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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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ANOTHER MURDERER GONE TO GLORY.

WILL DUKES, the murderer, just hung at Manchester, was a very commonplace villain. He killed his employer like a beast, and tried to conceal the crime like a fool. During the trial he imitated the unhappy example of Mrs. Maybrick, and made a voluntary statement, in which the jury showed their disbelief by bringing in a verdict of wilful murder. But before paying the penalty of the law he was prepared for kingdom-come by the professional soul-saver of the gaol, and so efficacious were this gentleman's services, that Dukes went to the scaffold with the sure and certain hope of a glorious passage to heaven. At any rate he "died happy," to use his own last words, and it is to be presumed he is now in glory, twanging his hallelujah harp, blowing his hallelujah trumpet, joining in the chorus of all the menagerie of the Apocalypse, and consorting with all the hung and unhung scoundrels who have left the earth for a more genial locality where their characters are better appreciated. May God, if there be a God, forbid we should ever join their holy crew, for we would rather take a villa or a flat in Hell than be for ever disgusted with such neighbors in Heaven.

Like all the rest of us, Dukes was what he was because he was constructed that way. When a man has the sense of a fool and the savagery of a beast, it is no wonder that he commits a murder; just as a tender-hearted man might weep that such creatures ever existed for their own misery and the world's affliction. We do not intend, therefore, to waste our time in denouncing the poor devil. Our object is to show the beautiful effect of the Christian doctrine of repentance, particularly on the very natures for which it was especially designed.

Cardinal Newman, in his marvellously eloquent lectures on the *Difficulties of Anglicans*, gives his whole genius to a picture of a murderer and his execution. The affair is the talk of the town. There is an hourly bulletin of the culprit's spiritual state. Some say he is obdurate, some that he has yielded. The women cry out that Jesus and Mary will see to it. The excitement is at its height, the suspense is intolerable. At last the news is circulated that the culprit has confessed, asked pardon of God, and made up his mind for a long spell of purgatory. Then arises a shout of joy and thanksgiving for "the grace vouchsafed to one so near eternity."

This is very interesting, but not very edifying. Such pious resignation on the part of the condemned murderer does not sensibly affect the statistics of crime. Throats are still cut, property is still unsafe. The dying may profit, but it brings little benefit to the living. The fact is, religion makes death an opportunity of appealing to the imagination. The criminal is "near eternity," but so are hundreds of others in every great city. He will not die alone. Some other life will expire at the same moment; not that of a murderer, but perhaps of a father who has toiled hard, and brought up his children honorably; or a poor widow who has worn herself to death to find her little ones bread. No excited crowd is making a fuss about *them*. Such exits from life are common and do not inflame the imagination, and of course religion is a matter of imagination from beginning to end.

The culprit himself is simply appealed to on his selfish side. What is to become of *him?* Where will *he* go? His victim is entirely lost sight of. Yet, if a man's heart were touched, that is the only thing he would think about. What of the man I wronged, robbed, murdered, and hurried into the next life? What is his fate? What will become of his widow and children? What can I do, slight as it may be, to ease their burden or lighten their grief? Such are the questions he should ask, but such questions do not trouble the scoundrels who walk to the scaffold and swing into heaven. Religion says to them "Look after your immortal soul," and they look after it, just as they formerly looked after silver spoons, cash boxes, and other unconsidered trifles. They repent; that is to say, they are sorry—in the circumstances. A reprieve would damp their piety, a pardon would extinguish it. They square it with God because they think he has power to plague them. Their repentance is only a desire to escape the lash.

Dukes made an edifying end. He died happy. Heaven opened as earth slipped from his feet. The night before he exchanged the prison cap for a crown of immortality he wrote a longish letter to a friend, full of maudlin self-pity and unctuous cant. He recommends "religion and temperance," quotes Scripture, believes he can suffer hanging as Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion, reproaches the friends who had not called upon him in prison, but magnanimously forgives them, though with a warning to "be careful." Not a word about poor Gordon whom he murdered Not a word or a sigh of regret, except for his own plight and the sorrow of his own wife. Such "repentance" is detestable, and the religion which inspires it is accursed.

"I feel prepared for my doom," he said, "through the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ." Poor Gordon was less lucky. He was not prepared for *his* doom. Dukes murdered him without warning; did not even send him a coffin and cross-bones as a gentle reminder. Poor Gordon had so little of the "mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ" that he had to leave the world in too great a hurry to settle his spiritual accounts. While bashing his head with the hammer, Dukes might have cried with Gloucester, "Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither." But Dukes himself was more fortunate. He had ample room and verge enough to prepare to meet his God. The chance denied to his victim was given to him. And if there is any truth in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Dukes may sit and see Gordon cooking in Hades. "A mad world, my masters," where men believe such things. This Christian superstition is fit for knaves and fools. Honest, sensible men should hiss it out of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SACRIFICE.*

PROF. ROBERTSON SMITH'S new book is decidedly the best he has yet put forward. It contains more genuine learning and far less truckling to the orthodox than his *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. Prof. Smith has not quite got rid of his fear of the kirk and we continually come across passages in which he softens down the result of his own researches. When we remember how even Prof. Huxley demolished the Genesis account of creation under the name of the Miltonic hypothesis, and how Prof. Smith was hunted out of the Free Kirk for his heresy, we may pass over his timidity and express for ourselves the conclusions to which his investigations lead us.

There is very much in the volume well worthy of discussion. Indeed, it is likely we shall return to certain items in regard to totemism and taboo, for they strongly corroborate a thesis we have upheld in these pages, viz., that the early Jews were savages. But the chief interest of the book centres round the fundamental institution of sacrifice. The origin and meaning of sacrifice constitute a central problem of ancient religion. That question connects the stronghold of Christianity, its doctrine of the Atonement, with the most barbarous customs of primitive savages. Much has been written upon it, and certainly Professor Smith's contribution is one of the most remarkable.

At the outset Prof. Smith has some noteworthy remarks on the fact that ancient religion was more largely concerned with practices than beliefs, and that with them mythology took the place of dogma, the myths being derived from the ritual, the latter being fixed, but the myths being variable. Prof. Smith very properly illustrates the religious practices of the Jews by those of the Arabs and other Semitic nations. There is a double advantage in this, for not only is the one illustrated by the other, but the nature of such a practice as that of sacrifice is much more clearly seen by the Christian reader when exhibited by other nations than as it appears among God's chosen people. The sacrifice of the first-born appears in its true light when related of the King of Moab (2 Kings iii., 27), but when told of Abraham or of God the Father himself, the horrible character of the proceeding is veiled in all sorts of disguises.

To understand early customs, we must study early Sociology and it is exactly because Professor Smith has given so much of his attention here that his book is a distinct advance upon any previous one upon the subject. It is not hard to understand how sacrifices arose. The Hindoos who placed upon the grave of an English officer the brandy and cheroots which he loved in life in order to propitiate his spirit illustrated a prominent aspect. Just as men were appeased with gifts, usually of substances which minister to life, so were spirits supposed to be, and the general form which the offering took, was something in the shape of what the Americans call a square meal. The Romans never sat down to eat without placing a portion aside for the Lares and Penates, and Prof. Smith gives abundant evidence that the early sacrifices of the Semitic people were animals offered at a meal partaken by the worshippers. The sacrifice, he holds, was originally a nourishing of the common life of the kindred and their god by a common meal. Eating and drinking together were primarily a sign of fraternity. Only to his own kin did early man own duty, and his god was always of his own kin. Jehovah was as we are often told, the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was their father and their king. When Ruth said to Naomi "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," the exclamation showed that taking up new kindred involved a change of worship. Prof. Smith says. "It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the idea of kinship between gods and men was originally taken in a purely physical sense." The Christian's explanations of Biblical anthropomorphisms may be dismissed as unfounded assumptions. The story in Genesis of the sons of God going with the daughters of men is one of the remnants of early myths unexplained by later editors.

The primitive tie being one of blood kinship, the offering of blood was thought to peculiarly cement the unity between the deity and his people. Herbert Spencer points out in his "Ceremonial Institutions," how blood offerings over the dead may be explained from the practice of establishing a sacred bond between living persons by partaking of each other's blood. The derived conception being that those who give some of their blood to the ghost, effect with it a union, which on the one side implies submission, and on the other side friendliness. Hence the worshippers of Baal, gashed themselver with knives (1 Kings xviii., 20).† Hence too, the frequent employment of blood in sorcery. The blood being the natural sign of life, or as it is called in Gen. ix., 4, and Deut. xii., 23 the life itself, it was reserved for Jahveh; as with the ancient Mexican and Central American gods, to whom was continually offered up the blood alike of sacrificed men and animals.

The notion that communion with the deity is effected by means of a meal in which blood—be it only the blood of the grape—forms an element, shows a survival in the Christian rite of Communion. The story that Jesus offered bread and wine saying this is my flesh and this is my blood, is an evident myth founded on the rite in which the sacred meal was supposed to cement the kinship with the deity. Prof. Smith says throughout the Semitic field the fundamental idea of sacrifice is that of communion between the god and his worshippers by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of the "sacred victim." The term communion is misleading if likely to give rise to thoughts of ideal devotion for it is abundantly clear that the only communion with deity dreamt of by early man was communion of food and consequent communion of blood and kinship. To the barbarous notion that deities are to be appeased by a blood communion, Christianity has added the absurdity that Christ was God, thus making God, in the famous phrase of Diderot, "sacrifice himself in order to appease himself."

We should have liked Prof. Smith to have entered more fully into the subject of substitutionary sacrifice and to have traced the steps which connect the primitive sacrifice of the mess with the sacrament of the mass, the supper where the deity eats with that where he is eaten. But this would be too much to expect even from this heterodox professor, whose work we heartily commend to our readers as a courageous and learned introduction to the study of the Semitic faiths, which, it has been boasted, have supplied the world with its principal religions.

J. M. WHEELER.

Theology is but ignorance of natural causes reduced to a system.—*D'Holbach.*

I do not believe that any two men, on what are called doctrinal points, think alike who think at all. It is only those who have not thought that appear to agree.—*Paine.*

The church that does not allow investigation, that teaches that all doubts are wicked, attains unity through tyranny, that is, monotony by repression. The boast of unity is the confession of tyranny.—*Ingersoll.*

There is in childhood a period measured by six, or at most by ten years, when any well-inculcated dogma, no matter how extravagantly absurd, is sure to retain its hold for life.—*Schopenhauer.*

The progress from deepest ignorance to highest enlightenment is a progress from entire unconsciousness of law to the conviction that law is universal and inevitable.—*Spencer.*

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* "Lectures on the Religion of the Semites;" First series "The Fundamental Institutions," by W. Robertson Smith, M.A., LL.D. Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1889.

† Prof. Smith points out that the Syriac word *ethkashaf* "make supplication," literally means "cut oneself."

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—VIII.

On "Prayer."

To the Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, M.A.
Chaplain-in-ordinary to the Queen.

(CONCLUDED.)

INSTEAD of skulking behind ambiguous illustrations, I invite you to take a simple one, and see whether it confirms or contradicts your theory. Let us go to the Prayer Book of your Church. In the "Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea" I find a special prayer against storms, containing the following ejaculation: "O send thy word of command to rebuke the raging winds and the roaring sea; that we, being delivered from this distress, may live to serve thee, and to glorify thy name all the days of our life."

Let me ask you to explain how God's acting upon "the physical world indirectly, through his action upon human thought and will," is likely to make a storm subside. It seems to me that human volition cannot break or bend a single law of nature, and that human thought has no effect on the weather. The only way to save a ship in a storm is to handle her well, and throw overboard a few gallons of oil, which can be done by Atheists as well as by Christians. Superstition says that the will of God can control the winds and waves by some mysterious process. The doctrine is, of course, unintelligible, but you have undertaken to teach it. Yet you did not undertake to explain or defend it, and you are ill advised in attempting to do either. Your safest course is to say, "God *does* still storms in answer to prayer, but I do not know *how* he does it."

Not only does your theory of God's control of the physical world by human agency break down, but you connect it with a metaphysical theory which has been repudiated by the greatest doctors of your own faith. Your argument stands or falls with the doctrine of Free Will. You perceive unchanging law in the external world, but you declare that the internal world of man's nature is "another department where God governs, not by Law, but through the freedom of the human Will."

I will not discuss Free Will. There is no need to do so. You are defending Prayer as a Christian, and are not entitled to assume what many of the greatest Christians have denied. A theory of Christian prayer which would necessarily be rejected by Saint Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards; a theory which flies in the face of the plainest teaching of Saint Paul; a theory which is explicitly condemned by the tenth and seventeenth Articles of your own Church; such a theory, I say, is totally inadmissible, unless you *prove* it in opposition to these preponderant authorities; and as you make no attempt to prove it, but simply postulate it as though it were a Christian axiom, I am justified in declining to accept it as a basis of discussion.

The only question which is worth discussing, after all, is this—Does God answer Prayer? Or, in other words—Is Prayer answered? Now this is a question of objective fact, for I have contended, and you tacitly admit, that every one who prays asks for *something* that would not happen in the ordinary course of nature. It is idle to say that the lives of praying men prove the efficacy of prayer. You yourself furnish the answer to this sophism, before attempting a singularly feeble reply. It is downright folly to assert that "Christianity as a whole is the true explanation, and the strongest defence of Christian Prayer," for that is assuming everything at first, and proving it afterwards in detail by means of the general assumption. The question is not whether God might, could, would, or should answer Prayer, but, in your own words, Does he do so? Now the only way to answer this question is to appeal to evidence. It has been proposed by Professor Tyndall, on the suggestion, I believe, of Sir Henry Thompson, that an experiment should be made in some hospital, by specially praying for the patients in one ward, and seeing whether it affords a greater percentage of cures. Such a proposal is alarming to the professors of mystery; for all religions die of being found out. and experiment is fatal to their pretensions. Accordingly you declare that this "so-called experiment would, as a matter of religion, be a blasphemy," and that "Prayer made under such conditions could not have in it the esssentials of Prayer." But of course you carefully refrain from suggesting an experiment which *would* conform to the true conditions, and which would, at the same time, be a *real* experiment. Nor do you explain why God should regard as "blasphemy" an endeavor to ascertain the truth or falsity of a doctrine taught by priests. It is only religion that cries "blasphemy!" in the presence of investigation.

While waiting for *your* experiment, I look abroad in the world, and find no *practical* recognition of the efficacy of Prayer. No Life Assurance Company would calculate a sovereign's life policy on the ground that her subjects asked God to "grant her in health and wealth long to live." No Fire Insurance Company would grant a policy on a House of Prayer unless a lightning conductor were run up to prevent the Deity from making mistakes in a thunderstorm. Underwriters never think of asking whether the captain prays or swears, or whether he carries rum or missionaries. And when the Peculiar People use prayer, without mixing it with medicine, they are browbeaten by Christian coroners and jurymen.

You give only two answers to Prayer, and they are extremely ancient. Nay more, they are selected from the Bible! *O sancta simplicitas!* Moses prayed to see "the good land beyond Jordan," and died without seeing it; but fifteen hundred years or so afterwards he saw it from "the summit of Tabor" when Christ was transfigured. What a precious "help to belief!" Paul also prayed God to remove his "thorn in the flesh"—whatever that was; and, although the thorn was not removed, God "gave the grace to bear it." Well, if there be a God, let us hope he will give us grace to bear the logic of theologians.

In the little sermon with which you conclude, you picture Christ standing "amid the surging, weeping throng of agonised humanity"—all created by the God of love—and hearing their cries for help from "sin." But is it not a fact that all the alleged miracles of Christ were *physical?* Where in the whole of the Gospels, did he make a single bad man good? "I have chosen you twelve," he said, "and one of you is a devil." He had, therefore, in Judas a fine subject for one of his "spiritual" miracles. But did he work it? No, the "devil" betrayed him, and Judas has been cursed by Christians ever since.

Here I take leave of your volume. You have not "helped" my "belief." You have said nothing to convince a doubter of the efficacy of Prayer. But you have shown me, once more, that Christianity has in its service a number of intelligent, accomplished, and *well-paid* men, who juggle and chop straw for a living. If I prayed at all, I would pray that they might despise the wretched business, and earn even a scantier allowance of bread in a more honest avocation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Some cattle at Banbury nearly drove in Mr. Bunton's window. He wrote to the local *Guardian* advocating the improvement of the street, and is replied to by a good Christian, Y. Z., who thinks it would have been a great blessing "not only if those erratic cattle had smashed his window and destroyed his *Freethinkers*, but that it had involved the whole building with its enlightening literature, and that it could never be replaced." Y. Z. is truly pious in his wishes, but they will not hurt Mr. Bunton.

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HELP FOR THE SWEDISH MARTYR.

VIKTOR LENNSTRAND, the gallant young Swedish Freethinker, is in gaol again. He is serving two terms of three months' imprisonment, and one of six, and, as other sentences are pending, it is possible that he will be doomed to linger for two years in the place which Swedish Christianity reserves for bold and honest sceptics. Fortunately Mr. Lennstrand is in good spirits. He is provided with writing materials, and is contributing to his journal the *Fritankaren* (*Freethinker*). Captain Otto Thomson has left his home and gone to Stockholm for the purpose of conducting the paper during his friend's imprisonment, and he will keep the flag flying or fall beneath it. The darker side of the matter is this The Swedish Freethinkers are poor, and they are overwhelmed by the difficulty of maintaining the paper, which does not yet pay its way, and providing Mr. Lennstrand with decent food during his incarceration. Of course it scarcely need be said that prison fare is Sweden is very hard, and might seriously injure a delicately-bred gentleman. In these circumstances the Executive of the National Secular Society has voted £2 10s., and decided to appeal to the Freethinkers of Great Britain and Ireland for assistance for their Swedish brethren. A Swedish Prisoners' Fund is therefore open, and subscriptions are urgently requested. They can be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C., or to the editors of the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer*.

A FISH, A PROPHET, AND A GOD.

"BREATHES there a man with soul so dead,"
Who will not weep when he has read
How Jonah from his God had fled,

How Jonah strove to get away.
How Jonah's God would have him stay,
How with a fish God barr'd his way?

"O fish!" cried God, "hold Jonah down,
The indolent, disobedient clown,
And bring him back, not far from town."

So back he comes; oh, sad to see!
A sicker fish there could not be,
I wot none ever swam the sea.

"Thou fish," roared God, "heave Jonah out!"
"I must," quoth fish, "beyond a doubt;"
Where'pon the whale began to spout.

"Aha," quoth God, "you're back, I see;
Now skin out straight for Nineveh;
And don't run off and go to sea.

"You lazy, worthless, roving clown,
Cry out like mad through all the town
That you and God will burn it down.

"Sure pop, old man, now git, I say;
You surely ought to find the way;
So don't you dare to go astray."

So Jonah got, as git he must,
God scarce could see him for the dust;
He sped as though his gall he'd bust.

And Jonah cried his false alarm,
Not doubting God would make it warm
For Nineveh in a fiery storm.

He bawled, he yelled, his Thus God saith;
He raved and stormed till out of breath,
And scared some Ninnies half to death.

"Yet forty days," great Jonah cries,
"We'll bake you up in brimstone pies,
On Jonah's God you'll find no flies."

The forty days their course had run,
Still Jonah sweltering in the sun;
"Alas!" quoth he, "where's all the fun?"

In this sad fix Jonah went to bed,
Growled about God, and finally said:
"Darn all Nineveh! I wish I was dead!"

So thus he died, and has gone to sleep
With his father and mother. Oh, weep,
All ye who would God's vigil keep!

NELSON HUNT.

ACID DROPS.

After endorsing the Catholic and High Church doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage, Mr. Gladstone now reprints an old article of his, written in 1844, eulogising the Confessional as an agency of spiritual culture. The *Tablet*, of course, is in high spirits, and those who have always asserted that Mr. Gladstone was a Catholic at heart are shaking their heads more ominously than ever.

Mr. Gladstone speaks of Confession as "making clean the inner chambers of the heart." But those who know the Confessional practically, in countries where the churches are whispering galleries, say that the priest too often leaves more dirt in the penitent's mind than he found there. How often is the young girl's mind poisoned by the lascivious suggestions of a priestly mud-raker. How often does the priest carry on a kind of spiritual adultery with the wife while the husband is toiling for her maintenance. And how often does the priest, who is for ever listening to confessions of frailty, become a volcano of morbid passion, that sometimes finds a vent in the beastliness for which the clerical tribe are only too famous.

Mr. Gladstone says he gave no permission for the republication of this old article. The editor of *Merry England* says he did, and flourishes one of the Grand Old Man's postcards. All this is a very trivial matter—to the public. The only important question is, Does Mr. Gladstone still endorse his old view of confession? If so, let him read again Michelet's *Priests, Women, and Families*.

Canon Liddon must be singularly behind date if he meant what he said about the late Bishop of Durham. According to the eloquent Canon, Bishop Lightfoot rolled back the worst attack on the Scriptures since the days of the early Church. But every out-ider knows he did nothing of the sort. He spent all his time in wiping off the spray, while the tide flowed on unimpeded. Even the *Athenæum*, which is not an heretical journal, is obliged to admit that "He was timid. He clung strongly to tradition. He disliked to be disturbed in any of the beliefs that prevailed within his Church." It adds that "he saw little truth outside of the beliefs which he deemed the essentials of Christianity. Accordingly, he has struck out no original path. He has done little with which his name will be permanently associated."

The Bishop of Bedford advises the clergy to take the lead in cricket clubs. He says "there is plenty of 'go' among the young fellows." Yes, in the legs. What they want is a little more "go" in their heads.

The Australian pietists have brought a Bill before the Victoria Parliament to prohibit the sale of newspapers on Sunday. The parsons want to have the monopoly of the day. It seems likely that the Bill may become law, but Mr. Symes promises to fight the question and continue at all costs the sale of the *Liberator* on Sunday. No doubt the parsons here dislike the competition of the Sunday newspaper, but they are not strong enough to attempt their forcible suppression.

The United States Court at Utah has decided against the Mormons being allowed to vote on account of their prior allegiance to the Church. If this judgment were applied to the Roman Catholics, it would disfranchise every one of them.

The Theosophists explain why they claim Edison. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1878, and as he has not publicly withdrawn, they still claim him as a member. Capital! Now note the subtlety of these people. When they ask you to join the Theosophical Society they tell you that you can do so without becoming a Theosophist; but, judging by Edison's case, the moment they book you they claim you as a Theosophist for ever.

Reluctance to pay up is found even among the Theosophists, despite their spiritual culture, which is so superior to that of ordinary beings. The difficulty in getting in subscriptions led to the appointment of "commissioners" in July last, and the result is a recommendation to substitute

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a system of voluntary contributions for the old method of definite subscriptions, which were so indefinitely received.

Prayer doesn't seem very efficacious in Spurgeon's case. His health does not improve, and his voice is almost completely gone. It is really too bad of Jehovah to make such fine promises and break them so shamelessly.

Spurgeon has a new view of persecution. "If any one," he says, "would see a persecutor in full flower, let him listen to a gentleman of 'advanced views' when he is delivering his gentle soul in relation to a Calvinist." Here, surely, says the *Christian World*, we have the wolf scolding the lamb to perfection.

The Rev. E. P. Downman has got the Bishop of London to relieve him from the vows (we suppose of poverty and chastity) he took some years ago when founding the Order of the Sacred Redeemer in the City-road. The reverend gentleman will now be able to pile up money and marry a wife—two things for which the English clergy have a sneaking fondness.

An evening paper calls this City-road fraternity "a brotherhood for men." Did it ever hear of a brotherhood for women?

There is a proposal to marry people "free, gratis, for nothing" in the State churches at Derby. The object is to draw people away from the Nonconformist chapels and the registry office. Should the scheme succeed it will no doubt be tried elsewhere. The churches, we suppose, will have notices outside to this effect:—"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Come and be married for nothing. Splendid chance for the poor, the helpless, and the unemployed. Christenings at the same price, with a present of five shillings for each baby, whether single or in twins or triplets."

Canon Eyre, reading a paper on the press at a clerical conference, lamented the power of the press for evil. There were no fewer than three weekly publications of a Freethinking character, and in addition to this there were 57,700 tracts of the same nature. Where does the Canon get his figures? We can assure him that the London Secular Federation issue far more than this number in the course of a year. He then, of course, went on to speak of penny dreadful and other "poisonous and filthy literature" in a way to associate in the minds of his hearers the serious Freethought propaganda with all that is low and detestable. It is the old game of the clericals to seek to blacken their opponents. We can afford to smile and live it down.

Among the "timely topics" submitted for discussion at a recent London Ministers' Meeting were these:—What is a London minister's duty in respect to the alarming increasing debt of the London Methodist Mission? What can be done to save the collapse of the Methodist Day School systems in London? Questions like these show that there is a sombre obverse to the pretty picture of the "Forward Movement."

How funny! *The Ceylon Friend*, a Methodist paper in the isle of spices, ridicules the Singhalese for their belief in demons, when almost every page of the Christian gospels is saturated with the same superstition.

The *Medium*, which took no notice of the Fox sisters when they published their exposure of Spirtism, now gives prominence to a recantation by Maggie Fox Kane, in which she repudiates all she said against Spiritualism as false, and hints that she was suborned thereto by Catholics high in position. She says she had a letter from Cardinal Manning advising her to abandon this "wicked work of the Devil." To us this second recantation of Mrs. Fox Kane only makes it clear that her evidence on any point is thoroughly untrustworthy; and from the way in which she herself speaks of her hopes of emolument from lecturing, one need not look far for a motive for her perversions, conversions, and re-conversions.

The good Christians of New York do not permit the directions of the New Testament to be carried out to the public danger. The police raided a faith cure establishment at Brooklyn and arrested three persons who had endangered the public health by going from a house infected with diphtheria and scarlet fever, which they had sought to remove by the prayer of faith, to a place of public meeting without taking the ordinary precautions to prevent the spread of the disease.

The New York Presbyterians, and a good number of Scotch ones too, are getting ashamed of their Westminster Confession of Faith. The Presbytery has reported certain changes which it desires with a view of toning down reprobation, election, and damnation. Meanwhile the orthodox are crying out that hell is just as hot though changed to Hades, and that, as the Scotch beadle said, a kirk without a hell isna' worth a damn.

Canon Shuttleworth is a pleasant gentleman, and we are not surprised at his bursting out into "poetry" on his Christmas cards. But why on earth should a daily paper chronicle such very small beer? Fortunately we are spared six lines out of eight. The two given refer to Robert Browning and Bishop Lightfoot, and are as follows:

Story-singer of earth's hope, man's life, God's love,
Wise pastor, sweet as deep and true of soul.

Lines like these could be turned out by the thousand by any educated man. Preach away, dear Canon, but spare us your "poetry."

Everybody has heard the story of the Quaker sailing in a ship which was attempted to be boarded by a privateer. Seizing a hatchet, he cried out to a fellow with his hand on the bulwark, "Friend, take away thy hand; I am going to chop that wood." A pendant to this story is told by an evening contemporary. An Irish priest was walking in Rome. A "rude fellow of the baser sort" struck him in the face as he was going along the street. "My friend," said he, "smite me on the other cheek also." Nothing loth, the rough administered a sounding blow on the other side of the priest's face. "Now, my friend," said the priest, "I have obeyed the command of the Gospel—it is my turn now." Whereupon he doubled his fists and gave the man as sound a thrashing as ever he had in his life.

Lord Brougham said you could drive a coach and six through any act of parliament, and evidently you could drive Barnum's show through any maxim of Jesus Christ. When the little boy called his sister a fool, and was reminded that whoso calleth his brother a fool is in danger of hell fire, he retorted "She ain't my brother."

The *St. James's Gazette* gives a very interesting account of the *Coronoca Nera*, the Black Chronicle, which has been started at Rome as an organ of the lower clergy, and already enjoys a circulation of 38,000 daily. The higher clergy are denounced as avaricious and profligate, and the vices of some are described under pseudonyms that do not disguise their identity. One sells indulgences, another intrigues with his fair penitents, and another carries on an amour with the wife of a brigand whom he shields from the law. Naturally the Cardinals are in a great rage, but the obnoxious paper goes on with its exposures, and demands the abolition of clerical celibacy.

The late Mr. Kavanagh, formerly an M.P., had neither legs nor arms, and the peasantry of his district believe it happened in this way. His mother, a strong Protestant, was offered a plaster model of the Virgin in Paris. She bought it and broke off its arms and legs, and her next child was born with the same defects. Such is superstition in the land of potatoes, pigs, and priests.

A Mr. W. Shepherd opposed Mr. Foote at Nottingham. His remarks were so rambling that the chairman took the sense of the meeting as to whether he should be allowed another speech, and the meeting decided against him. Mr. Shepherd has since eased his mind in a four-paged tract. It seems impossible for him to be accurate. He says he only had five minutes on the platform, when he had fully ten, like other speakers. Being very dull and offensive, Mr. Shepherd complains of Mr. Foote's "sarcasm and ridicule." Another time he is likely to get rather more than less.

The proprietors of St. George's Hall, Plymouth, wouldn't

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stand a lecture by Mr. Moss on "The Devil's Doom," but they made no objection to "Inspired Nonsense." Christians in that part won't have the Devil played with, but don't mind being called fools.

The Bishop of London preaching at Fulham Parish Church on Christmas day, gave utterance to some remarkable theology. Alluding to the connection of Christ with domestic life he was reported in the *Evening Standard* as saying "this domestic relation had a counterpart in the very essence of God himself. Enough was revealed to them to show that the tie which bound parent to child and child to parent did not spring from the creation of things that they saw, but sprang from a deeper foundation, and had its origin and source in things which were far beyond the possibility of comprehension by our human intellects." If this means anything within the comprehension of human intellects it refers to God the Father and God the Son, and if the domestic relation has a counterpart in the very essence of God himself it must imply there is also a God the Mother who, judging from the analogy of human relations, should be the most important member of the whole concern.

The Rev. Dr. McCann, of St. Cuthbert's, Winson Green, has discontinued the week-day services. He does not feel the utility of discoursing to empty benches, and the people don't see the use of filling them.

The Government inquiry into the management of the Kilkhampton Home, which appears to be conducted by Canon Thynne, a Mother Superior, and sisters, reveals facts by no means creditable to these pious people. Some of the girl inmates testified that they were half starved, that they were punished by putting stinging nettles on their mouths and hands, and that though they went in well, they came out with bad places on neck, arms, and legs.

Several girls declared they did not get enough to eat, but they seem to have had a pretty bellyfull of religion. In the morning they said the Lord's Prayer, sung the hymn "Gentle Jesus," and said a prayer asking God's blessing on Canon Thynne and the Mother. They also had to pray for the sisters and all the others, and in the evening, service was held in the chapel by the Mother.

The birthday of his Savior proved too much for one of the Salvation Army. He appeared to be the leader of a band that caused annoyance near Holborn, and, on being asked to go away, struck a constable in the chest. He was taken to Bow Street and fined 20s.

Dr. Joseph Parker thought it proper at Christmas to warn religious editors, "lest in an unguarded moment ye bite and devour one another." Dr. Parker has edited a Christian paper himself, and knows it would never do to allow the editor of the *English Churchman* to come near the boss of the *Church Times* unless both were muzzled.

The Rev. John McNeill, of Regent Square Presbyterian Church, preaching on the Rich Man and Lazarus, denounced the innovators who sought to put out the fires of hell. "This was no mere parable Christ was narrating. . . . The Pharisees denied Christ for his teaching, and he flashed up the lurid light of one of themselves being in hell." The Scotch Spurgeon, after the manner of his kind, makes of the narrative what *he* pleases. It says nothing of the rich man being a Pharisee, and his torments in hell appear not to have been the result of any sin, but simply a revolution of position, because in his lifetime he received good things and Lazarus evil things.

Mr. C. Raleigh Chichester is struck with a good idea, which he ventilates in the journals. It is to further open up trade with Africa and at the same time to Christianise the Dark Continent. He proposes the formation of a Christian Trading Co., a prominent item of whose operations will be to allow and establish at every station of 300 miles lands for churches, schools and a dwelling-house, which the company will make over to a minister of religion.

The idea is by no means novel. Many travellers have observed how well Christianity and trade go together, and that whenever Christianising begins, the lands and commodities soon—by the divine blessing, of course—find their way into the hands of the Christians.

Here is Mr. William Harris, for instance, who has just put out a book on Morocco. He says that missionaries are invariably accompanied by drink, and is emphatic in his belief that the inhabitants are healthier and better when unchristianised.

The dear old *Daily News* came out on Tuesday with a rattling blood-and-thunder article on the Bishop of Salisbury and his rigging of the educational supply of the city, by which he practically forces Nonconformists to send their children to Church schools, and have Church religion taught them or none at all Now, Nonconformists play the same game with Freethinkers, and call it fair play. They squeal to the very stars when they are hit themselves, but cannot see that they have no right to beat others. By and bye, perhaps, they will learn that secular education, pure and simple, is the only solution of the difficulty.

Hating every form of persecution, we share the indignation of the Crewe Radidals who have suffered from the bigotry of the Tory railway officials. But while they are smarting they should remember that one kind of persecution is as bad as another. There are several Freethinkers among the railway servants at Crewe, enough to form a good strong Branch of the N. S. S., but they dare not move for the bigotry of Nonconformist foremen. Those who cry out against persecution should be very careful not to indulge in the sport themselves.

A newsagent of the feminine gender, not many miles from the Euston Road, sells the *Freethinker*. She also sells the *War Cry* and other religious periodicals, and conducts her business in a spirit of impartiality. This annoys a bigoted sky-pilot, who tells her she ought not to sell this journal. She replies, "I have to get a living, and why shouldn't I make a penny out of one paper as well as another?" He rejoins, "Oh, you shouldn't." "Well," says the shopkeeper, "will you make up my loss if I stop selling it?" Oh dear no! Not he! Bigots like to gratify their bigotry at other people's expense.

The *South African Methodist* reports a speech of the Rev. J. T. Lloyd at a meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society at Port Elizabeth, in which that missionary, while glorifying Christianity, said "The natives come among us and we teach them vices, and they return to their native countries degraded and vitiated from their contact with Christian people." Strange testimony to the triumph of the one divine religion.

PARSONS AND GYPSIES.

ENGAGED in philological research, I became acquainted with the Gypsies and their Oriental language. The designing nomads are no strangers to the Christian religion, for they spoke of *duvel* (god), *duvelesko charo* (Jesus), *mi-duvelesko mauromengri* (the Jews, *i.e.*, god-slayers), and posed as believers, mistaking me for a — parson. It reminds me of the ancient lie they told, when first they appeared in Europe, making their dupes believe that they had been banished from Egypt, as devout followers of the ranter, Jesus; hence Egypcions, Gypcions, Gypsies, (vide Andrew Boorde, 1547). On closer acquaintance, however, they dropped the mask, and frankly acknowledged that their real religion is the acquisition of valuables,—chiefly coin, which they worship like—their Christian brethren. I twitted them with being *bengesko folki* (the devil's people). An old *Romany chal* retorted: Aava Aatcheni Romany chalaw see sor nashedé." (Yes, all true Gypsies are lost), which proved to me that the *rashei* (parson) had not made a lasting impression upon them. Yet the man of god is told by the swarthy would-be penitent (by way of gammon): "*Tinova, pal, sor Kon Koovah too pookeras mandi see tatcho.*' (I know, brother, everything thou tellest me is true;) —adding with a sly look: "*Meero duvel see mere bokorengro, Keknannei wanta sova.*" (My god is my shepherd: I shall want nothing at all;)—sotto voce, "*for I help myself!*"—There is a difference between them and the parsons. Gypsies make things pleasant by telling our good fortune (*bonne fortune*), for which they, poor devils, often suffer imprisonment; whilst parsons make things very unpleasant, by telling our bad fortune (*mauvaise fortune*), for which they are well paid. Gypsies and parsons carry on a strange game. They delude mankind as to a future state, of which neither can know anything. Yet, instead of being subjected to the same treatment, the former go to jail, whilst the latter are honoured by Court and Government whom they help in duping the people.

CHS. KROLL LAPORTE.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 5, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 7, "Mr. Gladstone on Marriage and Divorce: a Freethinker's Reply."

Jan. 12, Hall of Science, London; 13, Reading; 19, Liverpool; 23, West Ham; 26, Camberwell.

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A. N. S.—Thanks for the cutting, which may be useful on some future occasion.

"IMMOTUS" writes an interesting letter from South London. We regret it is too long to reproduce. Twelve months ago he first saw a copy of the *Freethinker*, which was handed to him in the train. He shrank from it with horror, but could not get the picture out of his mind. He avoided the shop where he knew it was exhibited, but at last he purchased a copy and became a regular subscriber, and gradually a Freethinker. He has suffered a good deal of petty persecution, but he does not regret his conversion to Freethought.

A. POMEROY.—We hope you wont be puzzled again by our irony or facetiousness. Of course Sunday Closing is a rank piece of humbug, got up in the interest of the sky-pilots.

J. KING.—We used the word *determined* in a purely scientific sense, meaning no more than caused; just as we might say that the earth's orbit is determined by the centripetal and centrifugal forces. *Foreordained* is quite another matter. That means *consciously* determined by a *volition*. So, you see, *you* are in the mess, and not we.

W. INCHES.—Mr. Forder showed us your letter. Some day or other there ought to be a Freethought propaganda in Dublin. When it arrives Mr. Foote will no doubt pay the Irish capital a visit.

R. E. WILCOCKS.—Thanks for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."

T. JENKINS.—Your adventure with the parson was amusing. These black gentry should be tackled whenever possible. Glad to hear you so appreciate our Christmas Number. We have still a supply left for those who would like to purchase further copies for distribution.

JAMES GRAY.—There is no Freethought magazine published in England.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Paragraph inserted.

E. GOTTHEIL.—Thanks. It may be useful.

J. SAUNDERS.—It is hardly fair to make public use of the reverend gentlemen's letters without their permission, and what they write is very nebulous.

C. J. RUSE.—Capital!

TYPO.—Thanks for the paper. Mr. Foote has not visited Bury for many years. There are so many places that want his services, and only fifty-two Sundays in the year. We can still supply the Christmas Number, and shall be glad to be eased of what remains.

G. STEWART.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. L.—We certainly agree with you that the Salvation Yahoos have no right to howl and blare and drum in public at every hour of the day and night. But if they couldn't make a noise their business would soon expire. The "walk up, walk up" is indispensable to the show.

H. T. BAILEY offers to take 1,000 copies of our last week's article on "Jesus Christ's Birthday" if reprinted as a Tract. What do others say? This correspondent asks the meaning of "sacrosanct." It is (in short) double-holy.

L. STANLEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. BRUMAGE.—Glad to hear your health is improving. It is the best bit of news from the south of England this week.

W. R.—(1) Cobbett was a strong partizan, but worth reading. Both he and Hume are superseded now. Froude, Gardiner, Hallam, and Stubbs are more valuable. (2) The act of Jesus was that of a maniac. The money-changers were doing a legitimate business, changing the current Roman money for the old Jewish money, which alone the priests would accept in the sanctuary. If they cheated they must have been devilish sharp, for all their customers were Jews.

INCOG.—The thing was merely a joke, and the figure was put down at hazard.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Mumbles Observer—Western Figaro—St. Helens Advertiser—Weekly Telegraph—Devon Evening Express—Westminster News—Banbury Guardian—Rushden Argus—Truthseeker—Surrey Times—Printer's and Stationer's Circular—Twentieth Century—Progressive Idea—South African Methodist—Grocotts—Grahamstown Penny Mail—Evening Standard—Liberator—Freethought—Secular Thought—Open Court—Bulletin des Sommaires—Boston Investigator—Jewish World—Bury Times—Star—New York Herald—Anti Infidel.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

TO ALL WHOM IT CONCERNS.

A GENTLEMAN asked us at Nottingham if the invitation we printed early in the year was still open. We replied that it was. Our resources are not adequate to carry on our Freethought business properly, and they are diminished from time to time by investors requiring to withdraw their money. We have indeed to repay a good deal of money during the new year, and we shall be glad to hear from any friends who have spare cash to entrust us with. Every investment bears five per cent. interest, and the investor receives a legal document entitling him to recall his amount by six months' notice. We intend, if possible, to be very active in publishing during the next year or two. There is a certain market for all we produce, and a reasonable, if not handsome, profit on sales. It will be borne in mind that the *Freethinker* brings us no direct return for our labor, at least for the present, though the prospect is slowly improving. We have, therefore, to rely upon what is yielded by the publishing business, which, besides lecturing work, is our only source of income. Our stock of publications is a large one, and some idea of the resources needed may be gathered from the fact that the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* alone has cost £150 to produce, exclusive of the binding, the expense of which is incurred gradually as the work sells. Those who cannot afford to invest are not desired to inconvenience themselves; we only appeal to those who can; and they who respond quickly will be doing us the greatest service.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Two friends, one in London and the other in Lancashire, have responded to this appeal. We shall be glad to hear from others forthwith. Any sums from £5 upwards will be acceptable on the foregoing conditions.

SPECIAL.

MR. FOOTE is writing a reply to the Bishop of Peterborough's extraordinary article on Christianity. It will take the form of an open letter, and will be published in pamphlet form early next week, price twopence. The title is not yet settled. Orders can be sent in on Tuesday.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OH the fog! What the deuce is Providence thinking about—putting men in a place to live, and surrounding them with an atmosphere as thick as pea-soup and as black as a priest's face when he sees a heretic? On Sunday evening it was horrid in the vicinity of Old Street, and the three hundred people who found their way to the Hall of Science deserved a medal each in honor of the event. Mr. Foote lectured on the Star of Bethlehem, and really if there be such a luminary about he missed a good opportunity of shining.

THIS evening (Jan. 5) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science. His subject will be "Mr. Gladstone on Marriage and Divorce: a Freethinker's Reply." Mr.

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Gladstone's article on this subject has just appeared in the *North American Review*.

NEXT Tuesday evening the second annual dinner of the London Secular Federation takes place at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. The dinner will be served punctually at eight. Mr. Foote presides, and there will be toast speeches by many prominent Freethinkers, with musical interludes. This gathering is looked forward to by those who were present on the last occasion, and a very large company is expected. Indeed, the annual dinner may now be regarded as an institution.

SECRETARIES of Branches will please advise Mr. Seago, 209 Hill Street, Walworth, *at the latest* by Monday morning, how many tickets they have sold, as a definite order as to the number of diners will have to be given on Monday evening.

JANUARY 29 being the anniversary of the birth of the author of the *Age of Reason*, a Thomas Paine Birthday Party will be held at the London Hall of Science, under the auspices of the Secular Federation, and the profits will be handed over to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. The tickets are on sale, and can be obtained of any Branch secretary, of Mr. G. Standring, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C., at the Hall, or at 28 Stonecutter Street. Messrs. R. O. Smith and G. Standring have all the arrangements in their hands. The programme will include a musical and elocutionary entertainment, a brief speech or two by Mr. Foote and others on Thomas Paine, and dancing until a fairly unreasonable hour in the morning. There ought to be a good party in honor of the great reformer.

MR. FORDER, secretary of the N. S. S., will be glad to receive subscriptions forthwith for the annual Children's Party at the Hall of Science. He is being assisted in the arrangements by many of the ladies and gentlemen who have given their services before. As to the subscriptions, we venture to think they will flow in readily. Anyone who has ever witnessed the riotous glee of four or five hundred little demons—we beg pardon, little darlings—on the floor of the Hall of Science, will need no incentive to dip his hand in his pocket. For weeks afterwards the laughter of the children echoes about the building. Some of the kindliest elders can hear them still in the corners of the galleries. Ladies and gentlemen, shell out. Provide a long evening's innocent enjoyment to hundreds of little ones, some of whom don't get too much of it. And as example is better than precept we pull out our own lean purse and extract—bless us! how light the draft has left it!—the sum of ten and sixpence. There you are now. Who's next?

MR. FORDER has since sent us the following list of subscriptions for acknowledgment:—Per J. Anderson: A. C., 2s.; S. Stalder, 2s.; F. Maitland, 2. 6d.; Miss Allen, 2. 6d.; Rayment, 6d.; per R. Forder: R. H. Side, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Temple, 1s.; B. A. Marks, 5s.; R. A. Cole, 1s.; H. Seal, 10s.; F. Rutt, 1s.; per Mrs. Santem: T. Moses, 1s. 6d.; Mr. Harrison, 6d.; Mary, 6d.; J Young, 6d.; H. Kelsey, 6d.; small sums, 1s. 5d.; E. Truelove, 5s.

IT is all very well to laugh at "tea-fights and muffin struggles," but the Camberwell party on Dec. 8 resulted in a profit of £6 to the London Secular Federation. That's no laughing matter anyhow.

NEXT Monday, Jan. 6, the North Eastern Secular Federation's tea, concert, and ball takes place at the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle. The tickets are 1s. 6d., and can be obtained from Mr. Joseph Brown, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle: Mr. Peter Weston, newsagent, 77 Newgate Street, or Mr. Tullen, 137 Burt Terrace, Gateshead.

THE Committee of "scientists and philosophers," Italian and foreign, has met at Milan with the object of instituting a new "National church." Their first step has been to draw up a catechism, and to invite adherents through a manifesto addressed to parents, students, and public officers. The manifesto declares that its promulgators wish to found "a fresh church in a free State, unfettered by the ideas, prejudices or dogmas of other creeds, and having for sole guide the books of Nature, with the eternal truths taught therein."

DR. RICHARD H. CLARKE of New York, an eminent writer among the Roman Catholics, makes the statement that the Roman Church in America has lost far more by the falling away of Catholic immigrants from their ancestral faith than it had gained by conversions. The *New York Sun* thinks the Catholics have lost more than half their immigrant population or their descendants, and adds that "Infidelity is more dangerous to the Church than ever before."

WE see from the *Fritänkaren* that Mr. H. V. Berghell continues to hold forth from the Freethought platform at Stockholm. The same number contains a translation of Mr. Wheeler's recent article on the "Opponents of Christianity," reproduced from our pages by our esteemed friend Captain Otto Thomson.

THE *Truthseeker*, which we notice is inclined to drop its cartoons on account of their extra expense, has a very good one entitled "When Womanhood awakes: A new Shakesperian Cipher." It depicts womanhood as Titania awakening, while beside her lies a figure with an ass's head labelled Christianity. The well-known lines from "Midsummer Night's Dream" are given below. *Womanhood as Titania*: "O Oberon! What visions have I seen! Methought I was enamored of an ass." *Manhood as Oberon*: "There lies your love!" *Titania*: "How came these things to pass? O; how mine eyes do loathe his vision now."

Secular Thought reports some very successful lectures by Mr. C. Watts in Canada. Mr. Watts is doing a good work over there, and is winning a first-rate reputation. His paper is well conducted, and often gives a paragraph on the progress of Freethought in England.

THE Freethinkers of California meet in Convention at San Francisco on Saturday and Sunday, January 25 and 26 with the special object of discussing the issues forced upon the people by ecclesiastical encroachments, and preparing measures for the establishment of a purely Secular government in the State.

MRS. MARGARET DELAND, authoress of *John Ward, Preacher*, has begun a new novel entitled "Sidney" in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

AT their quarterly meeting next Sunday, the Camberwell Branch present Mr. R. S. Seago with a testimonial, together with a handsomely bound copy of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* as a "send off" before his voyage to South Africa. By his untiring energy Mr. Seago has done much to make the Camberwell Branch an undoubted success, and he will be greatly missed both there and at the Council of the London Secular Federation. We have the consolation, however, of knowing that wherever he goes his services will be enlisted in the Freethought cause.

WE have been considering how we might accede to the request to insert reports of N.S.S., Branch meetings. Up to the present we have been unable to come to a decision. We have decided, however, to insert a list of forthcoming lectures. Notices must reach us not later than Tuesday morning. Lecturers can also have their lists of engagements inserted free of charge. But we can only give this privilege to those who have been long enough in the field to be regarded as "solid." New comers will have to win their spurs before wearing them, and we must be on our guard against enthusiastic young men who, finding they cannot climb to the top of the tree in a month or two, begin to ask whether they are in the right camp.

WE remarked the other day that the special numbers of the *Freethinker* seldom did more than recoup us for the investment. The present Christmas Number, having a new cover, has been extra costly; the great expense being, of course, entailed by the illustrations. Making up the account to date we find ourselves slightly out of pocket. There is a small supply still left, and if these are cleared off we shall

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just make both ends meet. Such is the colossal fortune to be made in running a Freethought paper. Never mind, we didn't expect anything, and that's the way not to be disappointed.

"WHAT magazine writer seems most popular among the contributors of the great heavy magazines?" was asked recently at one of the news-stands in a Boston depot. "Pagan Bob," came the quick reply; "and," continued the newsdealer, "to illustrate the fact, we usually sell fifteen or sixteen *North American Reviews* a month; when Mr. Ingersoll writes, we sell from fifty to a hundred, and one month last winter when he contributed we sold one hundred and sixty copies over this counter."

WE have just issued a splendid new pamphlet by Colonel Ingersoll on the great and grave question of Marriage and Divorce. Portions of it were reprinted in our columns from the American papers, but we have, in the pamphlet, reproduced the Colonel's article verbatim from the *North American Review*. Hardly anything so just, beautiful, and eloquent has been written on the subject since the days of Milton. Like the noble gentleman he is, the Colonel is the sworn friend of women and children, and he teaches men that love is higher than authority. The pamphlet should be circulated by the ten thousand.

MR. BRADLAUGH seems to have had a splendid reception at Bombay. His health is reported to be nearly recovered. This will be good news to his many admirers.

THE CORROBORATION OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

BY JOHN BURROUGHS.

From the "North American Review."

DR. LYMAN ABBOTT, in criticising Professor Huxley in a recent number of this Review, loses sight of a very important distinction—a distinction which Professor Huxley keeps constantly before him in the articles referred to; namely, the distinction between objective and subjective truth, between a statement or a proposition which rests upon outward, independent, logical evidence, and is addressed to the reason and the understanding, and one which is purely personal and subjective, involving the taste, the emotions, the hopes, the aspirations, and which is true or false according to the temper and experience of the person to whom it is addressed. When our theological doctors talk of the evidence of Christianity, they lay great stress upon the historical evidences; the root of the matter is here; these are real, objective, positive, and are matters of logical and scientific inquiry. The subjective evidences—that is, those which are furnished by the mental or spiritual experience of the individual and beget a feeling of certainty and security in his mind—these are of quite a different nature, and our logical faculties can have little to do with them.

Professor Huxley in his *Nineteenth Century* articles referred to, applies the scientific method of inquiry to certain alleged occurrences in the New Testament—occurrences which must rest upon objective evidence, if upon any, and in which the appeal of credibility is made, not to our faculty of spiritual insight, but to our reason and understanding. Is the story of the Gadarene swine probable? is it reasonable? does it agree with the rest of our knowlege? "The Gadarene miracle either happened, or it did not. Whether the Gadarene 'question' is moral or religious, or not, has nothing to do with the fact that it is a purely historical question whether the demons said what they are declared to have said, and the devil-possessed pigs did or did not rush over the cliffs of the Lake of Gennesaret on a certain day of a certain year," etc; "If that is not a matter about which evidence ought to be required, and not only legal but strict scientific proof demanded by sane men who are asked to believe the story—what is it?" Professor Huxley thinks a man who believes such a story without logical evidence is guilty of an immoral act. And so generally with the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and with demonology and possessions. These things are alleged occurrences in the outward physical world, and they are not supported by adequate objective evidence.

Men reason upon the subject of the soul's immortality, but the answer which reason gives is mainly in the negative. There is nothing that could be called evidence that man continues to live after the dissolution of his body. Yet Dr. Abbott is convinced that he does so exist; he realises in himself "a nature superior to disease, decay, mortality;" and who shall gainsay him? who shall say he is illogical? The evidence he has upon this point is personal and subjective, and cannot be imparted to another. It has no logical or scientific validity, because it begins and ends with himself. It is not a question of reason, but of religious conviction, But all the questions in dispute between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wace are questions of reason and of evidence. They pertain to the outward, visible, concrete world of history and of experience, and can be settled in no court but the court of reason.

Dr. Abbott says (and he assumes to speak for "the great mass of Christian believers") "that there are propositions which men ought to believe without logically-satisfying evidence." This is what the old Mother Church used to say, and used to back it up with the stake and the rack. "Ought to believe"—that is, it is a man's duty to believe certain propositions addressed to his rational faculties, without rationally-satisfying evidence. It is to be regretted that the good doctor did not cite some theological or religious proposition, or some article from the creeds, that it is a man's duty thus to believe. Would he say that a man ought to believe any of the points in dispute between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wace without "logically-satisfying evidence"?—the swine story, the authorship of the Gospels, that Jesus said what he is reported to have said, that demonology is true, etc., etc.?

Professor Huxley, I imagine, would be the last man in the world to deny Dr. Abbott's proposition that there is such a thing as spiritual insight, or the religious sense, and that certainties, or at least assurances and satisfaction, reach the soul through these avenues. The religious nature or the poetic and artistic nature is not occupied with logical processes or the reasons of things, but with impressions, attractions, intuitions, emotional processes, the divine, the beautiful, the enjoyable. We do not ask of a poem, or a work of art, or any work of pure literature, Is it true? as we would ask of a proposition of science, or the statement of a witness upon the stand, or the declaration of a creed, Is it true? but, Is it good? is it powerful? is it satisfying? does it move and nourish us? A poem must have poetic truth, but how different is this from mathematical or scientific truth, and by what different faculties apprehended! Neither do we ask of purely religious utterances like the Sermon on the Mount or Paul's Epistles, Are they true? but, Do they stimulate and exalt our religious sense? do they quicken and purify the spirit? Paul's theology may be true or false: what is forever true and real is his fervid piety, his spiritual power, his eloquent humility, and his love for mankind. His logical faculties may have been weak; the things which he believed, which lay in his understanding and satisfied his reason, may have been utterly inadequate to stand rigid tests, but for all that the power and value of his writings are beyond question. The same may be said of some of the fathers of the Church, weak in reason, but strong in the spirit. Professor Huxley is strong in reason; his logic is a chain hard to break; but highly spiritual and imaginative natures would perhaps find little satisfaction in his writings. He is occupied with objective truth, not with subjective impressions. His mind is strictly scientific, and the results of his method of inquiry are hard to controvert.

He does not deny the moral sense, or the æsthetic sense, or the religious sense, as Dr. Abbott would seem to imply; he is not discussing questions that lie in either of these realms, but questions that come within the scope of reason and are matters of evidence. The questions of right and wrong in human conduct, of lying, of stealing, of murder, etc., which Dr. Abbott introduces, belong to quite a different sphere from the question of the authorship of the Gospels or of the credibility of the miracles.

There is the appeal to conscience, the appeal to taste, the appeal to our sense of the fitness of things, and there is also the appeal to reason, to the judgment, to our power to weigh and sift evidence. It seems to me that Dr. Abbott confounds these things, and in his reply to Huxley sets up a man of straw. If the great scientist had said that all truth and certainty comes through the logical faculties, he would have laid himself open to the doctor's criticism. What he did say or imply was that all scientific, all objective truth comes through our logical faculties. These are his words: "It is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty."

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In the outward objective world a fact is always a fact. It is always pertinent to inquire into the truth of any alleged occurrence. St. Augustine says that the flesh of the peacock never decays. Is this a fact? If it was a fact in his day, it must be a fact in ours. Do miracles happen? Have they ever happened? Is there a personal devil? Are we surrounded by a multitude of good and bad spirits who are seeking to influence our lives? Any objective evidence of the truth and reality of these things must hold good at all times and in all places. Two and two always make four, and doubtless always will. But when we enter the region of morals, we are in a world where all is plastic, indefinite, relative. Right and wrong are so only under certain conditions. It may be right to lie and steal and murder under certain extraordinary circumstances. "The certainties of the moral and spiritual realm." to which Dr. Abbott refers, and upon which he says "all æsthetic, all domestic, all political and national life are based," are not outward demonstrable certainties, like those of science, but inward personal certainties, which involve our constitution and our temporary relations to the universe and to each other.

(To be concluded.)

INGERSOLL ON IMMORTALITY.

THE following letter from Colonel Ingersoll has just been published in America. It was addressed to Mr. E. R. Johnes, the author of *Circumstantial Evidence of a Future Life* :—

45, Wall Street, New York, June 25, 1889.

Dear Sir,—Accept my thanks for your essay on "Immortality." It is very beautifully written, and you have brought forward in support of your doctrine all the argument there is, and you have stated your case with much force and clearness.

In addition to this you have abandoned many positions that cannot, in this age of the world, be maintained. You admit that the hope of immortality cannot, with safety, rest upon the inspiration of the Old and New Testament, or upon any form of superstition. If we admit the existence of a God of infinite wisdom and compassion, we may say that there must be a world better than this; but how do we account for one worse than that, that is to say, for this? If injustice triumphs here, why not there? If honesty goes without bread in this world, why not in another? Certainly God will be no better then than now. Still, it may be possible that a God of infinite love and compassion will so reward those who suffer, through suffering itself, that all that happens will be consistent with wisdom and compassion.

I do not see any evidence in this world that it was created by either wisdom or compassion. Neither do I see what right we have to say that man has a spiritual body, any more than trees have. The tree springs from a seed, so does man. The trees produce others and then perish from the earth; the same is true of the human race. You have had the courage to accept the logic of your position and give to all life the immortality that Christians give to man.

I hardly know the meaning of the words "spiritualist" and "materialist." I do not see that it makes the slightest difference with the argument to admit that everything is "spiritual," or to assert that everything is "material." He who asserts that all is "spiritual," admits the existence of everything that another calls "material"; and he who insists that all is "material," admits the existence of everything that is by the other called "spiritual." Call it what you will, it remains beyond the grasp of our mind.

The weakest parts of your essay are the quotations from others. What Greenleaf says upon the subject seems to me a *non sequitur*. If man had believed only in his own experience, why could the world "be neither governed nor improved"? The first man obtained something by experience which he could convey to another, to which the other might add by his own exertions, his own experience, and so on from generation to generation, until there would be a vast and splendid capital of human experience. So, what Mr. Drummond has to say may be more ingenious, but is equally without foundation. Of all the men who have written upon this subject, I know of no one so shallow and insincere as Dr. Young.

I congratulate you on what you have said concerning the "wax figures" of Milton. If anyone is open to the charge of barren Materialism, it is Milton. His "heaven" was simply another England — with a government somewhat worse. You have endeavored to establish your doctrine by reason—by something universal—and you have wisely left out the provincialisms, the prejudices, and the puerilities of Christianity. Love and hope are universal. As long as men love and as long as they hope, there will probably be in heart and brain the splendid dream of immortality. It may be that we live no more—that we go back to the unconscious dust, and yet the heart will always say, "Perhaps there is another life." But whether there is or not, let us all paint on the canvas of the future the pictures that delight and satisfy the soul. We know that in this world after joy comes grief, as after day comes night; and it may be there is some world where after grief comes joy, as after night comes day.

Thanking you again for your beautiful and poetical essay,

I remain, sincerely yours,

R. G. INGERSOLL.

"DAGONET" ON DR. PARKER.

Dr. Parker, who has been put in the shade lately by the superior business abilities of the American gentleman at Olympia, has made another wild attempt to atract a little attention. This time he has introduced a kind of burlesque opening to his Christmas pantomime by sending messages from the pulpit to the celebrities of the day. This sort of thing is the latest .—"To the Queen.—God bless your Majesty. Why do you not recognise your Nonconformist subjects?" "To Mr. Balfour.—The Lord have mercy on you," etc., etc.

The pulpit pranks of the mountebank minister are not unknown in this country. The Nonconformist merry andrew —for whom a better name than a Nonconformist would be a Dambadformist—has before now caused the judicious to grieve, and there are not wanting clergymen of the Church of England, who have degraded the pulpit to the level of the political platform; but this new departure of the City Temple Tabarin is so grossly offensive that to dismiss it with the contempt it deserves would be a mistake. The Brothers Harris should compete for him for next Christmas, before Barnum secures him for a side show.—*Referee.*

THE CHRISTIAN HEAVEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—On Tuesday morning last, a man named Dukes was hanged in this city for the murder of a Mr. Gordon, his employer. Gordon had a shop in a neighbouring town managed by Dukes, and one day he went over to inquire into the accounts, which had gone wrong, when Dukes smashed his skull with a hammer, thrust the body into a wardrobe, and locked it in. Gordon's brother went over before the body could be disposed of, found Dukes on the premises, and he was captured, tried, and executed. Dukes was a dissipated drunken villian who after his conviction paid great attention to the exhortations of the prison chaplain, and when he stood on the scaffold, with the rope round his neck, he said to the reporters, "Tell my wife that I die happy."

A few years ago, a notorious scoundrel named Peace, who had murdered three or four people, was hanged on the same spot as Dukes. Peace, too, became touchingly pious under the hands of the gaol parson, and when he stood on the scaffold he said, addressing the reporters, doctors and prison officials, "Oh, my friends, I hope that your end may be like mine, for in less than two minutes I shall be safe in the arms of Jesus."

Now, I presume it cannot be denied that according to the christian scheme of redemption, both these men would go straight to heaven. Each had repented, had been washed in the blood of Christ, had received absolution at the hands of the parson, and had had no opportunity of relapsing into sin. After having their necks broken, they would be received into the heavenly kingdom, be presented with a regulation harp, and are now—and will be to all eternity—tramping over golden pavements and singing one monotonous song.

This is the christian heaven, filled almost entirely with such wretches as Dukes and Peace, who would be welcomed with yells of delight, whilst Darwin, Huxley, Herbert Spencer and millions of the best and wisest who have appeared on earth will be consigned to a hell of literal fire and brimstone. It may be, but I do not think it is posible to imagine more hideous trash than this, and I rejoice at having lived to see the Christian mythology in its death flurry. It has sat like an incubus on the hnman mind for ages, and though superstition dies slowly, this one is doomed to follow many others into the limbo of contempt.

(Manchester). AN AGNOSTIC.

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THE "STAR" ON BISHOP MAGEE.

It is useful to hear from the Bishop of Peterborough in the new *Fortnightly* what, in his opinion, Christianity may not and cannot do. It seems that it cannot put down war, it cannot put down poverty, it cannot teach us to forgive public enemies, and that in short the State that tried to live up to the Sermon on the Mount would be ruined in a week. The Gallio may very well be inclined to ask, if it can't do these things what on earth is the good of talking about it any longer, unless for the sake of filling fat sees with gentlemen of the cut of Bishop Magee? But the Bishop is no way discomposed by such possible questionings as these. True, he says, it can't put down war; but then it can teach us that our enemies (whom we are preparing to exterminate with bullets that make a little hole when they enter their bowels and a large one when they come out) are "our brethren!" So with the poor, Christianity has not said there shall be no poor "nor has it in any way enlarged the poor man's right as a citizen!" But still it teaches him that he is "our brother"—especially after we have given him skilly and stone-breaking because he has no work—or three months' hard labor for trying to keep up his scanty wage. So with the starving tramp to whom the Christian magistrate has given five years for picking a Christian pocket on a Christian highway. He, too, is to learn from Christianity that he is "a man and a brother."

Well, this is Cant, and Cant that no man—be he learned bishop or drivelling curate—would dare to utter if he were not steeped to the very lips in class vulgarity and selfishness, disguised as the most unselfish of religions. The article in the *Fortnightly* is worth to Mr. Foote or Colonel Ingersoll five yearly issues of the *Freethinker*, and five hundred editions of the most sceptical pamphlet that ever was penned.

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Minister: "And do you like to go to church with your papa and mamma, Bobby?' Bobby (inclined to non-committal): "Well, I guess I like it as well as pa does.'

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 2.] SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

NOTICE.

"Letters to the Clergy" will be resumed next week. The ninth will be addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

PROVIDENCE.

LONDON awoke on New Year's morning to find that a frightful tragedy had happened during the night. A fire broke out at the Forest Gate Industrial Schools, and twenty-six boys were burnt or suffocated in their dormitories. Heroic exertions were made to rescue the little fellows; without them, indeed, the death-roll would have been far more appalling. Some of the boys showed more courage than soldiers on the battle-field. One who was himself rescued, went back to save a small comrade, and perished in the attempt.

The youngsters had gone to bed looking forward with pleasure to the morrow. They were to have had a whole day's enjoyment, but, according to an evening newspaper, "Providence designed it otherwise." No doubt this shocking language made but little, if any, impression on the minds of ordinary readers. There is a stock phraseology of religion which is so hackneyed as to be almost meaningless. Otherwise it is difficult to conceive the state of mind of a man, in this humane and enlightened age, who could deliberately write such words. They imply that Providence resolved to frustrate the boys' hopes in the most cruel manner; that Providence arranged the fire, so that they might wake amidst flame and smoke, instead of in the dawn of a happy day; that Providence wilfully burnt or smothered twenty-six lads, just in order to show the power of the great designer, whose ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts.

Such a God would be a colossal devil. The worst criminal that ever cursed the earth would look pure beside him. Human criminals are tempted by gain, and impelled by sudden passion. But God has nothing to gain, and is supposed to act deliberately, with perfect forethought and unerring aim. If he murdered those twenty-six poor little fellows—that is, if he "designed it otherwise"—the dictionary has no words strong enough to describe him.

Suppose a wise and merciful God ruled the world. Suppose he saw fit to terminate the earthly life of those lads and call them "home." Could he not have called them in their sleep? Could he not have ordered the Angel of Death to fan them gently with his wings, so that in the morning their faces might lie pale upon the pillows, without a sign of terror or pain?

Why rouse them with the hoarse cry of "Fire?" Why choke them with the blinding smoke? Why lick their limbs and faces with tongues of flame? Why unveil the face of the King of Terrors to the gaze of shrieking children?

Would the worst man in London have been capable of such a deed? Jack the Ripper would probably have shrunk from the infamy. He has a mania for killing middle-aged unfortunates, and perhaps he has suffered from them. But who has suffered from youth and innocence? Who, maddened with wrong, would torture and kill a crowd of children? Who would turn a boys' bedroom into a slaughter-house, only to show that events may not happen according to expectation.

The victims of this tragedy were buried on Monday, and religion gave it another touch of irony. A hymn was sung by the surviving boys and girls of the schools, the first line of which was this:—

"There's a friend for little children."

What a kind friend! And what sickening humbug to hymn and slaver the "kind friend" who slaughtered twenty-six objects of his attachment!

Right under the report of the funeral in the *Evening News* was the heading, "Prize Fight at Leeds," and the next column was devoted to the "West End Scandals." Surely the "designer" of the universe is in a dreadful muddle. He would be far better engaged in stopping prize fights, and reforming dirty aristocrats, than in burning innocent children in their beds. Cowper tells us that "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." If he exist the line is undoubtedly true. But what if God be a dream of ignorance? What if Providence be a fiction of theology? Are we not then relieved from the intolerable burden of belief in an Almighty Devil.

G. W. FOOTE.

TYNDALL ON CARLYLE.*

NEARLY nine years have rolled their course since the literary Colossus of the century passed away, yet the stream of Carlyle literature still flows on. Few men indeed are so well known, known not only, as even eminent men usually are, merely from the outside, but turned inside out, exposing the seamy side. Few have borne so fierce a light. If, as the upshot, Carlyle remains a very human man—with the keenest of eyes for the demerits of others and tragical blindness—until too late, for the merits of the one who should have been first and dearest, it is better that the truth should be known. Better a true man than a false God.

The cloud of detraction which followed the publication of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, written in age, ill-health and grief at the loss of his wife, has lifted since the publication of the numerous letters exhibiting his tender great-heartedness in many varied

* "Personal Recollections of Thomas Carlyle," *Fortnightly Review*, January, 1890.

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relations. They reveal him, to use his own fine comparison, as "a rock of unsubduable granite, piercing fast wide into the heavens, yet in the clefts of it beautiful green valleys with flowers." He has been judged as in the judgement hall of Osiris, where every little action is weighed; yet he takes his place among the lofty in character as well as among the great in intellect. Gold, though alloyed with bronze, is more valuable than silver and above comparison with tin.

Professor Tyndall's "Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle," though they do not throw any new light upon his character or opinions, are yet of interest, as exhibiting him in relation to modern science. It has been thought that Carlyle showed an ignorant impatience of science, or, at any rate, of its conclusions. Professor Tyndall does something to modify this judgment. Impatient, he undoubtedly was, of those who he fancied denied reality to all that could not be tested in a laboratory. As Prof. Tyndall remarks—"With such Carlyle had little sympathy. He was a Freethinker of wiser and nobler mould. The miracles of orthodoxy were to him, as to his friend Emerson, 'Monsters,' To both of them the blowing clover and the falling rain were the true miracles." Froude indeed, says in so many words, "the special miraculous occurrences of Sacred History were not credible to him."

The first meeting of Carlyle and Tyndall appears to have taken place at the Royal Institution when Tyndall was experimenting on the subject of the origin of life. The result of his researches, the conclusion that there is no spontaneous generation (a conclusion, we must remark in passing, which is after all only an inference founded on human failure) fell in with Carlyle's own notions. They appear often to have discussed, and the Professor remarks that "in matters of science, I was always able, in the long run, to make prejudice yield to reason." Carlyle's love of truth amounted to a passion, but although he had long made the "exodus from Houdsditch," "the peeling off of fetid Jewhood, "as he called his revolt from orthodox Bibliolatry†" and though he was well away from all metaphysics," the grim Calvinism of his youth, and the transcendentalism of his early manhood left their traces to the last. The doctrine of evolution came too late to find acceptance.

Professor Tyndall often expressed the wish that Carlyle and Darwin might meet—The wish was fulfilled—and he afterwards said to Tyndall: "Yes, I have been to see him, and a more charming man I have never met in my life." Could they both have known each other more intimately, Carlyle would scarcely have given utterance to some savage gibes which are apt to rankle in the minds of Evolutionists.

Carlyle, on one occasion, deplored the collapse of religious feeling in England, upon which Professor Tyndall remarked "As regards the most earnest and the most capable of the men of a generation younger than your own; if one writer more than another, has been influenced in loosing them from their theological moorings, thou art the man." And the observation was just. The writings of Carlyle, no less than those of Mill, were a powerful solvent of orthodoxy, not by direct attack, but by showing how wide a world existed outside. On the occasion we have mentioned—Tyndall said:—

"Despite all the losses you deplore, there is one great gain. We have extinguished that horrible spectre which darkened with its death-wings so many brave and pious lives. It is something to have abolished Hell-fire!" "Yes," he replied, "that is a distinct and an enormous gain. My own father was a brave man, and, though poor, unaccustomed to cower before the face of man; but the Almighty God was a different matter. You and I do not believe that Melchet Court exists, and that we shall return thither. more firmly than he believed that, after his death, he would have to face a judge who would lift him into everlasting bliss or doom him to eternal woe. I could notice that for three years before he died, this rugged, honest soul trembled to its depths at even the possible prospect of hell-fire. It surely is a great gain to have abolished this Terror."

The power of Carlyle, however, did not depend upon his opinions so much as upon his personality, the intense vigor and earnestness which he threw into an unwearying battle against cant and quackery of all kinds, and which he imparts to his readers. His power of enlarging the imagination and stimulating the emotions places him beside the highest poets, and for this reason those who sometimes fancy they have got beyond Carlyle may do well to turn again and yet again to one who always makes his readers feel the weight and importance of life and the vanity of systems of philosophy or religious institutions not in harmony with the fact of things.

J. M. WHEELER.

† Carlyle, in a letter to Emerson states that he once thought of writing this, "Exodus from Houndsditch." The following passage from *Latter Day Pamphlets* may give some hint as to what the work would have been like. "The Jews' old clothes, having now grown fairly pestilential, a poisonous encumbrance in the path of man! burn them up with revolutionary fire as you like and can."

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
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GOD AS A STONE.

IN an interesting and important article on "Sacred Stones," in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. Grant Allen notices the wide-spread practice of stone-worship, and does not scruple to apply the argument to the religion of the Jews, since the early Semites were notoriously stone-worshippers. He notices how the Jewish God was carried in the ark, and how David "danced before Jahweh," and compares his place in the temple with the fetish stones in the holy of holies of the temples of Greece. Mr. Allen says, "That Jahweh himself in the most ancient traditions of the race, was similarly concealed within his chest or ark, in the holy of holies, is evident I think to any attentive reader." He points out that the later Jehovistic glosses of Exodus and Deuteronomy, do their best to darken the comprehension of the matter. Mr. Allen thus concludes:—

Not to push the argument too far, then, we may say this much is fairly certain. The children of Israel in early times carried about with them a tribal god, Jahweh, whose presence in their midst was intimately connected with a certain ark or chest, containing a stone object or objects. This chest was readibly portable, and could be carried to the front in case of warfare. They did not know the origin of the object in the ark with certainty, but they regarded it emphatically as "Jahweh their god, which led them out of the land of Egypt." Even after its true nature had been spiritualised away into a great national deity, the most unlimited and incorporeal the world has ever known (as we get him in the best and purest work of the prophets), the imageary of later times constantly returns to the old idea of stone and menhir. In the embellished account of the exodus from Egypt, Jahweh

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goes before the Israelites as a pillar or monolith of cloud by day, and fire by night. According to Levitical law his altar must be built of unhewn stone, "for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou has polluted it." It is as a Rock that the prophets often figuratively describe Jahweh, using the half-forgotten language of an earlier day to clothe their own sublimer and more purified conception. It is to the Rock of Israel—the sacred stone of the tribe—that they look for succour. Nay, even when Josiah accepted the forged roll of the law, and promised to abide by it, "the king stood by a pillar (a menhir) and made a covenant before Jahweh." Even to the last we see in vague glimpses the real original nature of the worship of that jealous god, who caused Dagon to break in pieces before him, and would allow no other sacred stones to remain undemolished within his tribal boundaries.

I don't see, therefore, how we can easily avoid the obvious inference that Jahweh, the god of the Hebrews, the god of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob, the god who later became sublimated and etherialised into the God of Christianity, was in his origin nothing more nor less than the ancestral fetish-stone of the people of Israel, however sculptured, and perhaps in the very last resort of all, the monumental pillar of some early Semitic sheikh or chieftain.

IT WASN'T ANGELS.

(*The main incident of the verse is a fact*).

'Twas midnight, and within the stately church
The congregation prayed; a solemn hush
Fell like an angel's pinions, who, in search
Of Truth, did pause and blush

With pleasure there to find his heart's desire.
Without the sleeping earth was wrapt in night,
And bells in turrets grey and lofty spire
Hung silent in the night.

The great church clock was pointing to the hour;
The roseate lamps a glimmering radiance shed,
As though an unseen hand did blessings shower
On each bowed quiet head.

The worshippers were still: each bosom felt
The awe-inspiring death-throes of the year,
When on the night-wind rose, as low they knelt,
A murmur faint but clear.

Was it an angel choir with joy aglow,
Returned unto this world of pain and sin
To tell to man their song of long ago
And sing it o'er again?

The hush grew deeper, and that sound afar
Drew near and nearer as the seconds sped;
Expectant hearts beat 'gainst their prison bar
To hear the seraphs' tread.

Then suddenly from every belfry-tower,
With one glad burst, the midnight chimes rang out,
As though to greet the New Year's dawning hour—
The very stars did shout.

And as the night wind lulled, with wond'rous glee,
Now near and loud, once more that sound awoke:
"We're all gone drunk; oh, wot a jolly spree"—
The mystic spell was broke.

Alfred Lovett.

OBITUARY.

Percy Greg, who has recently died, never achieved the eminence of his father, Mr. William Rathbone Greg. It is not generally known that he was for several years a contributor to the *Reasoner*. Under the name of Lionel Holdreth he wrote "Why should an Atheist fear to die?" and many other verses of promise. He was, however, somewhat erratic, and after the Civil War in America became politically a Conservative. His *Devil's Advocate* and other works contain food for thought rather than well reasoned conclusions.

Miss Constance Naden, the author of two volumes of verse, and we believe also of the Agnostic pamphlet *What is Religion?* to which Dr. Lewins contributed a preface, died also last week at the age of thirty-one.

Died at Glasgow, on 3rd of January, Mr. John Fisher, aged 73. Mr. Fisher was a sturdy Freethinker, whose advanced views dated from the days of Robert Owen. He was one of the leading supporters of the old Glasgow Eclectic Institute, and was respected for his earnestness and thoroughness by all who knew him.

SHOCKING BLASPHEMY.

A New Year's Story.

At the beginning of the present year a long hatchet-faced sky-pilot, whom we will call the Rev. Zephaniah I. Ena, felt it his duty to pay a ministerial visit to the house of a Freethinker, whom we will call Mr. Sturdy. Of course the dispenser of the gospel of brimstone and treacle came when Mrs. Sturdy's husband was out. Rapping briskly at the door, he stepped boldly in as soon as it was opened, saying, with his smirkiest of smiles, "A happy new year to you." "The same to you, and many of them, sir," said Mrs. Sturdy. Now Mrs. Sturdy, it must be premised, was the daughter of a Freethinker, who had felt it his duty to to bring up his family in absolute ignorance of religion, and as while still young she married a Freethinking husband, her spiritual condition, at any rate as far as an intimate acquaintance with the dogmas of theology was concerned, was one of almost utter destitution. It was probably hearing something of this that induced the Rev. Mr. I. Ena to make his call.

"This is a happy season for those who love the Lord."

Mrs. Sturdy thought of the landlord, but said nothing.

"I fear you have never felt the sweet, comforting influence of the Holy Ghost."

"Oh yes I have, sir," said Mrs. Sturdy, blushing. "At least, sir, that's what my husband calls it."

The Rev. Mr. I. Ena looked shocked, and his ashy face turned purple when Mrs. Sturdy added: "Mr. Sturdy is very fond of the Holy Ghost, and I have to keep him in hot water."

Suddenly it flashed upon the mind of the reverend gentleman that Mrs. Sturdy must mean spirits; unholy spirits—gin, rum, or whisky.

"You mean he is addicted to the bottle."

"Well, sir, he is fond of it these cold nights. He always calls it the Holy Ghost."

"He ought to be ashamed of himself."

Mrs. Sturdy pulled herself up sudden.

"If you've got anything to say against my husband you'd better come when he is at home. And I know he doesn't care for gentlemen of your cloth coming when he is out; so as I am busy ——," and here she looked significantly towards the door, to which Mr. Ena felt constrained to move.

"Well," said he, "I'll call and see him in a day or two, for your sake."

"Oh, you needn't come on my account," said she, "I am as fond of the Holy Ghost as he is," and she banged the door almost in the face of the man of God.

It soon was circulated throughout the neighborhood that Mr. Sturdy and his wife were given to drink, and although no one ever saw them intoxicated and their intimate friends declared they were strictly temperate, the story was credited because it was known they never attended church or chapel, and the tale came on the unimpeachable authority of the Rev. Z. I. Ena.

The matter remained on the mind of the minister. With the woman, poor ignorant creature, it might be as with the disciples of St. John mentioned in Acts xix., 2, who had "not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," but with the man it was a clear case of deliberate blasphemy. Blasphemy, too, of a kind for which there was never forgiveness, neither in this world nor the world to come. He felt he must call and warn, or, since warning was too late, at any rate, denounce the sinner.

"I feel it my duty to warn you of the wrath to come," said he as he entered the house one evening in response to Mr. Sturdy's invitation.

"Why, sir, do you think I have come to my time of life without thinking of religious matters for myself?"

"But you are a drunkard and a blasphemer."

"You may call me a blasphemer if you like, though I do not see how I can blaspheme a God I don't believe in. The title seems more appropriate to you who believe in the God of the Westminster Faith, who elects some to heaven and some to hell, all for his glory. But assuredly I am no drunkard, and have never been intoxicated since I was married."

"But your wife declared you are addicted to the bottle, and blasphemously call it the Holy Ghost."

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said Mr. Sturdy smiling. "Well, I confess I do like to take the article to bed with me these cold winter nights."

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"Whatever do you mean?"

"Here, wifie, show the gentleman our Holy Ghost. You see, sir," continued he, as his wife held up an earthenware foot-warmer, "that is what we call it, because it is the Comforter." LUCIANUS.

"GENTLE JESUS, MEEK AND MILD."

AT this season of the year, when the celebration of the birthday of the above-named individual is made the excuse for so much drunkenness, waste, and excess, is it too much for one to ask—Who was this Jesus, whom, in order to be orthodox and accounted "respectable," he must profess to believe in and worship? All history, even modern, is to a certain extent unreliable; but the Bible, the Christians tell us, is "inspired," and of course must be truthful and infallible. Let us, therefore, go to the Bible for the information we require.

Jesus was, we find, the illegitimate son of Mary, the affianced wife of one Joseph, a carpenter by trade. From his birth and circumcision to his thirtieth year, one, and only one, incident in his life is recorded (Luke ii., 41-51). And what was this solitary, wonderful episode that his friend Luke thought worth preserving? A very homely tale. It is the custom of Jesus and Mary to go to Jerusalem every year, there to attend the Jewish feast of Passover; and when Jesus comes to be twelve years old they give him a treat and take him with them. The ceremonies over, they return home with their friends and neighbors, but Jesus gives them the slip and "tarries behind." When they have gone a day's journey they, to use a Hibernianism, find the boy missing, and anxiously retrace their steps. Right back to Jerusalem they go, and at last find this precocious youth in the Temple, slily chaffing the senile wiseacres there assembled. Considering the trouble and anxiety he has caused, his mother decidedly errs on the side of leniency in the matter of admonishing him; but what is his reply? Does he say, "I am very sorry, mother, I have given you so much trouble, but will come home now and try to make amends"? Nothing of the sort. "Why have ye sought me?" he cries. "Don't you know I have other things to see after than dance attendance on you?" A bright pattern for our sons of twelve to follow. It was enough to make Mary regret she had not exercised a little more of old Solomon's philosophy in regard to the rearing of children. However, it is natural to suppose that his stepfather had something to say in the matter, for we are told in the same chapter that he "went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was there subject to them," which was all very satisfactory.

For the eighteen years subsequent to the above exhibition of filial tenderness, we know literally nothing of Jesus' life and adventures, but at the age of thirty, finding perhaps his father's honest calling irksome or distasteful, the idea evidently struck him to take upon himself the character of the "Messiah" long before prophesied. With this end in view he engages the services of an eccentric hermit-like individual named John (who "was clothed in camel's hair, with a girdle of skin about his loins, and who did eat locusts and wild honey," Mark i., 6) to perform the rite of Baptism. On the various supernatural phenomena and atmospheric disturbances said to have taken place at this ceremony it is useless to comment further than mentioning the fact that the said Jesus and John were the sole witnesses thereof, between whom there was evidently a friendly understanding, both before and after this event. (Luke iii., 16.; Matt. iii., 11 12; xi., 11.; Mark i., 7). And here, by way of parenthesis, and let us pause to inquire why these strange things are said to have taken place at all? "Truth is great and will prevail" without any supernatural corroboration. But mystery is the sheet anchor of the charlatan. When we find a man habitually trying to mystify us, we should beware of him, and mystery was throughout the prevailing characteristic of Jesus' utterances, *e.g.*, "In my father's house are many mansions," "I will destroy this temple, and in three days raise it up again," and other innumerable instances.

Well, after having been baptised to the aforesaid phenomenal accompaniments, Jesus retires into seclusion for about six weeks, during which period the story of the wonderful baptism becomes public property, in a manner which would no doubt puzzle Mr. Vincent Crummles, and lo! at the end of six weeks Jesus emerges from his retirement to find himself famous (Luke iv, 14), and forthwith proceeds to collect a dozen lieutenants to enable him to carry on the war, as General Booth would express it.

With such a send off as this, one would think any man of even ordinary intelligence and capacity, would at least earn a reputation for gentle, saintly and upright living, but was this the case with Jesus? The Christians with their usual absence of argument say "Yes;" but let us go to the Bible, and we will find him of the earth earthy.

Almost his first public appearance was at a fashionable wedding, at Cana, in Galilee. To this festive occasion was invited his mother and disciples (John ii. 1-4). During the banquet, his mother looking forward to her son performing a preconcerted piece of legerdemain, sought to hurry him up: but how she must have repented her impatience, when this Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild, retorted "Woman! what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." And this in no whisper, or how could it afterwards be related? We can picture to ourselves this little family jar; the old lady naturally impatient to see her favorite son distinguish himself, offering a gentle reminder, and for her pains getting a brutal snub in presence of all. This was not only a fracture of the fifth commandment, but a sad breach of manners into the bargain.

(To be concluded.)

CHRIST SAVE ME.

How sad and solemn to witness a funeral on a new-year's day, and the chief centre of sympathy, an old friend. As the mournful cortege passed by and the coffin shone through the glass panels of the hearse, I pictured my friend in all his health and strength on Saturday evening going to meet a most horrible death at his work. I also wondered as I looked at the many faces around, if there was one in that crowd who gave a thought to the hollowness of the talk about the Christian God. Poor John Moorhead of Flint, was a man in his prime. Full of health and vigor, he posted a letter to his wife and family on Saturday evening to tell them he would be with them on New Year's day. He went to his work and at five o'clock on Sunday morning—one hour before he would finish work—he fell into a large pot of boiling caustic up to his neck. He got out, and in stripping off his clothes, his flesh came off also, while buckets of water were thrown on his raw and bleeding body. But to no purpose; his flesh kept dropping off, and in four hours he was dead. John Moorhead was a total abstainer, never cursed or swore, and attended his chapel regularly; loved his wife and children, with whom he promised to spend a few days, two hundred miles away from the scene of his death. What had poor John done to bring the thunders of the Christian God down on him? Was it because he was so anxious to go home, or was it ill will to his poor wife, who was making preparations for the return of the absent one? or was it towards the children, who were looking for a sight of their father coming along the road, that they might run in and say, "Mother, he's coming"? Truly, the ways of J—— C—— are wonderful.

Flint. W. GIBSON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BLOOD, THE LIFE AND THE SOUL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

MR. WHEELER in his notice of Professor Robertson Smith's new book, points out that the blood was considered by the ancient Jews as being identical with the life itself. He might have gone further and have said that it was identified with the soul, for it is the very same word, *nephesh*, which is usually translated soul, is rendered as life in Gen. ix., 4, Lev. xvii., 14, Deut xii., 23, and other passages which speak of the blood as being the life. I think it is clear that the blood was considered of the very essence of life, and no doubt this view throws light upon the nature of bloody sacrifices. DETHABAR.

Twentieth Century, of New York, is evidently succeeding under the editorship of ex-Rev. Hugh. O. Pentecost. It begins the new year by enlarging its pages, in which is given a story by Miss Helen H. Gardener, the talented young American Freethought lecturess. *Twentieth Century* is a capital paper and well deserves its success.

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ACID DROPS.

Archdeacon Farrar is preaching at Westminster Abbey on "Missions." He admits that we have decimated, degraded, and exterminated, by the vices of our character and the diseases of our civilisation, whole races of the heathen. Well then, why not leave the poor devils alone? Oh, says the Archdeacon, we owe them an act of reparation, and having sent them the curses of our scepticism, we must now send them the blessings of our Christianity. Indeed! Are rum, rifles and gunpowder the "curses of *scepticism*"? Are they not manufactured and supplied by Christians? It is a cunning stroke to make "scepticism" a present of all your own rottenness, but the gift is declined without thanks. Shoot the rubbish in your own dustbin.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach says it is "the duty of Conservative clubs" to show "the Socialists and Secularists" that "in hereditary rank or hereditary legislation there is a kind of necessity for noble thoughts and noble deeds." The Conservative clubs have a tough job before them, and a long one too. Few Secularists are likely to believe in hereditary legislation before the day of judgment. What a pity it is that Sir Michael did not get off his little joke near Cleveland Street instead of at Leamington.

The "week of prayer" has been in full blast, yet the epidemic of influenza is more widely spread and malignant than ever. For the first time since its foundation the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Paris, has been broken up, its infirmary being overcrowded and the healthy students being in danger of falling victims to the plague. This is the greatest school of Catholic Theology in France, or perhaps in the world, and Father Hyacinthe and M. Renan were educated there.

Negrophobia in the United States is getting serious. Collisions between the whites and blacks are becoming frequent, and a recent telegram announcing that the Rev. T. M. Joiner, an English clergyman of North Carolina, who had been mobbed and badly beaten for preaching to the negroes unable to obtain redress from the State, has appealed to the British Government.

The London cat's-meat men are going in for Sunday rest. We are glad to hear it. Perhaps a few of them will go to church in the morning and cry "Meat." If well executed it would excite a sleepy congregation. But how about poor pussie? Will she get her double supply unfailingly on Saturday, or will her miouwing render the Sabbath calm more hideous than a whole chorus of cat's-meat men?

The Rev. John McNeill has been preaching a special sermon to his brither Scots in London. Dealing with the temptations that beset them, he spoke especially on the decline in church-going. The church-going belle keeps at it, but the sterner metal stays at home. N.B.—This is *our* little joke, not the Scotch Spurgeon's.

"Preachers," said Mr. McNeill, "deserve all that has been said about them, but, nevertheless, to refuse to hear the gospel is a dangerous game." Bravo! You must patronise the gospel-shop whether the pious doctor is skilful or stupid, or whether his medicine gives you relief or the stomach-ache. An excellent doctrine for quacks!

The following item is from an American paper. The comment is our own:—"Living a short distance from Perkinsville is a lady almost forty years of age, who has been a widow for some ten or fifteen years. A few days ago she was placed in a somewhat embarrassing position by giving birth to a boy baby. Since her husband's death she has become a great believer in spiritualism, and she now stoutly maintains that the father of her child is her spirit husband, who returned one night to her something less than a year ago. She refuses to give any information other than that given above, and there are some people who believe it." A somewhat similar story is said to have happened in Palestine almost nineteen hundred years ago, and is credited by millions who would scout the story of the widow lady near Perkinsville.

Captain Dawson wants to save the souls of the Bournemouth cabbies. He tempts them to sing hymns and listen to amateur sermons with a supper and a pair of socks. He appeals to their stomach and feet instead of their heads. It is the best move for his creed.

A Catholic Priest supplies the *Colne and Nelson Times* with tables to prove that the percentage of illegitimate births is greatest in countries without priestly confession. His tables, however, only show that this is, so taking the countries he enumerates on the whole, for confession prevails both in the country which stands highest on the list, Austria, as well as in that which stands lowest, Ireland. This fact must induce the suspicion that it is something else than religion which influences the number of illegitimate births. Besides, we must dissent from measuring the total morality of a country or a district by this one item.

The Catholic Priest says, for instance, "Banffshire, where they have no confession, is sixteen times more immoral than Mayo, where everyone goes to confession." The statement is itself sufficient to show the misuse of the term immoral. Banffshire is one of the counties of Scotland where the fashion of courting by night still prevails, and this has far more to do with the returns of illegitimacy than any item in the religious creed or practice of the inhabitants.

We do not deny that the influence of the priest may count to some extent in Ireland and other places in getting unchaste girls married. But whether that result is well purchased by their spiritual debauchery, and whether the moral status of a nation is to be judged by this one particular, are quite different questions.

The Rev. H. B. Chapman, of St. Luke's, Camberwell, has given his clerical blessing to the new Theatre of Varieties at Leicester. Mr. Lovejoy, the proprietor, sent the reverend gentleman a box of cigars at Christmas. Mr. Chapman had the best of the bargain.

Two Theosophists write to the Portsmouth *Evening News* on the subject of Mr. Foote's recent lecture on "The Follies of Theosophy." But as one hails from London and the other from Great Malvern, we venture to think they never heard the lecture they criticise. The Great Malvern gentleman thinks that it is impossible for a gross Materialist like Mr. Foote to appreciate the great truths of Theosophy. We quite agree with him. Blavatsky, Sinnett and Olcott are too lofty for Mr. Foote. He prefers such poor creatures as Descartes, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Bain, Spencer and Darwin.

The Rev. C. A. Davis, of Reading, has just made the discovery that the military system of Christendom is a scandal and a crime. Freethinkers have been saying this for a long time. Mr. Davis has just found it out. However, better late than never.

Judging from Mr. Davis's figures and quotations, he might have based his sermon on Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*. There is enough in that pamphlet to keep the clergy going for fifty years.

The movement for marrying gratis, begun at Derby, is advocated in some of the Church journals, and is likely to spread. This is a device to give apparent strength to the Church of England by citing how large a proportion of the population resort to it for consecration of unions. Of course such returns have little value, and will have less if the parsons agree to the proposal.

The Rev. Mr. Gunter, of Abberton, Essex, is bankrupt. Although his stipend is only £250, he incurred debts last year to the tune of over £700, and his only assets are £180 worth of furniture unpaid for. The man of God should ponder the text which enjoins, owe no man anything.

The *Record* makes much of the reported discovery of a MS. of the New Testament, said to have been made in some Turkish library at Damascus by Bishop Byrennius, the discoverer of the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. The *Record* surmises that the event will prove as important as the unearthing of the Sinaitic MS., which it is said to resemble, at any rate in including the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas, which is a pretty sure sign those documents were also considered "Scripture" at the

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time when the manuscript was written. Of course, we must wait and see what light the alleged discovery throws on Christian evidences.

As the Shepherd of Hermas after the fourth century fell from the high repute in which it was doubtless held in the previous century, there is no doubt its inclusion would indicate that the MS. is an early one. On the other hand, a forger who wished to give his manuscript an appearance of antiquity would be likely to adopt some such device as this. It is little likely that any new MS. will throw very much light on the process by which the Christian books got compiled. Tischendorf himself made the noteworthy statement in his Introduction to the Tauchnitz New Testament, "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them."

God doesn't seem to have been very careful of the manuscripts of his divine revelation. If he really wanted to do a turn for the Christian Evidence people, he ought to unearth the originals of the Gospels, with the autographs of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the sworn attestations of unimpeachable witnesses.

The Rev. J. T. Owens, of Grimsby, objects to any rival entertainment to his own. He stigmatised the "waits" as "cadgers," "midnight brawlers," and declared their carols were little short of profanity. As it happens that some of the "waits" at Grimsby devote the proceeds of the "cadging" to the hospital, Mr. Owen's utterance has met some strong criticism. If ministers were not sheltered behind their coward's castle, how meek and mild they would become; but whenever the fear of the daily press is not before their eyes, the old Adam, the sense of being God's elect, is apt to break out.

Yet another murderer gone to join St. David and all the rest of Jehovah's favorites in Heaven. Close on the heels of Will Dukes, Thomas Hood was jerked to Jesus at Maidstone for murdering his wife at Gravesend. Shortly before his pious exit he expressed a hope that the Lord had forgiven her and himself also. His two little boys visited him in prison and repeated the Lord's Prayer. The last letter of this saved sinner expressed a hope that "We shall all meet again in heaven." Oh what must it be to be there!

Dukes and Hood have been joined in glory by Charles Higginbottom, the Birmingham murderer of his paramour, who was swung from Warwick gaol straight into Abraham's bosom on Tuesday morning. Since his committal Higginbottom had been most penitent, and paid great attention to the ministrations of the prison chaplain.

Another sudden death in church. Mr. John Harris, a well-known citizen of Chester, falling down dead in Christ Church just after having, as sidesman, taken up a collection.

The Rev. Francis Holland Adams, a retired clergyman, formerly of Salisbury, committed suicide by blowing his brains out. He had of late shown signs of weakness of intellect, though there was nothing in his manner to suggest that he contemplated suicide. He was put in Digby's Asylum, Exeter, but was only there a week, the authorities certifying that there was nothing the matter with him. If Talmage would only collect the cases of clerical suicides it might modify his opinion of its being the result of scepticism.

The *New York Herald* gives an account of a new spiritist work which has just been issued, and which professes to have been written at the dictation of the Bible heroes and writers. All the old patriarchs, from Adam onwards, give their views on affairs. Noah tells how he was thirty years building the ark, and there is a host of similar drivel.

Sir Edward Clarke has been telling his constituents at Plymouth that Church and State must stand up for each other; in other words, the parson and the squire must back each other up. Sir Edward is in some fear as to the result, however; for he prophesies evil days if the nobility go on prize-fighting and Cleveland-streeting, and the bishops cling with tremulous hands to their posts long after they are incapable. Altogether the prospect is mixed, and we fancy that men like Sir Edward Clarke are hoping against hope—and know it!

The Bishop of Ripon protests in the *Contemporary Review* against the projects of forming Brotherhoods in the Church. He apparently thinks that the Brothers would be dangerous rivals to the priests. But the bishop is fighting a shadow. The Occult Brothers of Thibet are about as forthcoming as those of the Church of England.

"A Lay Preacher" writes to the Portsmouth *Chat* declaring that "Dancing is the Devil's loadstone," and that "We shall soon have dancing on a Sunday like they indulge in at the Secular Hall in Wellington Place." "Next," says this libellous preacher, "We shall have this party's representative on the School Board [our good friend Mr. John Brumage] proposing that our schools be turned into Sunday dancing saloons." Now they do not have dancing on Sunday at the Secular Hall in Wellington Street, thinking, very properly, that the work of Freethought propaganda is more needed than amusement. A Lay Preacher is evidently full of the charity and loving-kindness of his tribe.

Five local preachers, over whom the Lord had momentarily forgotten to cast an eye, were pitched out of a waggonette on the journey from Dunstable to Luton, and one of them seriously injured.

The Dean of Manchester (Dr. Oakley) preached last Sunday evening in the cathedral on Positivism. He besought his hearers not to worship an ideal, posthumous humanity, but a present living humanity. If they believed in the future of the race, then let them have up in every room a picture of Mary and her child, and let there be the dear and blessed crucifix on every wall.

Very pretty, no doubt, in a church. But not so very pretty outside. The Virgin Mother and her holy child are a standing—or sitting—insult to mothers that are not virgins and children that have fathers. As for the crucifix, it is not an elegant object, especially with a naked man upon it, with blood running down his head and side. We prefer a portrait of Paine, Voltaire, or Ingersoll, or even the Grand Old Man.

The discovery of the earliest known will shows that in Egypt, 2550 B.C., women possessed the right of inheriting property—a right which there is no hint of her possessing according to the divine law of Jehovah.

POOR old Thomas Crofts, of Winsover Road, Spalding, got troubled about his soul, and the ministrations of his pious visitors only made him worse. He often remarked that he was bound to go to hell, but if "they" had left him alone on his "old cow pad" he might have been all right. Unable to stand it any longer, he tried to hang himself, but the rope broke, and poor old Thomas Crofts is now in the County Lunatic Asylum.

The clergy are falling more and more into contempt In a recent number of *The Hawk* we noticed the term. "sky-pilot." True, it was printed in inverted commas, but by and bye the quotation marks will be dropped.

The Hawk finds the following explanation of how Theosophy captures an Atheist and a clergyman in the same net:—"It contains some germs of every faith, and restless souls seize upon this portion or that as suitable to themselves, and the absence of dogma produces a comfortable state of things, under which each devotee gives his own definition of his belief."

"There is the money somewhere," says the Bishop of Rochester. So they are trying to get it, to the tune of £5,300, to repair Christ Church, Southwark. The population is stated on the begging circular to be "twelve thousand, chiefly of the poorest class." Very likely the "poorest class" would take it as a favor if the £5,300 were spent on their bodies instead of their souls.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 12, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 7, "Christ and Humanity: a Reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Monday, January 13, Assembly Rooms, Friar Street, Reading, at 8, "Christianity and Secularism: a False Creed and a True One."

Jan. 19, Liverpool; 23, West Ham; 26, Camberwell.

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

F. MORRIS.—The date is booked for you.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A Friend, £5; J. Crabtree, £1; Student, 2s.

F. PELHAM.—Thanks for your good wishes.

YOUNG N. S. S.—Glad to hear from you, as one of our converts and a recent recruit to the N. S. S. Your letter to the parson ought to receive an answer, but we doubt if you will get one.

W. H SPIVEY.—Mr. Foote's dates are all booked up to June. It is impossible to visit any place frequently. The Freethought party is in want of a dozen good lecturers.

J. G. B.—Your parody is good, but not good enough. There is said to have been an old canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, but how on earth could a whale go through such a channel? It is a deep sea traveller, and soon gets stranded in shallows.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

P. WRIGHT.—That the Bible wines were intoxicating is evident from the example of Noah and Lot. Paul also refers to the Corinthians as being drunken at the Lord's Supper, (1 Cor. xi. 21.) Though strong drink is called "raging" (Prov. xx, 1.)—Prov. xxxi., 6, says: "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Deut. xiv, 26, permits the purchase of wine, strong drink or "whatsoever thy soul desireth." See the *Freethinker* tract on The Bible and Teetotalism.

LEP (Dundee)—Part XI finishes the *Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

E. CLARKE.—We are preparing some such advertisements, but they take time.

STUDENT.—Thanks. The verse shall appear.

INQUIRER.—(1,) Mr. Foote spoke of "*advanced* Unitarians." There *is* only a sheet of tissue between some of these and more pronounced Freethinkers. You must remember that there are Unitarians *and* Unitarians. (2.) We did not know that Tylor's *Primitive Culture* was out of print. It is in the publisher's recent lists. Perhaps your bookseller is mistaken. Clodd's *Myths and Dreams* is a good book and much cheaper, but get Tylor if you can.

A. DUNKLEY.—Your letter interested us. We are always glad to hear from converts.

BONES.—Doctors *will* cant about religion while it pays.

E. GOTTHEIL, Thanks.

J. C.—All right. Our office boy adds "keep your hair on."

J. KING.—You continue in the fallacy, and you will not understand the argument until you get clear of it. Read the first volumn of Buckle's *Civilization*.

J. BRIMAGE.—Delighted to hear of the continued improvement in your health.

F. C., (Bournmouth), in sending Mr. Forder a subscription to the *Freethinker*, says:—"I have only recently commenced taking in this paper, and it has awakened a deep interest in me. I have been a sceptic since I was 17 or 18, but never felt so sure of my ground as I do now, after reading only a few weeks' numbers of the *Freethinker*, which ought to have a large circulation."

SALFORD.—We can't explain it. Ask the tradesman.

J. CRABTREE.—Your good wishes are reciprocated. You will see that we are reprinting the Articles on Hugh Price Hughes, with additions.

H. BARRATT reports that, after a long struggle, the friends of the *Freethinker* have succeeded in getting it placed in the reading room of the Kilburn Liberal Club. The chief obstructionist has since been seen devouring the Christmas Number.

MUSICIAN.—Thanks, but the subject will need to be dealt with more completely before very long.

JOSEPH BROWN, sec. N. E. Secular Federation, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—J. Brown, 2s.; Selkirk, 4s. 6d.; Tullin, 2s. 6d.; Bell, 8s.; W. Reed, 2s.; J. Bowend, 2s.; J. H. Creswell, 2s. 6d.; F. Cresswell, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; P. Weston, 7s.; Storer, 6s.; Merry, 1s.; Greenwell, 2s. 6d.; Oxhill Branch, 6s.; Saunderson, 2s. 6d.; Glennie 1s. 3d.

Correspondents are requested, begged, implored, etc., *not* to send orders for literature to Mr. Foote, but to Mr. Forder. Disregard of this rule always causes delay and sometimes loss.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Reading Observer—Menschenthum—Colne and Nelson Times—Echo—County of Middlesex Independent—Women's Suffrage Journal—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—Ironclad Age—Western Figaro—Open Court—Evening Standard—Star—Consett Guardian—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Church Reformer—Western American—Grimsby News—Chat—Freethought—Liberator—Ironclad Age—Blackburn Times—Boston Investigator.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

TO ALL WHOM IT CONCERNS.

A GENTLEMAN asked us at Nottingham if the invitation we printed early in the year was still open. We replied that it was. Our resources are not adequate to carry on our Freethought business properly, and they are diminished from time to time by investors requiring to withdraw their money. We have indeed to repay a good deal of money during the new year, and we shall be glad to hear from any friends who have spare cash to entrust us with. Every investment bears five per cent. interest, and the investor receives a legal document entitling him to recall his amount by six months' notice. We intend, if possible, to be very active in publishing during the next year or two. There is a certain market for all we produce, and a reasonable, if not handsome, profit on sales. It will be borne in mind that the *Freethinker* brings us no direct return for our labor, at least for the present, though the prospect is slowly improving. We have, therefore, to rely upon what is yielded by the publishing business, which, besides lecturing work, is our only source of income. Our stock of publications is a large one, and some idea of the resources needed may be gathered from the fact that the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* alone has cost £150 to produce, exclusive of the binding, the expense of which is incurred gradually as the work sells. Those who cannot afford to invest are not desired to inconvenience themselves; we only appeal to those who can; and they who respond quickly will be doing us the greatest service.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Five friends have now responded to this appeal. We shall be glad to hear from others forthwith. Any sums from £5 upwards will be acceptable on the foregoing conditions.

SPECIAL.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has reprinted his lying story of the Converted Atheist from the *Methodist Times*, and is selling it at the modest price of eighteen-pence. We feel it necessary, therefore, to reprint our exposure of this infamous concoction, with some additions, and a postscript dealing with the reverend gentleman's absolute silence on being challenged to produce a single scrap of proof. It will make a sixteen-paged pamphlet, and will be issued at the lowest possible price of one penny, and this without using inferior paper. Our object is to get the exposure widely circulated. Every Freethinker who despises pious liars should aid us in the task by purchasing and circulating copies. Mr. Forder will supply parcels of two dozen and upwards at trade price—that is, ninepence per dozen of thirteen copies. The pamphlet will be ready next Tuesday.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

The Impossible Creed is the title of Mr. Foote's open letter to the Bishop of Peterborough on his remarkable article in the *Fortnightly Review*. The pamphlet is now on sale. Of course a copy has been forwarded (under cover) to the Bishop.

Christ and His Times is the title of a new volume of addresses by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Mr. Foote will lecture upon it this evening (Jan. 12) at the London Hall of Science. The volume has caused a good deal of pleasant excitement in religious circles.

ON Monday evening Mr. Foote lectures at Reading, and the chair will be taken by Mr. R. Forder. After the lecture a Branch of the N. S. S. will be started. Reading has been stirred up of late by Christian lecturers under the auspices of a local clergyman.

ON Thursday, Jan. 23, Mr. Foote lectures in aid of the funds of the West Ham Branch. The subject is "How to Get Saved." The tickets are sixpence each, and the Branch hopes to crowd the hall.

THE quarterly meeting of the Camberwell Branch was held last Sunday. About one hundred sat down to tea and a most pleasant evening was spent by the company. The chief feature was the farewell to the energetic secretary, Mr. R. S. Seago, who was presented with a handsomely framed testimonial and bound copy of the *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. The few words spoken on the occasion were applauded to the echo, all present wishing Mr. Seago prosperity.

THE Poet Laureate (of the Branch!) wrote as follows:—

SUCCESS TO SEAGO.

"The best of friends must part" we're told,
Though tried and trusted, true as gold,
But since our friend will o'er the *Sea-go*,
We wish he'd leave with us his Ego;
We also wish, with much sincerity,
Success to him and all prosperity.

Mr. Seago promised to advance the cause of Freethought as far as possible in his new home. His place as secretary will be undertaken by Mr. Leppage, who will we trust prove the *alter ego* of his predecessor.

THE North Eastern Secular Federation held its first annual social party at Newcastle on Monday evening. The attendance exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Members came as far as from Middlesborough. The tea was sumptuous, dancing was kept up till a late hour, and several friends contributed to the amusement of the party. Everybody pronounced the evening to have been a most delightful one.

THE South Shields Branch held its third annual tea and concert on New Year's Day. The tea was admirably served by ladies—Mrs. Moir, Mrs. Chapman, Miss Foley, and Miss Moir. Mr. S. M. Peacock, the president, was obliged to be absent, but his place was filled by Mr. Thompson, of North Shields. The event of the evening was the presentation of a silver teapot, cruet, and jelly-dish to the secretary (R. Chapman) and his newly wedded wife. Mrs. S. Black supervised a Dramatic Sketch, which was followed by dancing. In point of numbers, and otherwise, the gathering was most successful.

Freethought, of San Francisco, inserts an interesting letter from Captain Otto Thomson, describing the position of affairs in Sweden. There are a large number of Swedes in the United States, and as many as possible should be induced to subscribe to *Fritankaren*.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—J. Brumage, 2s. 6d.; G. W. Foote, 10s. There should be a large list next week. Every N. S. S. Branch ought to make a collection immediately.

THE annual dinner of the Oxhill Branch of the N. S. S. is reported in the *Consett Guardian*. Mr. J. White, the president, occupied the chair, and the gathering seems to have afforded satisfaction to all present.

The *Jewish Times*, commenting on Bishop Magee's article in the *Fortnightly*, says, "It shows that an appreciation of the radical weakness of Christianity, which Jews have indicated for centuries, is beginning to dawn on the thinking Christian World."

Secular Thought is going to begin the new year and its seventh volume by reprinting the discussion on "Christianity and Secularism, Which is True?" between Mr. Foote and Dr. Mc Cann. This debate is still in print, and is useful to put before those who like to see both sides of a question.

MR. SYMES gives long extracts in the *Liberator* from *The New Cagliostro*, Mr. Foote's open letter to Madame Blavatsky. We expect there will be a good demand for the pamphlet among the Australian Freethinkers.

THE Society of Freethinkers of Liége, Belgium, send us their Almanac for 1890. The publication is in its ninth year. The price is only 15 centimes or three half-pence, and among the contents are choice extracts from numerous foreign Freethought writers.

We notice that the Rationalist Federation of Charleroi has issued a new edition of the complete works of Jean Meslier, the priest who died a Freethinker and left a will declaring his disbelief in all supernaturalism.

THE *Bulletin des Sommaires* notices *Le Calendrier Républican et de la Libre Pensée*, compiled by M. C. Cilwa, which, we are glad to see, has reached a second edition.

THE LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION DINNER.

THE second annual dinner of this Federation, held on Tuesday at the Bridge House Hotel under the presidency of Mr. G. W. Foote, was an even greater success than the first. The diners exceeded two hundred, and, thanks to the straightforward appeal for the sinews of war from the president in his address, about twenty-five pounds were donated to the funds of the Federation. The toast of "Success to the London Secular Federation" was proposed by Mr. J. Clarke, M.A., who dwelt on the service of the Federation in upholding the lecturers, and was responded to by Mr. Standring, the secretary, who looked with pride on what the infant of two years old had already done, mentioning the withdrawal of the Christian Evidence lecturers at the Hall of Science as one result of their organised opposition. The toast of "The National Secular Society," proposed by Mr. Moss, was fittingly responded to by Mr. Forder. Our "Speakers and Writers," gracefully proposed by Mr. J. H. Ellis, who congratulated the Freethought party upon having speakers and writers of whom any cause might be proud, was responded to by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who expressed his sense of the goodwill invariably shown by the party for its workers. The retirement of Mr. Bradlaugh should only cement the bonds of union, and induce those, without his strength, to each do their best for the cause he would still have at heart. The toast of "Our Comrades in Other Lands," was proposed by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who rapidly ran over the position of Freethought in other countries, ending with asking sympathy for the Swedish hero who was suffering in Stockholm for propagating our opinions. The toast, which like the rest, was drunk with enthusiasm, was responded to by the chairman, Mr. Foote, who, having in his opening address, alluded to the loss of the Camberwell Branch by the departure of Mr. Seago for South Africa, now referred to the fact that Mr. Bradlaugh might be classed among our comrades in other lands. His name must always be held in honor in the Freethought ranks. No doubt his large experience, sound judgment, and wise counsel, would long be at the service of those who led the Freethought party on his official retirement. Mr. Foote finished by a glowing tribute to the sturdy character of Mr. Victor Lennstrand, now in prison perhaps for two years, and to Captain Otto Thompson, who had taken his place on the Freethought paper. English Freethinkers should see to it that the prisoner should not have his constitution wrecked by coarse prison fare, and that the paper should be sustained.

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The speeches were interspersed by songs and recitals ably rendered Madame Burgwitz, Miss Williams, Mr. Moss and Mr. Barnes. Mrs. Wheeler presided at the piano, and the gathering broke up after singing "Auld Lang Syne," all expressing satisfaction that the dinner has now become an institution. Great credit is due to the sub-committee, especially Mr. Angus Thomas and Miss Vance, for the arrangement of the programme.

THE CORROBORATION OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

BY JOHN BURROUGHS.

From the "North American Review."

[CONCLUDED.]

DR. ABBOTT says he feels but a languid interest in the critical discussion as to the authorship of the four Gospels. This may well be. It may be because Dr. Abbott is not primarily interested in questions of evidence,or in logical and reasoning processes. He is a moralist and preacher, and seeks the springs of conduct. not the sources of logical conviction. I believe he accepts the doctrine of demoniacal possession: it seems to suit his emotional and imaginative type of mind. But a man of science, as such could no more accept such an explanation of any form of insanity than he could attribute crystallization to the work of fairies, or the wind and the storm to furies. The authorship of the four Gospels may not be a vital question to the religious mind, but, as a question, it is a matter of evidence, and not at all of personal impression.

If Christianity really rested upon evidence, if its vitality was solely dependent upon verifiable facts and considerations, like a work of science, it would have perished from the earth long ago. But it does not live by its so-called evidences. Christianity is largely a matter of the heart, of the feelings and the emotions. It has not rested upon logical evidences; its main hold in the first instance has not been upon men's scientific faculties, but upon their hopes, fears, aspirations, and spiritual cravings. Paul says: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Neither can he. To talk about the reasonableness of Christianity is like talking about the reasonableness of magic or witchcraft. The human faculties are utterly powerless before its main tenets. Christianity has the vitality of literature, of poetry and art. The Gospel records have wonderful, even magical, power as literature. They are true, not as history, but as poetry.

The myth of the resurrection will be kept alive for ages to come notwithstanding all that has or can be urged against it, because mankind have such a profound interest in believing it.

Christianity does not offer a system of philosophy, but a religious incentive. When it attempts to play the rôle of interpreter of the visible order of the universe, or to satisfy our rational faculties, its failure is pathetic; its proofs are childish; its science is essentially pagan; its story of the fall as an explanation of the origin of evil, and its "plan of salvation" as a means of escape from that evil, as science, do not rise above any of the delusions of the pagan world. The story of the Chaldee god, Bel, who cut off his own head. moistened the clay with his blood, and then made man out of it, is just as rational an explanation of the origin of man as the one the Christian Church has always adhered to. In fact, the whole basis of our theology, the conception of Jesus, as a supernatural person who had no earthly father, and who rose from the dead and ascended bodily up into heaven, etc., is essentially pagan, and belongs to an order of things that has long since passed away. The power of Christianity is a spiritual power; it is in its appeals to the ideal of the gentle, the merciful, the meek, the forgiving, the pure in heart—an ideal which has such an attraction for the European nations; and also to the love of reward and fear of punishment which materialistic ages foster. In one is its charm for fine natures; in the other its power over the multitude.

Theological writers are in general prone to magnify subjective certitude at the expense of objective proof; to place faith above reason, in the domain of reason. They sneer at science and logic as if in their sphere they could be dispensed with and something else be substituted in their place. Thus Professor Blackie, in that vituperative book of his, "The Natural History of Atheism,"—a book the style of which is like a man going through a house and banging the doors behind him,—says, as a finishing stroke to the "drivel" of our "boastful science" that the "highest cognitions are never reached by the mere exercise of the knowing faculties, on whatever subject exercised." Not even, I suppose, when exercised upon the multiplication table! "Instinct and aspiration," he goes on to say, "are higher than knowledge; and the pretensions of the merely scientific man to assume the dictatorship of things that are not founded on nature. Many things can be known only by being felt; all vital forces are fundamentally unknowable; but they exist not the less because would-be philosopher B or would-be philosopher C has no machinery with which to measure or control them." Are instinct and aspiration "cognitions"? Do they belong to the sphere of knowledge? Do they even point to any certain and demonstrable conclusions? They may or they may not be higher than knowledge; it is certain that they cannot take the place of knowledge. Instinct and aspiration enlightened by knowledge is the desirable order, is it not? The only thing the scientific man assumes is that the scientific method is the only proper one with which to deal with the objective world of fact and experience. If the professor meant to say that some things are to be felt and not known, he is near the truth. The facts of science are to be known; we may know Kepler's laws; we can hardly feel them, since they are not personal. But truths of art, of poetry, of religion are to be felt whether we know them or not. They come to us by a synthetical, not by an analytical process.

I have no disposition to overrate our mere knowing faculties; I only want to say that what we *know* we know through them. What we feel, or fancy, or hope, forms no part of our true knowledge, and may come through other avenues. The perception of the beautiful is not a part of our knowledge; neither is the perception of the moral or the spiritual. These things are from within; they are subjective and not objective, and not within the range of the scientific faculties. They are real, just as pleasure and pain are real; they are experiences of the mind. The whole sphere of religion lies here; the kingdom of heaven is within you, not in some outward relation or condition.

Neither do I not wish to imply that there is any feud between science and true religion, between that part of man's nature which thirsts for exact knowledge—The red rays of the spectrum, so to speak—and that part of his nature which we call the spiritual, and which fades off in the vast unknown—the violet rays, at the other extreme; nor between either of these and his æsthetic nature, his love of beautiful forms, though in different individuals these different parts will not be equally developed, nor will they be equally active in different races and times. The feud is between true science and false science; between the conception of an order that is rational, and one that is irrational, between modern pathology and Indian "medicine."

Exact science deals with, and can only deal with the objective, the rigid. inexorable world of law. With the subjective, the world within us, the world of personality, whence comes all we call literature, art, religion, philosophy, etc., it cannot deal. Here exact demonstration is not possible; all is plastic, growing, conflicting, aspiring, intermediate. The personal element modifies everything. The laws by which insensate bodies act and re-act upon each other may be determined, but the laws by which persons act and re-act upon each other are quite another matter. In the subjective world truth is relative, but in the world of science truth is absolute. Chemical elements always combine in the same proportions; moisture is always precipitated from the air under the same conditions, and the same results always follow. Doubtless the same results always follow the same conditions in the world of mind and personality also, but here the conditions are more obscure and more fluctuating, and science cannot grasp them.

Every original mind may have, and usually does have, a philosophy of its own, a religion of its own, a political creed of its own, literary preferences of its own; but every mind cannot have a science of its own. The personal element is alien to science. How many systems of philosophies have there been from Aristotle down to Spencer? How many times have the old problems been explained? But one man's science must be another man's science; all science is a whole—a pushing farther and farther of the lines of knowledge into nature.

The hostility between the scientific and the spiritual, or the truly religious, may well cease, if, indeed, there ever has been, or ever can be, real hostility. We are bound to give the reason and the understanding full sway in their own proper fields. In subduing and in utilizing this world, or adjusting ourselves to it, we have no guide but science. Yet science is

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not the main part of life, notwithstanding all the noise it is making in the world. Science is making a great noise in the world because it is doing a great work. Literature, art, religion, speculation, have had their day; that is, the highest achievements of which they are capable are undoubtedly of the past. But science is young; it is now probably only in the heat of its forenoon work. It is a little curious that man's knowing faculties, the first to be appealed to, should be the latest in maturing; that he should worship so profoundly, admire so justly, act so wisely and heroically, while he yet knew so little of the world in which he was placed. Does not this fact point to the conclusion that science is the main part of life? It is probably the main part of our material civilization, of that by which we are clothed and fed and warmed and transported, defended in war and housed in peace; but of an intrinsic civilization it forms a less part. The old Greek had little or no material civilisation in the modern sense; his civilization was personal and mental. What distinguishes the modern man is not his personal superiority, but the enormous engines and deft appliances with which he is fended and armed, and the greatness of his material triumphs.

Yet knowledge is not discredited, reason is not supplanted. We can no more dispense with them than we can dispense with the bones in our bodies. They furnish the framework by which our lives are upheld, All the certainty we have of the order of the objective world comes through our rational faculties.

The Agnostic does not merely say that all knowledge is imperfect and fragmentary, nor that all certainty is based on the logical faculty; but simply that the understanding goes upon evidence; that in this world we have no guide to objective truth but our rational faculties. He finds no room for what our religious brethren call faith, because faith, as commonly understood, is a fatal undertow that swamps and drowns reason. He finds many things and enjoys many things which he cannot understand; he is not a stranger to the thrill of awe and reverence in the presence of the great mystery of the universe; but all propositions relative to the plans, ways, and nature of that mystery that are not verifiable, he fights shy of.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

A MIDNIGHT SCENE.

How proud was Philistia! How festive her day,
With clash of the cymbals and trumpets' loud bray,
And revelling wild and hilarious!
For Dagon's proud temple was Jove's resting-place,
And he with his rival now stood face to face;
But the two eyed each other with such a bad grace,
That 'tis certain no gods are gregarious.

Now the sexton has snuffed out the last altar light,
And the temple is wrapped in the darkness of night,
When there comes a loud roar from the basement,
And up springs the lid of the "Lord's" sacred box,
And in such vulgar language the fish-god he mocks
That his ichthyic optic on Jahveh he "cocks,"
Expressive of utter amazement.

While ever more insolent, stinging and strong,
The stream of invective comes rolling along,
Till Dagon his wrath cannot smother:
"His Joss-house invaded by that Jewish guy!
"Be flouted and 'cheeked,' and then given the lie!
"And stand it all meekly? He'd like to know why!—"
Here the deities went for each other.

Oh! would that poor I, with a Homeric pen,
This "Mill" of the gods could describe unto men
In the "Ring's" own sublime terminology!
But no human eye saw this beautiful sight;
So who "got well home" with his left or his right,
Or "tapped claret" first in this heavenly fight,
Is debateable ground for theology.

But 'tis said when the priests of the fish-god came round,
That Philistine's champion lay prone on the ground,
Defeated, yet covered with glory.
But I'd not like to swear that this version was true
Unless *both* the "sloggers" were open to view,
Or, at least, till I heard what the Philistines, too,
Had to say on this wonderful story.

And I think you may find, if his conduct you test,
That Jehovah, perhaps, had come off second best,
And took vengeance a deity befitting;
For the "sacred" account its inquirers will tell
How to Ashdod's brave habitants strangely it fell,
That, although for some days they by no means felt well,
They preferred any posture to sitting.

SPHINX.

REVIEWS.

"A Reply to Dr. Lightfoot's Essays." By the author of *Supernatural Religion*. London: Longmans and Co.—This is a volume for scholars, and will be *caviare* to the general. Dr. Lightfoot has made up a volume of his old attacks on *Supernatural Religion*, and the author of that work follows with a volume containing his replies. Dr. Lightfoot is learned but so is his adversary, and no whit inferior to him as a controversialist. The victory undoubtedly lies with the champion of rationalism. All the Bishop's criticisms merely affect the fringe of the subject. Here and there, among thousands of references, he finds an inaccuracy, but he never approaches the real point in dispute. As our author remarks, "The eagerness with which Dr. Lightfoot and others rush up all the side issues and turn their backs upon the more important central proposition is in the highest degree remarkable." The volume concludes with a powerful chapter, entitled "Conclusions," dealing with miracles and the supernatural, and level to the intelligence and information of the ordinary reader. Answering the absurd old question of "What will you give us in its place?" he writes: "To discover that a former belief is unfounded is to change nothing of the realities of existence. The sun will descend as it passes the meridian whether we believe it to be noon or not. It is idle and foolish, if human, to repine because the truth is not precisely what we thought it, and at least we shall not change reality by childishly clinging to a dream." Thus the author's tone is as manly as his arguments are powerful, and his learning solid and comprehensive. The volume should be procured by every reader who has *Supernatural Religion* on his library shelves.

"The Theology of the Bible." The Claims of Inspiration Examined by the Light of Reason. By Charles Theodore Perry. London: Printed for the author by William Reeves, 185 Fleet Street, E.C. Price 4d.—Mr. Perry is sceptical of orthodox theology, but says, "I believe in the religion of the Bible." As much of his pamphlet is devoted to showing that the Bible God is barbarous and that the Old Testament contains a good deal of bad morality, it is possible he draws some subtle distinction between the contents of the Bible and its religion, or it is possible his desire not to be irreverent has led him to use orthodox phrases with heterodox meanings.

"The Faith, Facts, and Frauds of Religious History." By Emma Hardinge Britten. John Heywood, London, 1889.—This work represents the views of a talented Spiritist lecturess on the religions of the past. And certainly heterodox they are. Mrs. Britten holds that the Christian story is mythical, and that in substance it was borrowed from India, where she finds the origin of all religions. The value of her production is greatly lessened by the weight she places on such works as Kersey Graves's *Sixteen Crucified Saviors*. There are, however, many good points in the volume, but they will probably be familiar to our readers. Certainly such Spiritists as Mrs. Britten are doing something to break down the exclusive claims of Christianity, though we question the worth of that which they would substitute in its place.

"Parsimony." Belfast, 1889.—This is not, as some rash speculator might hastily suppose, an exhortation against niggardliness at Christmas or any other time. It is a truly philosophic little brochure, and a very able one, on the law of parsimony in logic—the rule that neither more, nor more onerous causes are to be assumed than are necessary to account for phenomena. It is this simple rule which entirely puts out of court all supernaturalism, and which sets aside the idea of design as an anthropomorphism. The able author says, "to introduce any cause of the universe that is superior to Nature is to act contrary to the law of Parsimony by introducing a cause that is unknown, and disordering all accurate reasonings. Therefore the doctrine which teaches that all or any species of plants or animals existing on this earth were or was produced through an act of creation, performed by a supernatural Power of any kind, is a doctrine which must be relegated to the mythical limbo supposed to contain the paradise of fools, and all other miracles."

Science ascribes to natural causes, what theology ascribes to supernatural ones.—*Buckle's History of Civilization.*

Every religion has for its foundation a misconception of the cause of phenomena.—*Ingersoll.*

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Christ and Humanity: a Reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Can Man by Searching Find Out God?" Recitals.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mrs. Besant, "The Inspiration of the Bible: What Does it Mean?"

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 11.15, Debate; 7.15, Mr. S. Soldy, "The Testimony of the Rocks." Jan. 17, 7.30, Discussion.

Edmonton—7, S. Standring, "The Fight for Freethought, from Luther to Bradlaugh."

Old Southgate—3.30, Annual Conference (important); 5, Tea in Hall, 6d. each; 7, Public Meeting, Mr. J. M. Robertson and other speakers.

Wood Green—11, Mr. S. Standring, "Our Past Year's Work in North Middlesex."

East London—Swaby Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, E., 7.45, Mr. E. T Garner, "The Dying Creed." Free.

West Ham—131 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, Mr. Watts, a Lecture; 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Creation Stories."

COUNTRY.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, 11, Mr. J. W. Mahoney, "Are Preachers Failures?"; 3, "What is Man, and can he Survive Physical Death?"; 7, "Will Suicide become General?"

Cardiff—Small Hall, Queen Street Arcade, 6.30, Mr. Parr, "Land Nationalisation."

Huddersfield—Littlewood Bridges, Upperhead Row, 3 and 6.30, Dramatic Recitals.

Heckmondwike—Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a Reading.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 11, Mr. H. Bland, "The Philosophic Revolt against Individualism; 7 "Where the Old Radicalism Failed."

Glasgow—Ramsbottom Hall, 122 Ingram Street, 6.30, J. S. Maxwell, "Ethics of Co-operation."

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"John," said the minister to the sexton, "that pulpit cushion is worn out. I wish you would see that a new cover is put on it." "Yes, sir," said John, grimly; "I know it's worn out, an' its the third in six months. It ain't my place to make remarks, sir; but in my opinion there's such a thing as carrying religion a leetle too far."

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 3.] SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE is unable to write his *Freethinker* article this week. The influenza had been grappling with him for some days, and on Tuesday it overcame him. He hopes to be well enough to travel on Saturday, as it is very important that he should be in Liverpool on Sunday.

EPIDEMICS.

THEOLOGIANS have given many most excellent reasons for the existence of diseases, plagues, and epidemics of all kinds. I must confess there is, just now, one little circumstance which may hinder my appreciation of their arguments. I am suffering from the so-called Russian influenza, after nursing my wife with the same disease. Eyes sore with watery flux may not be able to discern the beauty of the divine arrangement which makes disease contagious instead of health. Limbs racked with aches are apt to hinder the impartial study of a theological problem. But, freely using the pocket-handkerchief and clapping a warm poultice on my wheezing chest, let us look at the matter of epidemics as dispassionately as possible.

The old view that diseases and plagues were the work of evil spirits was a very natural one in superstitious times. Evident evils, dreaded and avoided by all, were logically ascribed to evil beings. But since theologians have felt the difficulty of there being two or more warring and independent beings, the doctrine of diseases being the work of evil spirits, though endorsed by Jesus Christ, has been given up. Satan is superannuated. Even those who keep a devil put him to no use.

Theologians now seek to evade the difficulty by representing evil as not really evil, but a special form of good, inasmuch as its issues are good. But is this so? Notoriously it is not. My present pain is just as real, while it lasts, even if I am better afterwards instead of being permanently injured. Is it the method of omnibenevolence to do evil that good may come? Is omnipotence under the necessity of acting thus? Such arguments sound strange from those who tell us of a land, reserved for them and their like, where there is no evil.

Then we are told of the moral and spiritual blessings of disease. It abates vain pride, shows how dependant we are, affords an opportunity for repentance, etc. In short, disease is often an excellent auxillary to the priest. The moral benefit of ill-health is very dubious. The recognised historic effects of plagues have been a lowering of morals and a heightening of superstition. We do not go so far as the epigrammist who said a sick man is always a scoundrel, but there is no doubt ill-health generates selfishness and irritation, which fly away when normal health returns.

The Theist who adopts evolution now draws an argument for the divine use of disease from the survival of the fittest. But the fittest does not mean the best. It may be better for society that a feeble Blaise Pascal should live rather than one endowed with the strength of Milo of Crotona. But in the case of the present epidemic, we are told the danger is with the strong and spirited, who instead of taking to their bed and warm drinks, say, "Oh, we will fight it out." They stand a graver chance of being called to a sudden halt with inflammation of the lungs, than the more feeble spirited. Altogether the theistic arguments upon epidemics do not seem quite satisfactory.

Paley, who always made the best case possible for any cause he took in hand, seems to anticipate the modern germ view of disease. He says in his *Natural Theology*, (Chap. xxvi.) "What we call blights, are oftentimes, legions of animated beings, claiming their portions in the bounty of nature. What corrupts the produce of the earth to us, prepares it for them. And it is by means of their rapid multiplication, that they take possession of their pasture: a slow propagation would not meet the opportunity." So man, the boasted crown of creation, must perish, that myriads of microbes may claim "their portions in the bounty of nature," and take possession of their pasture. This is an admission that there is not room enough for all, but the theologian can still argue that disease is designed for *the greatest happiness of the greatest number*. If the Buddhist permits himself to be infested with vermin, since they are indeed, but more or less distant relations, should not the genuine believer in Providence have faith that not a single disease germ finds its way to the throat unobserved by our Heavenly Father? According to some authorities, the microbes which propagate the prevalent disorder are ever present in man, only waiting their chance to have a high old time and breed at our expense. Now without troubling ourselves with any subtleties as to whether man was designed for the microbes, or the microbes designed for man, it is evidently flying in the face of Providence to resort to drugs or any other form of interference with his handiwork. Those whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and our light affliction may work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

As I said at the outset, I am too shaky to give these fine arguments the treatment they richly merit. I can only say that in sickness and suffering I find no benefit from the contemplation of nature, where I find every form of butchery perpetrated with the utmost callousness. In human care, human science, and human sympathy, there alone is hope, and one grain of these is worth a ton of theology.

J. M. WHEELER.

The *Northampton Reporter* heads its account of a lecture by one of the clerical secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, "A Clergyman Condemns Persecution." Viewed historically this is no doubt important, but the fact that the clergy dare not now advocate persecution in no way erases the fact that their Church employed it just as long as it dared.

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THREATENED ATTACK ON FREETHOUGHT IN LIVERPOOL.

DURING the last session of Parliament an Act was passed for the borough of Liverpool ostensibly for the purpose of controlling, in the interests of public order, places used for music, singing, or dancing, and being open to the public, whether on licensed or unlicensed premises, and whether a charge was made for admission or not. Under the provisions of this Act the city magistrates sat for several days last week to hear applications for licenses, and with reference to an application for a license for the Gaiety Theatre and Music Hall, made by Mr. Quilliam on behalf of Mr. De Freece, the following is reported by the local press to have taken place:—Mr. Matheson asked "if literature of a very objectionable character was not distributed there? Mr. Quilliam: Not from our place. It is from a place underneath the hall. The people are not our tenants. A magistrate: What society uses the place? Mr. Quilliam: It is an Atheistical society. The place was formerly a temperance hall, and I have spoken in it many a time. It has fallen, perhaps, upon evil days. The literature Mr. Matheson has spoken about is circulated there, and we would stop it if we could because it is injurious to our place."

With reference to the above, it may be well to explain that Camden Hall, where the local Branch meets, is under the same roof as the Gaiety Theatre, but has a separate entrance, and there is no interior communication, the building being owned by the Liverpool Co-operative Society. The theatre is open on week-days and Camden Hall on Sundays. Mr. De Freece is of Hebrew extraction, and Mr. Quilliam president of the local Mohammedan Society—a small body, fortunately. Mr. De Freece's objection to the Secular Society dates from the time when they discontinued hiring his theatre for Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures. On January 16, 1885, £15, with £2 additional charges, were paid for the theatre for Mr. Bradlaugh's Sunday lectures, and a smaller rent was charged when Mrs. Besant lectured there. The offer of further reductions has not induced the Branch to engage the theatre of late. Mr. Matheson, who gave his opinion on hearsay on a matter not before him, takes a leading part in religious movements. Act two of this drama opened on Sunday morning, when the small audience assembled to hear Mr. J. W. Mahony's lecture were surprised by the appearance of a sergeant and two constables in the hall, and the information that several others were in the neighborhood, both in uniform and plain clothes. None were seen during the afternoon, but during both morning and evening lectures policemen entered and left, and were succeeded by others.

These proceedings upset the equilibrum, for a time, of some of our members, but the lectures were duly delivered. I took the chair, morning and afternoon, and for a short time took money; Mr. Newcomb took the chair in the evening. Mr. Mahony's lectures were really excellent and fluently delivered. It is due to Mr. Wise of the C. E. S., who opposed morning and evening, to say that he emphatically denounced the course taken by the authorities. What these proceedings may portend I know not, but I appeal for moral and financial support from those who should help the Branch in what promises to be a crisis.

CHAS. DOEG,

9 Cromwell Terrace, Liverpool, N. Sec. Liverpool Branch, N.S.S.

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Did you ever act the hypocrite?—No.

Never told an advertiser that he was doing more business than his neighbor?—No.

Was fully satisfied the world would revolve if you should decide to die?—Yes.

Did you ever try to "scoop" anybody?—No.

Never circulated false reports about your contemporary's circulation?—No; I nev———.

Here, take my keys; you are a rare specimen of your race. Make yourself at home.

THE LATE DR. DOLLINGER.

HAD Dr. Döllinger united to his great learning and thorough conscientiousness an untrammelled mind and a bold spirit of inquiry he would have been one of the first religious reformers of the century. As it is, his influence will, we believe, decline, and be represented rather in his books than in the Old Catholic Church, which, if it is to progress at all, will have to go much further in the course of reform than was contemplated by its founder. Dr. Döllinger was in truth a university professor rather than a leader of men. Even when he discovered that his opposition to the dogma of Papal infallibility, promulgated at the Vatican Council on April 24, 1870, led to his own excommunication, he was loth to set up a new organisation, and, although events compelled this, he always insisted that he and his followers held fast to the true Catholic faith and practice. He never saw the true issue of the question Rome *v* Reason, and his learned mind was largely stored with the lumber of the past. None the less he did bravely in making and adhering to his protest against Papal usurpations, and his reply to recent attempts to induce him to recant, "I will not sully my old age with a lie," entitles him to the respect which must ever be accorded to honest convictions.

HOLY MEN OF GOD.

A correspondent sends us some statistics relative to crime and lunacy in professors of religion. He says that during the latter half of the past year, from notes made by him in his casual reading of newspapers, and without any special search, he discovered that thirty-seven ministers of religion have been dealt with by the law for various crimes. Classified, the delinquencies were as follows: 8 for robbery, 8 for sexual crimes, 6 elopements, 4 drunks, 3 assaults, 3 murders, 1 burglary and attempted murder, 1 cruelty, 1 bigamy, 1 threat to murder and adultery, 1 elopement and attempted murder. Of these 18 were foreign and the remainder British cases. Twenty pious lunatics were either dealt with in police courts or placed themselves out of reach of restraint by suicide. Of the latter 3 were clergymen. Our correspondent points out that these cases only represent those which have come under his notice in an indiscriminate way, and not as showing a complete picture of the relation of piety to crime and madness.

"THE ANGELIC DOCTOR."

Such is the title accorded to Thomas Aquinas by the Catholic Church. We give here a brief specimen of his doctrines as quoted in the recent controversy, *Is Killing Heretics Murder?* "Heretics may not only be excommunicated, but justly killed: such the Church consigns to the secular arm to be exterminated from the world by death," are the words of Aquinas (Summa, 3 vol., page 48, and vol. iv. page 91). "Though the heretics who repent, must always be accepted to penance, as often as they have fallen; they must not in consequence of that, always be permitted to enjoy the benefits of this life . . . when they fall again they are permitted to repent . . . but the sentence of death must not be removed" The Church boasts itself ever the same, but deems it prudent to cover up a little these utterances of its greatest theologian.

BRAIN FOOD.

A Stanhope quarryman received a pastoral visit the other evening, just as he came home, tired and hungry, from work. He was, to use a Weardale phrase, "warsh"—did not know what to eat; he wanted something relishable and tasty to whet his appetite, so he had a two-eyed steak in the shape of a bloater, or, in pure Saxon, a red herring. The pastor's wife put in an appearance just as he was having his savory dish. She scented the oderiferous aroma of the two-eyed steak, and snuffing up her nose said, "So you are having a herring for supper." "Yes," said the blue diamond smasher, "I'm having a tasty bite." "Well," said she, "a herring's very nice for a working man," "Yes," said he waggishly, "bloaters are very strengthening." "Well, they are very tasty," remarked the visitor. "Yes," said the wag, "they're just the thing for quarrymen, very nutritious." Said she, "They contain phosphorus, and that is brain-forming matter." "That's why we quarrymen eat them to become intelligent." "I don't often see you at our place of worship." "No," said the wag, "I don't think you will either." "Why?" inquired his fair interrogator. "Because your husband doesn't eat herring." She saw the point, and at once made tracks for home.—*Consett Guardian.*

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THE PRESBYTERIAN DILEMMA.

By Hugh O. Pentecost,

Delivered at New York, Sunday, December 15, 1889.

When I lived out West I used to see what was called the chain gang. It was a number of male human beings working at street cleaning, each of whom had a large iron ball attached to one of his ankles by about six feet of heavy chain. These persons were taken from the gaol every morning. They were prisoners for minor offences, such as drunkenness or small disturbances of the peace. The balls and chains were attached to them to prevent them from running away. They could move about and do their work, but, of course, the balls and chains were a heavy drag upon them.

The chain gang is a fine illustration of things as they are. The men represent the human race. The balls and the chains represent the Church and the State. The human race would move forward in thought and accomplishment. But upon one ankle is the ball and chain of superstition, and upon the other is the ball and chain of repressive government by force. The human race *is* moving forward. But it cannot move very rapidly because the priest pulls it backward by one leg and the politician pulls it backward by the other. It is an unequal contest, because the human mind is so restless, so disposed to ask questions and so determined to have answers to those questions—the force of evolution is so strong—that nothing can prevent it, not even the ghostly terrors of the hereafter, nor the clubs, handcuffs, prison cells and gallowses of this material world. The priest and the politician are doomed. The day is coming when there will be no Church with its supernatural terrors and no State with its gunpowder and gibbets. The mind will some day be free to think unfrightened by blackrobed sycophants of wealth and power. The body will some day be free to move about untouched by uniformed ruffians.

One indication of the dawning of that better day, in which even the menial priest and the self-loathing politician will rejoice when it comes, is the ferment that is now going on in the Presbyterian church. That church is the last stronghold of the most monstrous and revolting system of supernaturalism that ever cast its poisonous shadow upon an unfortunate world. I have studied, somewhat closely, the birth, growth and development of religions from the earliest days of human history until now. I have familiarized myself, somewhat fully, with the religious beliefs of the people whom we call savages and of those who represent whatever of civilization the world has yet known, and it is my deliberate opinion that the Westminster confession of faith embodies the most horrible theories of the character of God and the destiny of man ever devised or even remotely dreamed of in the human brain. The science of devilolatry and the philosophy of the infernal regions reached its climax in the Westminster catechism. If you do not own a copy of that document I advise you to buy one at once before it is suppressed as something of which the world is ashamed. And when you have bought it find one of the most repulsive idols that heathenism ever produced, place them side by side and observe how handsome the idol is by contrast.

But Presbyterians are becoming ashamed of Presbyterianism. Young candidates for the ministry are beginning to avoid the Presbyterian Church as an intellectual smallpox hospital. And many of the older clergy, who ceased to believe in Calvinism long ago, but were too dishonest, too cowardly to say so, are now coming together, timidly, and cautiously suggesting that perhaps the Presbyterian God is just a *little* disagreeable, and that, possibly, the Presbyterian hell is not the best place that might be thought of in which to place the tender infants whom a God, whose mouth foams with wrath, snatches from their devoted mothers' breasts.

It does not appear that these concessions are making because the ministerial mind is shrinking from the logic of Calvinism. That is no doubt true in many cases. But as long as Calvinism could be profitably worked nothing was said about modifying the creed. But it is now being observed that the number of students in theological seminaries is falling off, and that there is a disposition among the people to leave Presbyterian churches for others less logical but more amiable. And as there is nothing that the average minister dislikes so much as to play a losing game, to be on the unpopular side of any question, there comes about this timid effort to get a new photograph of God and to slow down the fires of hell. Every other Church has yielded to the popular clamor, and now quite a large and growing number of the Presbyterian clergy are coming to see that their Church will have to fall into the line of surrender, or be left a wreck upon the beach of conservatism.

The delay of Presbyterianism in submitting to the inevitable has no doubt arisen from the more or less conscious recognition by her ministers that, unlike other Churches, Presbyterianism has a perfectly logical creed which cannot be tinkered with. The Westminster Confession of Faith begins with a premise, and goes fearlessly on to a conclusion that logically grows out of that premise. Each part of the creed dovetails into every other part, and you cannot alter it in any part without ultimately destroying the whole. The Presbyterians cannot revise their creed. They must either write a new one, beginning with other premises, or they must keep the one they have. And this constitutes their dilemma. They *must* change their creed, or enlightened public will pass them by and leave them, as an organization, to crumble into the dust of death. But if they begin to alter their creed there is no logical stopping place for them but in the abandonment of the idea of a personal God with a purposive will.

Very few see it, but there is, in fact, no logical stopping place between Calvinism and Agnosticism. If you believe in a personal God, you must, logically, become a Calvinist. If you are not a Calvinist you must, logically, become an Agnostic. The only reason why all persons, in the present religious situation, are not either Calvinists or Agnostics is simply because all persons are not logical. Calvinists and Agnostics are the only persons who can answer all your questions upon the subject of religion? If you ask an Agnostic any questions about God or the supernatural he will tell you that he knows nothing about either. That answer is perfectly truthful, and it puts an end to the subject. If you ask a Calvinist a question about religion he will tell you that you must assume the existence of a personal God. Why? There is no reason. You must just assume it. Having assumed the existence of a personal God all else is easy. If you are one of his elect to heaven you go, no matter how wicked you are. If you are one of the non-elect to hell you go, no matter how good you are.

All other Christians except Calvinists hem and haw and evade you, because their sentiments destroy their logic. But a Calvinist has a perfect system.

I am an admirer of the Westminster confession as a system of thought. It is horrible, but it is honest. It is cruel, but it is brave. It cannot stand the light of to-day, but it is consistent. And when the Church gives up Calvinism she confesses herself beaten in the battle of opinions, because with Calvinism goes the Bible as an authority, and with the Bible goes the Church, and with the Church goes the ball and chain that now drags upon the human mind. When the Presbyterian Church takes one brick out of the structure of Calvinism the beginning of the end has come.

Let us see, now, what Calvinism is.

The basis of Calvinism is the idea of a personal God. Given that idea and it follows, of necessity, that he must exist for himself alone—for his own glory. There can be nothing outside of God. He can have no objects outside of himself. Having assumed the existence of a personal God all goes merrily or horribly on. He creates the world out of nothing. It is absurd and impossible, of course, but it goes. God can do anything and, therefore, he can do impossibilities. He creates man for the purpose of having him sin. He creates hell in which to punish man, in soul and body, throughout eternity for doing what he, God, meant that he should do, and therefore, which he, man, could not help doing. He creates himself in the person of Jesus Christ, who is entirely God, himself, and is yet somebody else at the same time, for the purpose of receiving upon his devoted head all the phials of divine anger against sin which he, God, brought into the world, and thus become the savior of enough persons, previously foreordained to be saved, to make manifest his glory. But as his glory shines more brightly in the light of the flames of hell than anywhere else the redeemed are to have the exquisite joy of looking over the railings of heaven at the ceaseless agonies of their own parents and children, who were created for the purpose of being damned.

There is a lot more to it in detail to which I need not refer. You know the whole story of foreknowledge and foreordination; of election and non-election; of the shameful hell and the far more shameful heaven—a heaven in which no

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decent person could possibly consent to live. You know the story of Calvinism, based squarely as it is upon the Bible, and some of you will agree with me that the never ending wonder is that the Christian world was not turned into a madhouse by it. How could people who believe it ever dare to have children; How could anyone ever smile when he knew there was no means of knowing but what he and his friends were foreordained by this unspeakable God to spend all eternity in the unphraseable horrors of hell, or in the base meanness of heaven? The only reasonable answer to these questions is that nobody ever could have believed the horrible doctrines except those who *did* go crazy, or succeeded in mentally dehumanising themselves, as did John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards.

(To be concluded.)

MR. SYMES ON MRS. BESANT'S CONVERSION.

I HAVE said (in my first note on this pamphlet of Mrs. Besant's) that that lady had brought a scandal upon our movement. The scandal consists in two things. 1st. It is a sort of breach of discipline. 2nd. It is a gross insult to tell our people that Theosophy or Pantheism is part and parcel of Secularism.

As to the first. I admit at once that we have no rigid discipline. But Secularism is an organised movement; whoever enters it as a worker and undertakes to battle in company with others for right and liberty must, in the nature of the case, be expected to give up some measure of his individual right and liberty. Without this no organisation can exist. No person in a voluntary united movement can have all his own way. If everyone claims the right, and practically exercises it, to push or preach his own private fads, anarchy at once ensues, the organisation is dissolved.

I have met with many people who claim to be Freethinkers; but they believe in Spiritualism, in Theism, in popery, in monarchy, etc. Now let us suppose lecturers and leaders of each of those types meeting to spread Freethought, uniting in a crusade against priests, parsons, and all pretended revelation, divine government, etc. Could anything be more absurd? They may be all good men, earnest, sincere, able. But they cannot unite except upon neutral matters. This needs no illustration for it is patent to all.

And if people unite and agree at first, and afterwards develop different beliefs, the dissolution of the union must follow. Let Mr. Bradlaugh accept and preach, as part of Secularism, the immortality of the soul; let Mr. Foote adopt and teach the doctrine of Purgatory and the efficacy of prayers and masses for the dead; let Mrs. Besant do as she is doing; let me adopt Spiritualism and pit it against Theosophy—Is it possible for us henceforth to work together for what we have all along considered to be Secularism? Let Mrs. Besant answer..

Not by any vows we have taken or promises or pledges given are we bound to be true to Secularism; but by the position we have taken up and held so long, a position in which we have been trusted and honored for so many years—and no one more than Mrs. Besant—we are bound by the most sacred obligations to be true to our people and our movement,

If Mrs. Besant has lost faith in Secularism, her course is clear, to leave it openly. To still cling to it and retain her position in it, after adopting a superstition as gross as can be found, and which, on the face of it, is plainly *not* Secularism, is a scandal.

Far be it from me to limit the range of freedom of thought. I know no subject that ought to be forbidden to a Freethinker or a Secularist! I am not aware that any subject exists, any creed, philosophy or doctrine that a Freethinker ought not to follow if his convictions bid him do so. That is the only course open to him. But I do not see how a Freethinker can be bound to swallow contradictory systems or doctrines. Secularism repudiates miracles; Mrs. Besant adopts them. It is idle to say it is not a miracle to send letters by disembodied brothers, to project your soul from the body and travel with the speed of thought to the most distant lands, often transporting material things with you. To believe this is not Secularism, unless some remarkably good evidence be forthcoming to support it. Mrs. Besant gives no evidence yet that might not support the resurrection or the miraculous birth of Jesus. And henceforth she can no more denounce miracles, whether those of Jerusalem, Rome or Knock, while holding to the gospel by Blavatsky.

I maintain then that Mrs. Besant, by accepting Theosophy, reverses the whole of her life for the last fourteen or fifteen years. She may be right or wrong in doing this. All I say is that it is a scandal to Secularism to say that her new departure is no departure, to pretend that she still acts as a consistent Secularist, while professing her faith in miracles.

I cannot believe that she herself would admit that I was doing justice to myself or Secularism if I re-embraced Wesleyanism, and preached the old evangelical doctrines from our platform, as a genuine part of Secularism, legitimately and logically within the purview of Freethought.

To accept a god, though he be pantheistic, and miracles, though we are assured they are not superhuman, are not the acts of an unbeliever, a Freethinker, a Secularist, however deeply Mrs. Besant may be convinced of their truth. It is plain to everyone else that when she became a Theosophist she became a believer. And really, it would have grieved me less to see her joining the Roman Catholic communion than to see her bow her intellect to the transparent imposture of Mrs. Blavatsky.

I have written strongly. I hope Mrs. Besant won't rush away to the conclusion that I feel any personal enmity towards her. I am sure I do not. But I am profoundly grieved to think that so able and earnest an advocate of Secularism, and so fearless a defender, should have turned her back upon it and gone over to the enemy. She must pardon me if I can see it in no other light. I am absolutely sure that Pantheism and Theosophy are no part of Secularism, and never will be until recommended by better evidence than has ever yet been offered for either.

One painful fact is apparent in reading Mrs. Besant's pamphlet, and that is, that not her intellect has led her into theosophy, but its negation. Mrs. Besant is one of the most intellectual persons of the day; and yet her reasons for adopt- Theosophy are just on a par with those persons immeasurably her inferiors have given for removing from Freethought to Christianity. Many years ago I read the recantation of John Henry Gordon, who left the Secularists and became "pastor" Gordon, Baptist. Well, and I say it with pain, Mrs. Besant's pamphlet, though far better written, is equally flimsy, inconsequential and disappointing with that! It is simply provoking to find an intellectual person so absolutely wrong-headed. She has published her pamphlet to show her reasons for adopting theosophy; the reasons have been omitted, and paltry excuses take their place—that is, she has evidently adopted theosophy first and then looked about for something to excuse her conduct. And no more flimsy excuses were ever yet offered for a change of front.—*Liberator*.

"COME OFF THE FENCE."

LEND us a hand! We are weary of striving;
Straining each nerve to win popular sense;
Why do you, when we need your assistance,
Placidly neutral, still sit on the fence.

Inwardly sure of the right of our pleading,
Secretly hoping success to our fight,
Step from your outlook, your neutral position,
Bravely and openly join us outright.

Deep in your hearts you approve of our wishes,
'Tis but a question of time, as you know.
Openly come to us, say you are with us,
Now is the time to encourage us so.

Are we not pleading for right and for justice?
Dare not deny it; it is no pretence,
Come with your influence, eloquence, wisdom,
Come down and help us! "Come down off the fence!"

THE Rev. Mr. Roach, editor of the *Windsor Weekly Waterspout*, went fishing a few Sundays ago and broke his leg. The Rev. Mr. Dace heard of the accident, and in his Sunday evening sermon said: "Here we have a striking example of the retribution following the violation of the Sabbath. If Mr. Roach had been at church he would not have broken his leg." The following Sunday, as the Rev. Mr. Dace was ascending the steps of the pulpit, he trod on a piece of orange peel (dropped by a child of the Sunday-school), slipped, fell, and broke his leg. The next issue of the *Waterspout* contained the following: "Here we have a striking instance of the retribution that waits on self-appointed censorship. If the Rev. Mr. Dace had been fishing he would not have broken his leg."

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ACID DROPS.

We congratulate the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It has made a discovery, like the blind man who found the haystack with his stick. In one of its tracts, "Earnest Words to Working Men," it chirrups as follows:—"It is said that some heathen think that their women have no souls, but it seems in Christian England as if it were rather the *men* who doubt their own immortality; for whilst many of them think it right that their wives and children should attend to the outward ordinances of religion and go to church or chapel, how do they themselves spend the Lord's Day? How few of them are ever seen in the house of God!" Amen.

That mysterious individual Providence seems very remiss in looking after God's own houses. Compared to churches and chapels, public-houses and gambling clubs have a perfect immunity from fires and lightning. No doubt the steeples of churches are tempting to electricity, but lightning, controlled by omnipotence, ought to be able to strike a coal mine as readily as a church spire. Fires, too, may be occasionally looked for in stove-heated buildings, but it should be a little thing for God Almighty to show the sacredness of his edifices my making them as incombustible as heaven itself.

Last Sunday morning when the parishioners of Lewannich, six miles from Launceston, went to their church, they found it a mass of flames. The minister will have to preach from the text "Our God is a consuming fire."

Lives of Christ are as common as the influenza. The latest announcement is that Joaquin Miller, the American author of *The Ship in the Desert*, etc., has been for some time engaged on a versified account of the Judean gentleman, upon which he pins his hopes of fame. Here again it seems to be a case of Buddha before Christ, for it is whispered that Mr. Miller has been instigated by the success of Sir E. Arnold's *Light of Asia*.

A Hungarian shoemaker named Szaknay, living at Limehouse, was taken ill and went to see his minister at St. John's-wood. This did not improve him, and his landlady, seeing he was almost too ill to speak, asked him if she should call in a doctor. He got into a rage, and said he did not believe in doctors, but in anointing. Praying and oiling, however, did not effect a cure. Poor Szaknay died under the faith-healing treatment, and a coroner's inquest had to be held over his remains. If he leaves any friends to erect a tombstone upon his grave, they should not fail to record his devotion to St. James. Speaking ill of the dead is of course to be avoided, and his epitaph might be therefore, not "A Pious Fool," but "A True Christian."

"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another." Bosh! says Parson Wilson, of Rochdale, who, having quarrelled with the master of the Birtle National Schools, has locked up the premises and excluded the children.

"Suffer little children to come unto me," said Jesus in one of his amiable moods. Parson Wilson endorses this with a reservation. "Let them come," he says, "if I like the schoolmaster; if I don't, let them go to ——" well, a good many miles from Rochdale.

The *Ensign*, Y.M.C.A. Nottingham organ, states that the Melbourne Y.M.C.A. has secured the Secularists' "Hall of Science" as their headquarters at a cost of £30,500, and have made it a centre of Gospel effort. We do not know what truth there is in this, but we know that the Melbourne Secularists have a New Hall of Science, 456 Bourke Street, where Mr. Symes has large audiences.

All the sky-pilots in the neighborhood of Uxbridge have signed a memorial to the Petty Sessions complaining of the growing practice of Sunday trading as exhibited in a few cigar and sweetstuff shops, and calling on the magistrates to suppress it. Their motto evidently is "No competition. Our shop or none."

The *New York Press* of Dec. 31st, announces the death of an old lady while kneeling in prayer. Apoplexy has no regard for piety.

It was the London lounger out for his holiday, and, as he tucked himself into his little bed at the New Inn at Sideford, his eye fell on a beautifully luminated text, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Not while the money holds out," murmured the L.L., as he sank into slumber, and the landlord, who was listening at the keyhole, rushed downstairs and made his bill out "to be sent up with his shirts."

According to the *Methodist Times*—Hugh Price Hughes's paper—"There are two wings of the Liberal party—one agnostic, positivist, atheist, and somewhat apt to take lax views of social morality. This wing is preternaturally blatant in London, especially in journalistic circles. But in the provinces it is absolutely insignificant. The leaders, the organisers, and all the most valuable members of the rank and file of provincial Liberalism are hearty believers in Christian morality, are very often pronounced Christians, and as a rule evangelical Nonconformists."

We are glad to see Mr. Hughes recognising a fact, if only once in a way. The Freethinking side of London Radicalism can no longer be ignored. As to its being "preternaturally blatant," that is only Mr. Hughes's way of saying that it will not truckle to the Christians.

Mr. Hughes is very much mistaken, however, about provincial Radicalism. If he looks a little closer and deeper he will find Freethinkers on political committees here, there, and everywhere. In season and out of season they are hard workers for all kinds of progress. No doubt there is a greater leaven of Freethought in London, but it is far from absent in the provinces.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes took the *Pall Mall* tip and devoted last Sunday afternoon to Mr. Gladstone's praise of confession. The reverend gentleman now finds that "Mr. Gladstone, although great, wise, and good, has not taken the trouble to inquire what are the real sentiments of a far larger section of the Christian Church than his own, and practically he is ignorant of the religious opinions of the great masses of the people." Poor G. O. M.! He had better go to St. James's Hall and get converted.

At the same meeting Mr. Hughes said that 500 people had been converted at St. James's Hall since the opening of the Mission. We wonder how many of them are as sound as the Atheist Shoemaker.

After praying to vacuity for every possible blessing during the "universal week of prayer" the Evangelicals wound up with a thanksgiving for the privilege of being permitted to lay our requests before God during this week of prayer. Our modern Pharisees are almost as humble as the man who continually thanked space for giving him elbow room.

God's method of settling the love affairs of animals was illustrated by the deadly battle between two fine bucks, who were recently found in a dry ditch in Bushey Park, dead, and firmly locked together in a most remarkable manner. The right horn of the uppermost animal was firmly fixed in the mouth of the lower; the left horn of the lower one was as firmly fixed in the mouth of the upper, while the other horns were tightly clasped together. The battle that ended so fatally had evidently been a long and stubborn one, both animals having sustained severe bodily wounds. They had evidently died in great agony, and the jaw of the undermost animal was broken to splinters.

Major Evered Poole is asking for subscriptions to send Mr. H. L. Hastings' lecture on the Inspiration of the Bible and other productions of the Anti-Infidel Library throughout the army. He hopes to circulate over 150,000 copies before the end of February. We wish some of our wealthy friends would give Tommy Atkins a chance of seeing the other side.

A trashy orthodox pamphlet, entitled *Theosophy the New Religion*, has been sent to us. It appears to emanate from a party who trades upon other people's names, and one of its most significant sentences is the following: "Surely

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the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale cannot know what Theosophy really is if he imagines that, in embracing the same, Mrs. Besant has taken a step in the right direction."

The agent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners attempted a sale at Amlwch, Anglesey, of stock distrained upon at several farms for arrears of tithe. The attitude of the persons assembled became so threatening that the sale had to be adjourned.

Whatever is Mr. Yates thinking about to publish that silly story of Browning in the *World?* "One Sunday afternoon," runs the yarn, "about twelve years ago, he was crossing Hyde Park, walking homewards, and he stood a few minutes listening to the address of one of the pestilent atheistic lecturers in those parts. He waited till the fellow had finished, and then sprang on to the vacated chair, saying, 'now my friends, you have heard *him;* listen to me!' He held the attention of his strange audience for some ten minutes, the 'rapt oration flowing free' with such extraordinary effect that the 'populace' turned upon orator No. 1, and literally chased him from the neighbourhood of his exploits."

About twelve years ago! Very precise and a long way off! The *World* forgets to tell us how the story has slumbered all the while. It forgets, too, that it is a poor compliment to Robert Browning to say that he excited a mob to violence against a lecturer who invited discussion. Browning, it appears, like many other men, might have cried "save me from my friends."

Curiously enough, in the very preceding paragraph, the *World* describes George Meredith's as "the finest head and face" in the Westminster Abbey crowd at Browning's funeral. If the writer of the paragraph will read Mr. Meredith's poems—supposing him equal to the task—he will find the possessor of "the finest head and face" a pronounced Freethinker.

There is consternation in the ranks of the clergy, more general and more sincere even than that caused by the inroads of infidelity. There is a still further decline in the value of livings for 1890. Every £100 will have to be estimated as only £78 1s. 3¼d. Within the past six years there has been a fall of twenty per cent., and the parsons are all swearing that their business is going to the dogs.

All through Italy there are pictures in which the Deity is depicted throwing wreaths upon the heads of the Medici, Farnese, and other aristocratic families. Again, at Versailles, on a canvas representing one of Napoleon's victories, the Supreme Being is limned in the skies ordering the destruction of the enemy!

The Rev. J. McNeill says that "David was a splendid fellow—an all round man." Yes, especially when he lived as a thief. He requisitioned east, west, north and south, and cut the throats of those who thought they had any right to their own. He was the Jack the Ripper of the district, and as an "all round man" at the business it would be hard to find his rival.

A wolf burst into a Russian hut and attacked a boy in the absence of his parents. The house-dog defended the child, and was nearly torn to pieces before relief came. That dog had no soul. The Christian men who, a few years ago, were afraid to help a little girl struggling in three feet of water in Kensington Gardens, *had* souls. Let us pray.

Mr. Voysey seems to have set himself to the task of answering an objection as to what can be known of God apart from his inspired manifestations, and this he does by asserting that the inspired manifestation cannot tell us anything more than we already know. We beg pardon. They can tell a great deal, as that he exposed his back parts to Moses, had a son by a virgin, and much other curious information not to be gathered by unassisted reason.

It is rather curious to find, centuries after the statue to the Unknown God at Athens has tumbled into oblivion, the Rev. Christopher J. Street saying at the Theistic Church that God must ever be the Unknown God. It is a curious proceeding to talk Sunday after Sunday on a subject that must ever be unknown. We should think the time might be more profitably occupied.

Mr. Stead gives us his Trinity in his new Review. It is—God, England, and Humanity. In other words, Religion, Jingoism, and Imperialism. Cock-a-doodle-do!

The *Tablet* bestows some mild banter on that good man Mr. W. T. Stead for offering to set up a kind of journalistic confessional in the *Review of Reviews*. It wishes him to know that good Catholics go to confession not to find a confidant but to obtain forgiveness of sins. It does not think Mr. Stead will undertake to dispense this. Give him time.

The sorrowful and heavy laden were long exhorted to cast their burdens on the Lord. Mr. Stead, who evidently deems it one of the missions of the new journalism to take the place of the old Methodist pulpit and class-room, offers to play the *rôle* of Jesus Christ himself. He asks all who want the consolation of pouring out their soul's grief, to communicate with him. He has an unfailing supply of the true balm of Gilead to be disposed of on reasonable terms.

Do you seek for comfort?
Turn your thoughts to Stead.
Does your husband come home late?
Refuge find in Stead.
Are you weary of your sins?
Confide them all to Stead.
But please enclose remittance
Should you write to Stead.

The Established Church of Scotland is making an effort to form a Defence Fund for the Church. The sum modestly asked for is £10,000 but ten times that amount would prove wofully insufficient for the purpose.

A full and searching inquiry into the management of the Church Missionary Society has often been talked about, even Canon Taylor was unable to bring it about. The income of the Church Missionary Society last year was nearly £222,000. It is stated that of this enormous sum nearly a fourth!—that is to say, close upon £50,000—is spent before any of the money is paid out for mission work.

The millenium is coming. According to the Rev. W. Webb-Peploe, all the world is to be converted to Christ, and then war and strife will cease. And when will that be? Ah, as the song says, wait a little longer.

Mr. George Harwood, M.A., has been telling an audience in the Bolton Co-operative Hall that the Bible is the best book in the world to "teach manners." Well, let us take a case. David, the man after God's own heart, had an interview with a lady called Abigail. In the course of conversation he told her that he had meant to kill all the males of her husband's house. But did he say *males?* Oh dear no. What did he say, then? Well, we dare not repeat it. It may be read in 1 Samuel xxv., 34. Read it with a pair of blue spectacles on, and then swear that the Bible is a text-book of manners.

Can it be true? We hear that the new Secular hall at Edmonton is next door to the residence of Sir Henry Tyler, the pious guinea-pig who first prosecuted the *Freethinker*. The Christians of that neighborhood should take precautions against earthquakes.

The newspapers report a shocking case of cruelty by the nuns at the Franciscan convent at Schönbrun. They beat and starved a poor half-witted girl in their charge till she was a skeleton covered with a mass of sores, "In consideration of their calling," the magistrate inflicted slight fines, but the public showed by hooting that a heavier sentence was demanded.

Sarah Hannah Calender, who is charged with cutting the throat of her grand niece and child aged one year, and with setting fire to the house, seems to have been very pious. She asked for the Bible a little before committing the atrocity, and perhaps derived inspiration from the volume.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 19, Camden Hall, Camden-street, Liverpool, at 11, 3 and 7 o'clock.

Thursday, Jan. 23, Secular Hall, 131 Broadway, Plaistow, at 8 "How to get Saved." For the Branch funds.

Jan. 26, Camberwell.

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

G. JACOB.—(1) It doesn't pretend to be a literal quotation, being obviously a paraphrase. (2) We had no special information, and there was no use in repeating what every one had seen in the newspapers.

ANTI-HUMBUG.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. B.—Renan's *Vie de Jesus* is a sentimental work, we had almost written romance, but it serves as an introduction to rational criticism of the gospels.

"AMANA."—Papers and cuttings always welcome.

F. GILES.—Yes, Viktor Lennstrand must and will be supported.

F. COULTHARD.—Will say when we see them.

DOUBTER.—You have our sympathy. It goes out to every struggling, earnest mind. For our part, we regard it as a duty to be true to oneself, never to countenance a falsehood for the sake of peace, or to imagine that the human race can be elevated by it, however, it may have been inevitable in man's upward march. Truth is after all the highest thing, and every virtue ultimately rests upon it. If you are not a Christian, in any fairly understood sense of the word, you had better come out. It may be hard at first, but you will find the road soften and the sky clear, if you keep facing the dawn.

A. GUEST.—Thanks. Glad to hear you tackled Prophet Baxter at Darlington.

A. FRIEND.—Mr. Foote was forty on January, 11th. At the present he is carrying about a bad cold, which was exasperated by Monday evening's rush to Reading. Mr. Wheeler is also affected. Editor and "sub" both hope the chill hasn't got into the paper.

F. HAMPSON.—See "Acid Drops." Sorry the Bolton press is so little fond of fair play.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—We think of publishing some more good portraits shortly. Glad to have your opinion that *Letters to Jesus Christ*, which "every one who wants to know the leading specialities of the Jesus of the Gospels would do well to obtain."

W. OWEN says that "heart-felt" sympathy with our gallant Swedish comrades must mean "pocket-felt." True.

F. H. M. CHASE.—Under consideration.

E. SIMS.—No doubt a good subscription will be raised for the Swedish martyr.

H. CALASCA.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—W. J. Birch, £1.

A. HINDLEY.—Thanks. May be useful.

J. BRUMAGE.—Such letters in *Chat* or any local paper do the cause good. Hope to see you hale again next month.

E. T. GARNER.—Your lecture list is the first sent in. It shows you are wide awake, anyhow; and that is at least one merit.

JNO. DEAN.—Suit your convenience.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberty—Fair Play—Freidenker—Open Court—Freedom—Der Arme Teufel—Consett Guardian—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Uxbridge Gazette—Bournemouth Guardian—Western American—Progressive Thinker—New York Press—Evening Standard—Health Resorts—Bulletin des Sommaires—Western Figaro—Anti-Infidel—Weekly News and Chronicle—New York Herald—Menschenthum—Liberator—The Ensign Irish Y.M.C.A's Bulletin—Northampton Daily Reporter.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

TO ALL WHOM IT CONCERNS.

A GENTLEMAN asked us at Nottingham if the invitation we printed early in the year was still open. We replied that it was. Our resources are not adequate to carry on our Freethought business properly, and they are diminished from time to time by investors requiring to withdraw their money. We have indeed to repay a good deal of money during the new year, and we shall be glad to hear from any friends who have spare cash to entrust us with. Every investment bears five per cent. interest, and the investor receives a legal document entitling him to recall his amount by six months' notice. We intend, if possible, to be very active in publishing during the next year or two. There is a certain market for all we produce, and a reasonable, if not handsome, profit on sales. It will be borne in mind that the *Freethinker* brings us no direct return for our labor, at least for the present, though the prospect is slowly improving. We have, therefore, to rely upon what is yielded by the publishing business, which, besides lecturing work, is our only source of income. Our stock of publications is a large one, and some idea of the resources needed may be gathered from the fact that the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* alone has cost £150 to produce, exclusive of the binding, the expense of which is incurred gradually as the work sells. Those who cannot afford to invest are not desired to inconvenience themselves; we only appeal to those who can; and they who respond quickly will be doing us the greatest service.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Eight friends have now responded to this appeal. We shall be glad to hear from others forthwith. Any sums from £5 upwards will be acceptable on the foregoing conditions. This is the last week the invitation will appear.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an improved audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's reply to the Archbishop of Canterbury. To-day (Jan. 19) Mr. Foote lectures at Liverpool, where he will be glad to see any friends from South Lancashire who are anxious to see a better organisation of Freethought in that district. The letter we publish elsewhere from the Branch secretary should bring every Liverpool Freethinker to the hall. The bigots must be faced, fought, and beaten.

SINCE the preceding paragraph was in print we have heard from Mr. Doeg that he and Mr. Newcomb are to be summoned. Lectures are, if possible, to be treated as entertainments. Mr. Doeg says "I will fight it out." Surely there will be a big rally to-day (Jan. 19). Whoever holds back in a crisis is a traitor to the cause.

MR. BRADLAUGH is on his way home, very much improved in health and spirits. He will meet the members of the National Secular Society at the Hall of Science, London, on Sunday, February 16, and give a full statement of his reasons for resigning the presidency. No person will be admitted to the meeting who is not a member. Those who have not yet joined, but wish to be present, should enrol themselves at once. The meeting will elect Mr. Bradlaugh's successor.

MESSRS FOOTE AND FORDER made a descent on Reading on Monday evening. Mr. Butler and a few other "saints" had resolved to form a Branch of the N. S. S. in this thriving town, and as a local clergyman had been stirring up the public mind on the subject, Mr. Foote undertook to lecture on "Christianity and Secularism: a False System and a True One," and Mr. Forder to officiate as chairman on behalf of the Organisation Committee. A small hall had been engaged, capable of seating about two

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hundred persons; but somehow the hallkeeper let it afterwards for the same night to a dancing party. The only way out of the difficulty was for the Secularists to have the large hall in the same block at the same price. Now the mistake was a slice of good fortune, for a large audience assembled that could not have been squeezed by a hydraulic press into the smaller room.

NOT only was the audience large, but very courteous and intelligent, and there was a good sprinkling of ladies. Another noteworthy feature was the presence of two local reporters taking notes industriously. Mr Forder had a capital reception and made a neat little speech from the chair. Mr. Foote was greeted with several rounds of applause, and throughout the lecture there could be little doubt that he commanded the sympathies of more than half the audience. This augurs well for the prosperity of the new Branch. Reading has more than enough Freethinkers to make it a first-rate success.

AFTER the lecture many questions were asked, and answered. Three gentlemen made set speeches. One was a Reading curate; another an old business man, who does a little evangelising. This amiable old Christian told how he was converted fifty-four years ago; he thumped the lecturer on the back as a man and a brother; and left the platform with a fervent prayer for the Atheist's conversion. Mr. Foote laughed and the audience laughed. Everybody laughed but the aged Christian. He was in deadly earnest.

AMONG the audience was the great Barber of Northampton. This person has been very quiet since Mr. Bradlaugh threatened to answer his scurrility with a thrashing. Now he is on the war-path again. Barber mounted the platform, holding in his hand the regulation book of extracts. Mr. Forder offered him a seat, kept him sitting and waiting for his turn, and finally told him there was no time for more speeches, as the occupancy of the hall was terminating, and the keeper was going to turn out the gas. It was cleverly done, and Barber was wild, especially as he wanted a good advertisement for his own lecture the next evening. Most of the audience were evidently glad that Reading men had taken up the time, instead of an imported stranger. But there was a considerable knot of Barber's lambs at the back, and they baa'd most lustily. That was an old stager's opportunity. Rising to answer the curate, Mr. Foote was baa'd and baa'd; but he fairly shouted them down in two minutes, and the meeting finally broke up in perfect order.

ALTOGETHER the visit to Reading was a great success, and the Organisation Committee will no doubt organise descents on other towns within easy reach of London.

MR. R. FORDER acknowledges the following subscriptions to the Swedish Prisoners' Fund:—Grant from Funds of N. S. S., £2 10s.; Miss Vance, 2s. 6d.; R. Forder, 2s. 6d.; J. Chamberlain, 1s.; G. R., per E. Truelove, £1; E. Truelove, £1; J. Sterry, 4½d.; W. Langley, 5s.; Jupiter Ammon, 5s.; J. Moffat, 1s.; H. Seymour, 1s.; J. Hemingway, 10s.; J. H. Ellis, 5s.; Mrs. Palmer, 6d.; Daylight, 2s. 6d.; K. Hunt, 5s.; J. Robinson, 1s.; Alpha Rho, 10s.; B. Millichamp, 1s.—R. Forder, secretary.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—We have received the following:—F. Giles, 2s.; R. Ross, 1s.; W. Owen, 2s. 6d.; E. Sims, 10s.; W. J. Birch, £1; J. M. Wheeler, 5s.; F. B., 2s. 6d.

THE Rev. A. E. Clark, curate of St. Mark's Preston, finds himself unable to agree with the Prayer Book, and announces his intention of quitting the Church.

WALT WHITMAN thinks the Brazil Republic "More shining than the Cross."

Freedom says the *New Cagliostro* is "severely caustic," and hopes it "will have an extensive sale." It is having it.

THE Bradlaugh-Gibson debate still echoes along Tyneside. The Rev. Mr. Walsh has engaged the Nelson Street Lecture Hall for four Sunday afternoons. He intends to deal with the difficulties of Christianity, and has courteously invited the members of the Newcastle Branch, who have accepted the invitation on condition of free discussion, being allowed. Mr. Joseph Brown, the Branch secretary, has arranged to preside at one of the meetings. Mr. Walsh writes like a gentleman, and the proceedings will no doubt be marked by good feeling. The first lecture is fixed for to-day (Jan. 19).

CANON TALBOT is carrying on a series of Monday evening lectures in the Central Hall, Newcastle. In a printed circular to working-men, he says "I know what Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote have to say about the Bible." Well, if he answers what they say he will do wonders, for a clergyman.

MR. R. O. SMITH, honorary treasurer of the London Secular Federation, asks us to print the following list as the result of the chairman's appeal at the recent dinner:—Subscriptions Received—G. Burton, 10s.; Captain Cross, £1 10s.; W. Hunt, £1 1s.; James Rowney, 10s.; Jules Magny, 2s 6d.; H. A. Taylor, 5s.; J. Taylor, 10s.; Miss Emily Johnson, 2s. 6d.; C. H. Culliford. 2s. 6d.; W. Wheeler, 2s. 6d.; R. Malster, 2s. 6d.; C. Kingston, 5s.; Mr. Hillier, 10s.; T. V. Pearce, 10s.; Daylight, 5s.; H. L. Strong, 2s. 6d.; J. Tomkins, 5s.; J. Umpleby, £5; Mrs. Foote, 10s. 6d. Subscriptions Promised—R. Forder, 10s.; Mr. Trummel, 2s. 6d.; A. Reichert, 2s. 6d.; G. Lodge, 5s.; D. Colville, £2; R. McKirdy, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. McMillen, 10s.; G. A. Henning, 10s.; R. Bell, 5s.; G. Rutland, 10s. 6d.; J. Robertson, £1 1s.; Miss M. A. Robin, 5s.; R. Miller, 5s.; G. Ward, £1; A. Moss, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Henley, 5s.; S. Hartman, 5s.

THE headquarters of the American Secular Union are now at Philadelphia, where an office has been taken at 930 N. 17th Street. Miss Ira C. Craddock is the secretary.

A MISS VIRGINIA E. VANCE is among the writers in *Freethought* of San Francisco. No relative we presume to the lady who is so actively known in connection with Milton Hall.

THE Sunday visitors for a year at the People's Palace including the library are estimated at 92 927. Only twelve or fourteen attendants are paid, and there are no policemen kept on the premises. Of course the pious are wild that any should work on Sunday, but the men who are engaged are those who have not been working during the week. Hypocritical Sabbatarians prefer to overwork attendants on Saturday rather than have a fresh relay for Sunday.

WE see that Mr. B. F. Underwood was elected an honorary member of the Nineteenth Century Club of New York, in recognition of his ability as a thinker and of his work as a liberal advocate.

Freedom, of Sydney, Australia, presents its readers with a view of the design which has been accepted for the New Sydney Freethought Hall. It suggests a handsome structure, and one reflecting great credit on the Freethinkers of Sydney. It will be situated in Campbell Street, a fine road some 66 feet wide.

WE are pleased to notice that over 650 dollars have been already subscribed for a monument to the late Horace Seaver, who for above fifty years conducted the *Boston Investigator*.

THE *South London Press* and *Southwark Recorder* both gave good notices of the London Secular Federation dinner.

IT must have been some shrewd sceptic who sent the following queries to the *Bournemouth Guardian*:—"How is it that the Gospels are translated from the original Greek, whereas the founder of Christianity and his apostles must have spoken Hebrew?" "Are the originals of the Gospels in existence?" The answers given are not very satisfactory. All the early fathers spoke of Matthew as being written in Hebrew, yet our version has little evidence of being a translation. The last uestion is answered by a reference to the alleged recent

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discovery of M.S. of about the middle of the fourth century, or something over three hundred years after the time of the originals. Such evidence of a human testament would not satisfy a pettifogging attorney in search of a case.

DR. J. L. YORK, American Freethought lecturer, whose health recently broke down, after the strain of twelve years' hard work, has now recovered and hopes soon to take to the platform again. He says that what the movement wants in America is more speakers and papers.

God and the State is the title of a new pamphlet by Colonel Ingersoll. It should be in the hands of all political reformers, and circulated broadcast by those who desire to see a complete severance between politics and religion. It is one of the Colonel's best efforts, and written under a grave sense of responsibility, for the churches in America are trying hard to subvert the grand old Declaration of Independence.

The Converted Atheist—Mr. Foote's exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's story—is now on sale. The price is one penny. Parcels of fifty copies and upwards can be had at trade price. Freethinkers should circulate the pamphlet widely.

WE understand that a set debate between Mr. Joseph Symes and a clergyman has been arranged. We hope to give fuller particulars shortly.

THE "Humboldt" Freethought Union at Leipsic appears to have a number of capable members. *Menschenthum*, the organ of the German Freethought Union, reports a capital discourse delivered by Walther May.

"GENTLE JESUS, MEEK AND MILD."

(CONCLUDED.)

After giving his disciples the self-same advice which in later years Uriah Heep received from his father, namely, to be 'umble, we find Jesus going up again to the Jewish Passover at Jerusalem, though why does not seem very clear, seeing he had renounced his faith by his baptism, and struck out a new religion of his own. On his way, an unforseen difficulty occurs; it has come to Jesus' knowledge that a certain celebrity of the name of Zechariah, in days of old prophesied that the Messiah would ride into Jerusalem upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass (Zech. ix. 9), though how this feat was to be accomplished is a mystery. Well, here is Jesus nearing Jerusalem with no ass, no colt, nor the wherewithal to purchase these indispensibles. But Jesus was a man of resource, he had been that way before, and knew that in the adjacent village of Bethphage there were both these necessaries. Ha! a happy thought! said Jesus to his disciples. "Go into yonder village, and straight ahead you will find an ass tied and a colt, the foal of an ass with her, loose them and bring them to me." But, supposing they are caught in the act! What then? In this extremity, observe the deliciously ambiguous message which they are to deliver. "The Lord hath need of them" (Mark xi, 13); not "Jesus requires them," or Jesus would be obliged if you would lend them for a short time," but "The Lord hath need of them!" perhaps the poor man thought it was the landlord, to whom perchance, he owed a quarter's rent, perhaps, and what is more likely when he saw twelve great hungry fellows making off with his asinine property, he discreetly gave way to superior force, and inwardly rejoiced that they left him his ox and his wife, his man-servant and his maid-servant and everything else that was his. Any way they captured the ass, and very lucky they were to do so. I fancy one of our London costers would be very loth to part with his moke under such circumstances.

Well, we are told that Jesus, with the aid of the confiscated donkey, made his entry into Jerusalem with great *éclat*, but presently we are treated to a piece of ruffianism the reverse of godly. At these periodical festivals it was customary for the courtyards of the Temple to be thronged with money changers, purveyors of objects for the purpose of sacrifice, and others on the look out for the chance of turning an honest shekel. Jesus falls foul of these gentry, he does not like to see them there, but instead of reproving them gently and shewing them they were committing a trespass, Jesus, not having heard the famous dictum of John Bright, that "force is not remedy," proceeds to make a "scourge of small cords," (John ii., 15.,) and execute a pantomime rally, upsetting the tables of the money changers and driving the others out with their sheep, oxen, doves, &c. Very strange conduct this, for "Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild"! and what a dignified part to play for the founder of Christianity! Engaging with his disciples in a general scrimmage with a crowd of spiritless hawkers!

Now with just one more incident I will close the list, for after this the evangelists speak not so much of the acts of Jesus as his words and teachings, to the mystifying character of which I have already alluded, and shall presently refer to the deplorable effects of his doctrines.

The morning after his little brawl in the Temple, Jesus was returning to Jerusalem with his disciples from Bethany, where they had passed the night, when the cravings of the inner man reminded him he had come out without his breakfast, so he very naturally looked about for the wherewithal to appease his hunger, and soon he espied, afar off, a fig tree. Jesus, (was, the Christians tell us, perfect God, and perfect Man: *i.e.*—in his capacity as God, he could accurately foretell the future, of which as Man he must at the same time be entirely ignorant! Now were he God, he must have known there were no figs on this tree. Were he as a man cognisant of even the rudiments of arboriculture, he must have known it; *but he did not*, for Luke tells us (xi., 13) that he went up to it "if haply he might find anything thereon;" but finds himself sold instead. "Blast the fig tree" cries "Gentle Jesus meek and mild." I do not profess to be able to judge if this was god-like, but it certainly showed a great deal of human nature.

Now these episodes in Jesus' life are not the unimportant incidents of his career, but those very acts which are so glorified by the Christians. What a false faith must that be which converts such a career of bunkum, brag and bullying into "a godly, righteous and sober life"! Is it not time we cast off this tyrannical yoke which prompts a man to say "I am a Christian" when asked his religion, knowing in his own heart that Christianity, as taught and practised by Christ, is a most hellish creed. Truly he was right when he prophesied the effect of his teaching upon generations to come—here are a few of them—think of them ye recipients of Xmas cards, with "Peace on earth and goodwill towards men" printed thereon.

Matt. x., 34, 35:—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Luke xii., 51-53:—"Suppose ye that I come to give peace on earth? I tell ye Nay, but rather division. The father shall be divided against his son, and the son against the father. The mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. The mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law."

Luke xiv, 25:—"If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, he cannot be my disciple."

Truly these terrible prophecies have been fulfilled to the letter, and well may Shakespeare tell us that "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." Is it not time that we dethroned this Jesus Christ as an object of faith and worship, as Wodin, Thor, Friga and Saturn have been dethroned? I do not advocate abolishing the feast of Christmas which comes at the proper time at the end of the year for rest and recreation after twelve months labors, but hope for the time when Christmas shall have no more connection with Christ or Christianity than Saturday has now with that other heathen God, Saturn, who devoured his own children.

F. P.

The close alliance of religion and insanity is illustrated in the letter of a suicide read at his inquest at Chester on Jan. 9:—"My time is at hand. I have finished my course. My life is hid with Christ in God. It is better to fall into the hands of God than the hands of men. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to my charge. Lord Jesus open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. God will certainly visit England with a sword because of her Sabbath breaking. The sword is God's peacemaker—the Bible follows. Adieu." The jury brought in the usual verdict, making no mention of the fact that religion was evidently largely responsible for the calamity,

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CORRESPONDENCE.

OUR DIFFICULTIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have persuaded one of our local newsagents to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window and also to display the contents-sheet outside. He is willing to do so every week providing he can obtain a supply, but his wholesale agent refuses to supply it. He had one dozen sent him for two or three weeks direct from Stonecutter Street, but the postage swallows all the profit. I have promised to take all copies that may remain unsold, but he naturally does not like the idea of pushing the sale of a paper without having any remuneration for it. That the paper will sell in time I have not the slightest doubt as everyone in town knows something of Freethought now. Can you suggest a remedy? Ever since I have been a Freethinker (and that is since you uttered the memorable words, "Thank you, my lord, it is worthy of your creed") I have done my best for the good old cause. I should like to see your little "blasphemer" selling like wildfire and yourself with as large an income as the Archbishop of Canterbury. I have had the great pleasure of listening to three lectures by you—twice in Cardiff and once in London. They were the only Freethought lectures I ever heard and I enjoyed them immensely. Hoping you will be able to suggest some way out of this difficulty, I remain yours faithfully, THOS. WILLIAMS.

A JOSEPH COME TO JUDGMENT.

The lecture which our clever countryman Joseph Thomson, the explorer, delivered in Edinburgh last night, is intellectually worth a whole decade of Spurgeon's sermons, and of more suggestive value than all the Sunday sensationalism of all the John Robertsons that have ever shocked Scottish propriety. But the truths he tells us of European influences in Africa are not palatable. Our intercourse with the natives is, he says, an unmitigated curse, because with our missionaries we introduce guns, gunpowder, and gin. Our trading stations, instead of being centres of beneficence and elevating influence, have been in the past disease-breeding spots, which have infected with demoralising poison the whole country. The Christian missionary, propagating a creed of a delicately exotic character, and having too little of that elasticity and adaptability to the stage of development reached by the people who are to be converted, has been, in fact, a failure, and Mohammedanism has beaten Christianity all along the line. Mr. Thomson sees the cure for this in a total revolution in the method of work—in the proper equipment of missionaries under professors. Only by men having the spirit, the enterprise, and true Christianity of Livingstone can the negro be effectually attacked, and the Cross be reared above the Crescent.—*Glasgow Evening News.*

VISITATIONS OF GOD.

Evidence is accumulating that our heavenly father no longer approves of churches or church going. Here are two instances of divine visitation on the same day, and both in church:

Hopkinville, Ky., Nov. 13.—During service at the colored methodist church last evening, Hannah Gibson suddenly fell dead. She was shouting at the time, when she fell on her face and instantly expired.

Millersburg, O., Nov. 13.—David Love, aged 76 years, of Mechanic township, was stricken with paralysis on Sunday morning while at church, and died this morning.—*Ironclad Age.*

HE WAS PREPARED.—A travelling missionary had been through a very rough country, and his meek spirit had been sorely tried. He had found a spirit of irreverence and disbelief all over the land, and the ground was very stony. But he left in despair when he struck an old man at a railway station in Texas. They were both waiting for the train. They discussed various things, and finally the missionary asked—"Are you prepared to die." "I guess you've always got to be prepared in this country. Yes, I'm prepared to die or get the drop on the other fellow." "I don't mean that. Are you prepared for a hereafter?" "A hereafter! Look here, stranger, I was brought up in Arkansaw, an' I went from there to Missouri, an' from there I came to Texas, an' I've lived here ten years. I guess I can stand any hereafter as may be."

THE LATE SIR HARDINGE GIFFARD, BRADLAUGH-BAITER AND FOOTE-PROSECUTOR.

At Sudbury, an addition was required to the Bench of Magistrates in 1886. The Corporation sent up to the Lord Chancellor three names—a Conservative, a Liberal-Unionist, and a Liberal. The latter (Mr. Mattingly) had served as Mayor for three successive years. The Lord Chancellor only appointed the two former, on which the Town Council earnestly requested him to reconsider his decision. The only reply was an acknowledgment of the memorial. A year ago the Bench again required strengthening, owing to deaths and the illness of its members. The Corporation sent up three names—Mr. Grover (C.), Mr. Mattingly (L.), and Mr. Joy, Mayor (L) The Lord Chancellor entirely ignored these recommendations, and appointed Mr. Salter (L. U.) and Dr. Mason (C.) Mr. Mattingly has now been re-elected mayor, and actually presides over the bench on which the Lord Chancellor considers that he is unworthy to serve. It really is full time that a Parliamentary Committee should investigate the magisterial appointments of Lord Chancellor Halsbury. What has taken place at Sudbury is only an exemplification of what takes place in other towns. A more gross and impudent jobber never sat on the Woolsack. He never loses a chance to prostitute his high office to political wire-pulling. It is full time that he should cease to disgrace the ermine.—*Truth.*

CLERICAL SHINDY.—The vicar and the curate, in the village where we were raised, were not on the best of terms—in fact, the former lost no opportunity in snubbing the latter. A parishioner, one of the oldest and most respectable of the inhabitants, lay dead, and had to buried. The curate was on the spot, the vicar was not; he was absent—as usual, he was late. The curate waited: no vicar appeared, so he began to read the burial service. He had just arrived at the words, "I am the resurrection," when the vicar rushed up, breathless with haste, snatched the book from his hand, and said, in a tone of contempt, "*You* the resurrection? I am the resurrection!" and, as if nothing had happened, he continued the service.

THEY were only just engaged, and had gone to church for the first time after plighting their troth. And the good old grey-headed sky pilot weighed in with the Ten Commandments, and Algernon wondered within himself whether, if he pinched his loved one's arm about the time that the theft clause came on, whether she would rightly interpret his meaning, that she had stolen his heart. He knew she knew them well, so he chanced it. But whether it was that he was too previous, or had got them in his head by the wrong numbers, deponent sayeth not; anyway, he pinched her arm and said, "Now bear this one in mind." Just before the reading of the seventh, and before the eighth came up on the tape, she had indignantly left the church.

DISCORD prevails in the African Methodist Episcopal church of Fairview, Cumberland county, N. J. Deacon Moore heard a noise in his hennery a night or two ago. Instinct told him what it meant. Seizing the loose leg of a three cornered stool he marched boldly out. This exclamatton startled the night: "Brer Tappey. I'se amazed. Don't 'pear to me possible dat you, a deacon in de church——" "Why, bress yo' heart, Brer Moo'," broke in the trembling figure that crouched in the henhouse, "I done cum in heah outen de rain——" "Git out niggah, I'se done clean mad (kerwhack)!). You, a deacon in de church (whack!), comin' roun' a brudder's hennery (bang). Git out!" Deacon Tappey's face looked like a gerry-mandered assembly district map when Deacon Moore got through with him. There is now a division in the church.—*Philadelphia Record.*

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. T. Parris, "How I Became a Freethinker."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F Millar, "Mahomet and Islam."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Capt. Pfoundes, "Buddhism."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 11, Debate; 3.15, General Meeting of Members: 7.15, a lecture.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 7, Harold Cox, B.A., "The Eight Hours Bill."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3, Mr. C. Bentley will open a public discussion on "Socialism" Admission free.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Johnson, "Why I am Not a Christian."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr C. C. Cattell, 7, "The Man of the Past: His Natural Origin, and Great Antiquity."

Chester Le Street—Important meeting at Mr. Gray's, Old Pilton, 6.30, to hear Report from Secretary, etc.

Glasgow—Ramsbottom Hall, 122 Ingram Street, 6.30, Mr. R. M. Ritchie (Edinburgh), "Artemus Ward" (illustrated with readings).

Huddersfield—Littlewood Bridges, Upperhead Row, Mr. Sam Standring, 11, "Better Men than Jesus: Socrates, Plato, etc": 3, "The Fight for Freethought from Luther to Bradlaugh"; 6.30, "Why We are Secularists"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, 8, the Rev. Walter Walsh will lecture on "Bible Inspiration," Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., in the chair. All Secularists are earnestly invited to attend.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. Lord, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

E. Tolefan Garner, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Jan. 19, Portsmouth; 26, Woolwich. Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 23, Woolwich: 30, Westminster.

PROFANE JOKES.

A Michigan paper recently closed an obituary notice with the misquotation, "Though dead, he yet squeaketh." The printer apparently wasn't minding his p's and q's.

A Illinois minister announced on his Sunday night bulletin: "The funeral of Judas Iscariot." To which an obliging friend added: "Friends of the deceased are cordially invited

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The Freethinker

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

ON "CHRIST AND HUMANITY."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

MY LORD,—

I have carefully read your new volume on *Christ and His Times*, and I propose to make it the theme of this letter. When I first saw the volume advertised I thought it would be an historical work, and my curiosity was keenly whetted. A book on such a subject by the head (under the Queen) of the English Church, of which I am by law a member, promised a rare treat to a prowling sceptic. So vast, and so important, is the literature accumulated on this subject since the days of Paley, that I was anxious to see what would now be said upon it by the Archbishop of Canterbury. But, on purchasing your volume, I discovered that you had undertaken a more modest task. Your title was only meant to imply that these are the days of Jesus Christ as well as those in which he lived "in the flesh," and under cover of this pious truism you have merely published some recent charges to the clergy of your diocese.

The volume is beautifully got-up by a high-class publisher. A thin rivulet of type meanders through broad margins of hot pressed paper, and the price of six-shillings for what might have made a shilling *brochure*, is a proof that your exhortations are not intended for common mortals. Indeed, I am puzzled to understand how the poorer clergy of the diocese of Canterbury are to obtain this high-priced wisdom. I would fain hope that your Grace will pity their poverty, and present the poorest of them with a copy of the volume. The gift will make a very minute hole in your income, and the poor clergyman who receives it will no doubt experience a very disproportionate pleasure. He will be able to place it on the parlor table, show it to all his visitors, and even carry it round to the aged and infirm. The possession of such a sumptuous little volume, written by a live Archbishop, will be among the crowning glories of his life.

This is an age of social progress and social speculation, and your Grace is anxious to push the Church to the front as *the* Social Reformer. How the terrible problems that beset us are to be settled is the perplexity, and sometimes the despair, of many earnest thinkers. Your Grace's panacea for all evils is a simple one. We are not to look for the cure in rash political reform. That might wind up with Disestablishment, and send Archbishops with £15,000 a year into the limbo of archæology. Nor should we look for it in socialistic proposals. The idea of such "equality" is enough to send a shudder along the whole bench of Bishops. Your Grace invokes the Church as the good angel of humanity. She is to arrange the conditions between the poor and the rich, out of pure love and holy disinterestedness. And who will refuse to listen to her sweet persuasive voice, the *timbre* of which is maintained by ten million pounds' worth of lozenges per year? She is to flit between the desperate combatants, telling the poor not to be envious and uncharitable, and the rich not to be hard upon their unfortunate brethren. It is an idyllic picture, your Grace, and may commend itself to the rural clergy. But as a remedy for the grievous ills and injustices of modern life its efficacy is equal to that of rose-water for ulcers, or pills for earthquakes.

After reciting a number of social reforms, which have no more to do with religion than with the nebular hypothesis or the integral calculus, you exclaim that "Only the Church can supply the soul of the work." Elsewhere you say that "The English Church rejoices in the light of History, its investigations, its independent tests. She knows that 'Whatever record leap to light she never shall be shamed.'"

It is very good of you to appropriate Tennyson's fine praise of the Duke of Wellington, but I cannot find any independent historian to keep you in countenance. Macaulay's terrific impeachment of your Church, as the steady handmaid of tyranny, who only once raised her voice on behalf of the popular side, namely, in the reign of James II., when she herself was threatened—is too well-known to necessitate my quoting it. I will content myself, and I dare say more than satisfy you, by examining the list of the Bishops' votes in the House of Lords during the present century. When I have done, I am deceived if every candid reader does not allow that the Church has acted in a very extraordinary manner as "the soul" of reform.

In the early part of the century our jusisprudence was a scandal to civilisation. The death penalty was inflicted for trivial offences, and every Monday morning saw men and women hung in batches. Well, in 1810, a Shop-lifting Bill was before the House of Lords. Its object was to abolish capital punishment for stealing property to the value of five shillings from shops. It was defeated by 31 to 11 votes on the second reading. And how did the Bishops vote? Not one of them supported the Bill, and seven of them voted against it. The right reverend fathers in God declared that, so far as they were concerned, hanging should go on wholesale.

Seventy-three years later, in 1883, the Cruelty to Animals Acts Amendment Bill was before the House of Lords. Its object was to abolish the infamous aristocratic sport of pigeon shooting. It was defeated on the second reading by an overwhelming majority. And how did the Bishops act on this occasion? Did they listen to the cry of humanity? Did they show the Church to be "the soul" of reform? Not a bit of it. They acted like knaves and cowards. They were afraid to vote one way or the other, and not a single one of them spoke or took part in the division. They pleased their autocratic friends as far as they could afford to do so, without raising a storm of popular indignation, and helped to perpetuate an unspeakably brutal and degrading form of "sport."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

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PRIESTCRAFT AND RELIGION.

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear and rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." JEREMIAH, v. 31.

SOME of the eighteenth century Deists, carried somewhat too far the argument that religion was at bottom to be identified with priestcraft. Religion has other and far deeper foundations than the self-interest of any particular class. It springs from the deepest wishes and emotions of the human mind. Fear and hope are alike its incentives; but, on the other hand, those who have insisted upon the natural foundations of religion, have often lost sight of, we might say, hid away from view, the fact that priestcraft has had a considerable share in fostering and developing the religious sentiments and making them subservient to its ends.

Toland was perhaps not quite right in summarising the matter in the four following lines:

> Natural Religion was easy first and plain,
> Tales made it Mystery, Offerings made it Gain,
> Sacrifices and Shows were at length prepar'd,
> The Priests ate Roast meat and the People stared.

But those most assuredly are equally wrong who study the phenomena of religion entirely oblivious that the self interest of those who live by it had any share in its maintenance.

As long as a savage pow-wows to his own fetish he suffers from superstition, but not from priestcraft. It is not long, however, before some medicine man persuades him that he has some more potent charm to drive away evil spirits, which he is ready to employ for a consideration. Here we see in simple shape how the very objects of faith may be modified through the action of cunning and self-interest.

Among primitive men the chief of a family or tribe usually has priestly functions, but with increase of territory and tribe comes accumulation of business, and the delegation of religious concerns to another. A priesthood thus established soon takes care to endow and perpetuate itself at the expense of the rest of the community. Wars, plagues and famines give the opportunity. If a battle is lost it is because the gods have been offended; the sacrifices have been insufficient; proper respect has not been shown to the men of God. The priestly caste is a leisured caste, and leisure enables them to cement its power. They are among the first historians and writers; and such stories as those of the deaths of Korah, Dathan and Abihu, for objecting to the authority of Moses and Aaron, and of the forty-two children torn by bears for reviling a prophet, show the sort of moral with which they inclined to adorn their tales. Some share of civil government too they usually contrived to obtain, of which we may find a remnant in the bishops in the House of Peers, and the clerical justices of the peace. Ecclesiastical courts, beginning as tribunals enforcing the discipline of superior priests over inferior priests, soon seek jurisdiction in all cases in which the clergy are concerned, and claim authority above that of any civil court. The history of law, no less than the history of science, is a record of the restraints put on priestly power.

It is to be hoped that the young brides who believe that the clergyman is entitled to the first kiss after they are married, do not know the original meaning of that custom. Herbert Spencer, *Ecclesiastical Institutions*, §646, says:

"On finding 'among the Friendly Islanders the chief priest was considered too holy to be married, but he had the right to take as many concubines as he pleased'—that among the Caribs, 'the bride was obliged to pass the first night with the priest, as a form essentially necessary to constitute the legality of the marriage'—that among some Brizilian tribes 'the Paje (priest), like the feudal lord of former times in some parts of England, enjoys the *jus primæ noctis*;' or again on being reminded of the extent to which prostitution in emples was a religious observance among Eastern people; we are shown, in yet another way, that there is no necessary connection between priestly guidance and right action."

It is difficult to contemplate the wide spread system of "taboo," upon which, as Prof. Robertson Smith in his recent *Religion of the Semites*, shows, the very notion of "holiness" is founded, without seeing how it subserved the interests of the priesthood. No one dared enter the holy of holies save the high priest, to touch the ark, even accidentally was certain death. It was even death to imitate the priestly ointment.

Take again the great central feature of all ancient religious, *sacrifices*. Who can suppose such an institution would have become so all important but that the priests found their account in the food sacrificed? This was not only always of an edible kind, but that of the very choicest quality. We are, indeed, told in plain terms that the sin offering was eaten by the priests (Lev. vii., 6), who even had its skin (vii., 8). Nor is this all. It is clear from Num. xviii,, 12-21, the priests had the right to pick the best of everything, "all the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee."

In the books of the Apocrypha, which according to the sixth Article of the Church of England, are to be read for example of life and instruction of manners, there is an amusing story of Bel and the Dragon, cut off, it is said, from the end of Daniel, because only found in the Greek. The story tells how the Babylonian priests had an idol called Bel, upon whom was spent every day twelve great measures of fine flour, forty sheep and six vessels of wine, which the god was supposed to consume. Daniel got the king's servants to strew ashes in the temple, and though the seals upon the doors were intact, showed him the footsteps of men, women and children, who of course came into the temple by a private way and consumed the provender supposed to be devoured by the god. This story, be it said, not only illustrates the custom in the temple of Bel, but also doubtless that in the temple of Jahveh, where a table of shew-bread was always kept and large holocausts often slaughtered.

No one can look at all carefully over the religious ground—it matters not at what time or in what country—without seeing the "footsteps of men, women and children." We suppose none can be so simple as to suppose the essential situation is changed, because priests prefer offerings in money to offerings in kind.

Just consider the question of *tithes*, how they have been preached as an essential part of religion from the time of Aaron until now. Think of the denunciations of those who dare to refuse these offerings and are thus guilty of robbery of God. Has not the Archdeacon of Montgomery quite recently told of the awful deaths of those who in Wales have dared to commit this blasphemy. Who can suppose that Christianity would be so stoutly defended by so many learned volumes were there not prizes in the shape of rich emoluments attached? Did we not know how men can juggle with themselves and from being called ministers of God come to identify their own interests with those of God, might we not be tempted to suppose that instead of priests being subsidiary to religion, religion in reality is subsidiary to priests.

J. M. WHEELER.

Bishop Fava, of Grenoble, having refused to permit the church to take part in the obsequies of the prefet of l'Isère, on the ground that he was a Freemason, has given rise to a discussion on the relation of the Church to the State; since the Church, whilst continuing to take State pay, consults only itself as to how its duties shall be performed. Sensible people see that if the Church wants liberty, it must at the same time resign its emoluments.

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A BIBLE DISEASE.

WHEN one is an invalid confined to his room, doubtful as to his escape therefrom, he naturally, after taking the advice of the medicine man, is prone to consider whether there may or may not be remedies of a more recondite nature that will ease the sufferer and appease the disease. Those who are acquainted with the ideas of uncivilised, semi-civilised, and even of races fairly advanced in material prosperity such as the Italian, Russian and Irish peasantry, but who are mere children in mental progress, know that other means than scientific are resorted to when their bodies and minds are afflicted with disease. In the religions of antiquity it was a practice to offer in the temples gold, silver, or wax, and even wood models of the organs that had been affected after a cure, such care being attributed to the god to whom the fane was dedicated, and the *ex voti* were exhibited and preserved there to the god's or goddess's credit and power. Such offerings, with others, were of course a splendid source of revenue, and could be used by the priests when other means failed them. Christianity imitated these follies and all others of the ancient superstitions, extending them to an almost unlimited degree; at all events, limiting them only to their knowledge of the various diseases that flesh is heir to. They improved on the pagan practice, and assigned to each country, city, town, and village its patron saint. Churches, seas, rivers, hills, dales, markets, trades, and professions were in like manner provided with one or more of the saints in the calendar. When one had the epilepsy, what doctor was equal to St. Valentine? if the gout, what leech could cure it like St. Maur? St. Martin was invoked for the itch, St. Clara against sore eyes, St. Lucy against the toothache, St. Fiage against nameless diseases, St. John against poison, St. Quintan against coughs, St. Ruffin against madness, St. Romanus against devils, and a hundred others. When a cure was effected a present was made to the saint and deposited at his or her shrine. Every visitor to Catholic countries notes these offerings in every church. How many stop to think what size the churches would require to be if a part was set aside for an offering from those that had invoked the saints and *died?* Protestant Christians, or at least some of them, condemn these practices, it is true, generally on the ground that there is no warranty for them in the Bible; and if the Catholic join issue with them on this score they fall back on corrupted text or mistranslation.

But our object in this paper is to examine a Bible disease, and the peculiar remedy that removed it. In Deut. xxviii., 27, says "The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed."

The revised version has "boil" for botch, and "scurvy" for scab. Samuel Sharpe, in his version renders it thus. "Jehovah will smite thee with the ulcerous inflammation of Egypt, and with the piles, and with the scab, and with the itch, of which thou canst not be healed." Is Sharp justified in translating the Hebrew *ophelim* as piles? We shall see in the sequel. The French Bible gives d'hémorroides, and the Douay "The Lord strike thee with the ulcer of Egypt, and the part of thy body, by which the dung is cast out, with the scab, and with the itch, so that thou canst not be healed." The whole of this chapter of sixty-eight verses is devoted to the blessings and evils promised to the Jews, fourteen to blessings, and fifty-four to curses, ending with the enigmatical curse "and the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee. Thou shall see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bond women, and no man shall buy you." With this preponderance of evil predicted against his *own* people one might exclaim

> "Add not unto thy cruel hate,
> Thy still more cruel love."

Let us see how this threat of the infliction of emerods (whatever they were) was carried out. When Eli judged the Jews, the Philistines, long after the settlement of the former in Canaan and notwithstanding God's *oath* that this land should be theirs for ever, were engaged in one of their frequent wars with them. The heathens were victorious; the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas were slain, together with thirty thousand footmen of the Jews, and the ark in which Jahveh was kept fell into the hands of the victorious Philistines. Eli, when he heard of the latter calamity, fell off his seat and broke his neck. His daughter-in-law, Phineas' wife, gave birth to Ichabod, and fell down dead. The ark was taken by the victors to Ashdod. This city, according to Joshua xv., 47, had been given to the tribe of Judah three hundred years before; and seven hundred years later, according to Nehemiah, it was still in the hands of the aboriginals, and had its own language, which the Jews could not understand; thus are Jahveh's promises fulfilled. Being at Ashdod, the Philistines put the ark in their temple with their god Dagon. But two of a trade seldom agree. During the night there was evidently a row between Jahveh and Dagon, for the next morning Dagon was laying flat on his face. To give their deity a chance, they set him up again, but unwisely left no seconds to see fair play, for the next morning there lay poor Dagon again with his head severed from his body and the palms of his hands cut off. Having given Dagon his quietus, Jahveh turned his attention to Dagon's worshippers, and killed some, and others were smitten with *emerods*. They naturally were anxious to get rid of it, but instead of sending it back to the Jews, they passed it on to another Philistine city, Gath, with the result that Jahveh again went at it, "and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had *emerods* in their secret parts." The people of Gath sent it on to Ekron with the same result—*emerods*, more *emerods*. For seven months this went on, no one thinking or hinting that it would be wise to smash up this fatal box and its contents and burn the lot. Strange to say the priests and diviners of Dagon were called in and consulted, and their advice was that it would not do to send it back as they had captured it, but recommended the making of five golden mice and five golden emerods to send with it. This was done, put on a new cart yoked with two milch kine and sent on to Bethshemish. We will pass over the golden mice, but ye gods and little fishes! what were golden emerods? Ye Bible believers from Genesis to Revelation, enlighten us on this marvellous construction. What became of them afterwards? Did Samuel have the care of them. Did they pass as heirlooms to Saul and David, or did Solomon use them for the decoration of the temple? Golden *emerods*!! Why not try for the prevailing epidemic half a dozen golden influenzas and send them to prophet Baxter or St. Paul's Cathedral. And, now supposing Sharpe's translation is the correct one as given above, will the Christian Evidence Society take immediate steps to verify God's blessed word from the cavilings and revilings of ignorant sceptics, by at once requesting the Goldsmiths Company, (who I believe have aforetime given it a donation, "to stem the infidelity of the streets,") to make fine golden *piles* which might be sent for careful preservation to to the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons.

R. FORDER.

Mother: "Do you know, Bobby, who wrote the story of the loaves and fishes I've been telling you about?" Bobby: "No; but it sounds a good deal like pa's funny yarns."

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WERE THE JEWS IN EGYPT?

Professor Albert Leighton Rawson, LL.D., who writes in the current number of the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, on "The Pharaoh of the Exodus," is one of the greatest of American travellers. He has spent many years in the East, and written on the *Antiquities of the Orient*, the *Chorography of Palestine*, etc. Like our own Freethinking traveller, Captain Richard F. Burton, he penetrated to Mecca disguised as a Mahommedan. It is worthy of note that this person, who has studied the questions on the spot, holds that the alleged twelve tribes of Israel, never had any definite historical existence as twelve tribes, the two known as Judah and Israel alone having historic reality. He also holds that there is no proof that the Jews were ever in Egypt, and justly remarks that "Apion, a Greek in the first century of our era, attacked Josephus for advocating what he considered an absurd claim of the Hebrews to a remote antiquity, and of which no one had ever heard of before, and Josephus was unable to offer one word of real evidence in support of the claim."

Prof. Rawson addresses himself to the task of replying to a paper in the *Century Magazine*, in which the Rev. John A. Paine seeks to identify Seti-Menephtah of the Egyptian Monuments, a first-born son of Pharaoh who sat on a throne, with the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Prof. Rawson says "This absolute identity, if it were true, would only prove that the writer of the story of the Exodus knew the inscription on the monument, for in the absence of any reference to the Hebrews, anywhere in Egypt, the story cannot be connected with history." But Prof. Rawson gives good reason to show that Seti-Menephtah cannot be so identified, since there is no word of any of his people being slaughtered with him, and he is honored in a way not bestowed on any who died a violent and untimely death.

Professor Rawson mentions that the Jews were unknown to ancient historians as Herodotus, Ctesias, Thucydides or Xenophon, and they were unknown to Pharaoh Shishak when he conquered Palestine and mapped it in 960 B.C. (Turin Papyrus). After showing the different dates assigned for the Exodus, varying from 1866 B.C. to 1283, he says:—

"The Exodus has no place in time. Have the scholars located it on the maps? No. From the earliest to the latest in the Christian era, we read of guesses and arbitrary assignments of localities, but of no proof to any one out of four or five routes or localities, had any claim above those of another site. The mythical Israelites are made to cross the Red Sea a few miles south of Suez, where the water is from fifty to seventy feet deep for eight miles across from Jebel Atakah to the shore near the so-called Wells of Moses; or to march around north of Suez, where for three or four miles the water is shallow enough to admit of wading, as Napoleon attempted to do; or they are assigned to a route by the Bitter Lakes, to which place the Red Sea is supposed to have extended at that time: and finally, Dr. Brugsch would have the route through or near the marshes by the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, which are filled with reeds, for the Hebrew name of Red Sea is Reedy Sea (Yam Suf).

In neither of these localities is there a stone or any monument, whatever, or any inscription, or anything that can be offered as evidence of the alleged Exodus. Some very sanguine Christians once proposed to explore the Red Sea, near Suez, for the wheels of Pharaoh's chariots, but no discoveries have been reported.

Of course there is a possibility that some fact underlay the Jewish traditions of Egyptian bondage, but Christian advocates are compelled to fall back on their imaginations for anything in the way of actual evidence.

At present bull-fights are usually performed on festal days, and form part of most great religious festivals, especially those in honor of the Virgin.—Lecky, "*History Rationalism*," vol. i., p. 303.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL.

The rumor that some of Mr. Goschen's surplus will be used to "assist" elementary schools in the Tory fashion has stirred up the Nonconformists, who loudly declare their intention to fight to the death against the disguised endowment of Church schools with the taxpayer's money. For that is what the Government is said to be contemplating. "Free education" is to be carried by giving Church schools all the cash they need, and freeing them from all control by the people's representatives.

A *Pall Mall Gazette* man has interviewed some of the Nonconformist leaders. Dr. Clifford proclaims himself a supporter of the "Secularist plank." He is for ending these wretched intrigues, and this constant struggle, by excluding all religion—even the reading of the Bible—from our public schools. But he confesses to a fear that the general body of Nonconformists will not accept this view.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, of course, wants to keep the Nonconformist religion at the expense of Jews and Freethinkers. He thinks the conscience cause is quite good enough for *them*, but his blood boils at the idea of Nonconformist children experiencing the tender mercies of the conscience clause in Church schools. He is for keeping religious education in the curriculum, but there should be nothing sectarian; that is, there should be just as much Christianity taught as the sects can agree upon. Poor Hugh Price Hughes! He has as much logic in him as a donkey. He does not see that the Church will beat Dissent hollow on this wretched no-principle of self-interested compromise.

Dr. Parker is more sagacious. With all his faults he is no fool. He speaks out very clearly:—"I would get rid of all priestism, ecclesiasticism, and religious teaching of every sort and kind from rate-aided schools; all schools should become Board schools, and personally I would give no public aid where any religion is taught, whether Papal, Anglican, or Nonconformist, during school hours. Secularism pure and simple is my motto in day-school education."

It is thus apparent that the Dissenters are divided, and unless the division is healed the Church will win an easy victory. The duty of Freethinkers is clear. They must uphold the flag of secular education, and they must do so in loyal co-operation with such of the Nonconformists as accept and support the principle. A big battle is looming before us. If the Church wins, priestcraft and dogma will secure a new lease of life. If the Church is beaten, we shall be within measurable distance of a public school system without a tincture of religion. The priest will then be relegated to the pulpit, and the child's mind will be freed from his cramping influence.

ACID DROPS.

Dr. Sisley, in the current number of the *Universal Review*, gives some remarkable reputed cures for influenza. Sir Monier Williams, for example, tells a story of the cure of a whole village by a Hindoo doctor, who assembled the people, and solemnly let loose a pair of scapegoats into a neighboring wood which was supposed to be infested by demons. This method is exactly equivalent to the one ordered by God in Leviticus xvi. for getting rid of sin. Yet the one would doubtless be ridiculed by Sir Monier Williams as an absurd superstition, while the other is extolled as divine.

The Oberammergau Passion Play, which is performed every ten years in commemoration of the village being spared from a pestilence, will be produced on Whit-Monday next, and already great preparations are being made for the influx of visitors which the event brings to the Tyrol. Joseph Mayer again plays the character of J. C., and is in Vienna to have his photo taken in a number of positions. What a pity it is the original J. C. cannot favor his admirers with a faithfully executed photograph

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They would be probably considerably astonished to find he was a swarthy hook-nosed Jew.

The important character of Judas will this year be taken by a person, Johann Zwink by name, whose capable representation of St. John ten years ago shows his fitness for the more difficult, if not higher, *rôle* of the red-haired disciple. Mary the Virgin will be taken by Rosa Leng, and Magdalene by Amalia Deschlam, both new to their respective parts.

The Vicar of Clewer St. Stephen says "If a Bible accidentally falls, we always kiss it on picking it up." All the reverend gentleman has now to do is to sit and talk to the Bible. Then he might give daily performances in public, so that the world might learn the glorious upshot of a State Church, and the perfection to which Bibliolatry may be carried.

Modern Society is a little out in its reckoning. It finds that one shilling per day was allowed for the expenses of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, who was a prisoner at Winchester in 1307. This amount included the cost of a man servant and a boy, with a daily mass by the chaplain. Of course it could not have been done for a shilling at the present purchasing-power of money. Multiply the shilling by twenty, and we shall be much nearer the right figure. Still there is a big chasm between £365 a year and the £15,000 which it takes to keep the Archbishop of Canterbury out of heaven.

A minister once said he would have a good time in this world were he not afraid of going to hell. He was asked "Do you live an honest life simply because there are gaols"?

A man called on an artist the other day and inquired if he could paint him a picture of his father. "Yes" said the artist. "Where is your father?" "Why" replied the man "he's been dead this ten years." "Dead ten years! How can I paint him then?" "Well!" said the visitor "I thought there would be no difficulty about that, seeing as you have just painted a picture of Moses who died some thousands of years ago." The artist, seeing the sort of customer with whom he had to deal, agreed for a certain sum to paint the required picture, and when completed a a day was fixed for its inspection. Uncovering the painting the artist showed his client what purported to be a likeness of his deceased parent. After mutely gazing a few minutes he asked "And is that my father?" "Yes" replied the painter. "Well, here's your money, but I never should 'a believed ten years would have made such a wonderful change."

The *British Weekly* is now discussing the question, "Does Christianity Forbid War?" Eighteen hundred years have not sufficed to unite Christendom on such a fundamental question as this, the truth being that texts can be found to suit either side of this or almost any other question. On the one hand J. C. is alleged to have said, "Resist not evil"; and on the other, "Let him that hath no sword sell his garment and buy one."

The *Golden Gate* thus reviews the most recent joint production of the Theosophists at Landsdowne Road. "If there is any Atma-Buddhi, Manasic, eidolon among our readers, whose Kama-Rupa has not yet assimilated sufficiently with the higher triads to understand all about the Devachanic state, we advise him to come up out of Kama-loka, impregnate his Ego with the ideal efflorescence of the abstract and read the book."

The Bishop of Lincoln officiated on Sunday morning at St. Agnes Church, Kennington Park. There was a fine display of pious trumpery. Decorations were on an extensive scale, and six enormous fir trees occupied the arches of the three bays of the nave. A richly-gilded screen was also on view. There was incense, orientation at the "Glorias," and kneeling in the middle of the Creed, with ceremonial processions at the opening and the close of the service, the bishop and his clergy perambulating the Bethel accompanied by a retinue of acolytes, thurifers, crucifers and banner-bearers. If Bishop King goes on at this rate he will soon eclipse Barnum.

Fancy all this addle-headed nonsense being thought conducive to the salvation of souls! Fancy a God who feels pleased at seeing a grave, elderly episcopus gallivanting about a church like a master of the ceremonies at a Foresters' Feast! Still, we don't at all object to Bishop King carrying on in this fashion. On the contrary, we rather like it. It helps to bring the Church into discredit, and that helps on the cause of Disestablishment—and Disendowment!

The *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* is responsible for the statement that the Bishop of Newcastle sometimes goes about in disguise in order the better to oversee the souls of his diocese. Recently while travelling third class in somewhat seedy clerical garb he was accosted by a pitman. "'Ise suppose ye're a poor curate noo, travelling wi the likes o' us." "I once was" replied the bishop, "but——" "Oh ay," cried the other "I understand; that cursed drink. It brings many down of all sorts."

Some of our contemporaries must have learnt their arithmetic from the Bible instead of Colenso. They gravely tell us—even the *Speaker* does—that we have just entered on the last decade of the nineteenth century. Now 1891 begins the last decade, not 1890; just as 1901, not 1900, begins the twentieth century.

A story is appearing in the papers of two reverend gentlemen, both canons, riding in a third-class carriage in Wales. Finding a poor hawker of stockings in their compartment, they call a porter to turn him out, as they want a private conversation. The porter, of course, declines to do anything of the kind, and says the hawker has as much right there as the parsons. But the poor hawker, being much the finest gentleman of the three, offers to go to another compartment, and does so, leaving the sky-pilots to have their talk out and feel themselves a mean and contemptible brace of prigs.

The legal adviser of the Salvation Army is a blind man. What a pity it is that Booth can follow Jesus in nothing but hauling in the shekels. If he could only do the clay-and-spittle ointment trick, Dr. Ranger might soon have a pair of sound optics.

"Should the Clergy Smoke?" Such is the momentous question discussed in *Answers*. Cannon Farrar and Mr. Talmage are emphatic against the "noxious weed." On the other hand Mr. Spurgeon smokes the very best cigars that money can buy, and it is confidently remarked that if a poll of the parsons were taken, the immense majority would like to "go and do likewise." Some think the clergy are quite right to smoke at home, but that they weaken their influence if they appear smoking in public. Just fancy Jesus Christ puffing an Havannah while descending from the mountain, or whiffing at a churchwarden while ascending up to heaven.

Sarah Hawkridge, a charwoman, put forward her little daughter, something over six, as a witness in her favor at Bow Street Police Court. Being asked "What book do you call the Bible?" the child answered "The Prayer-book." Mr. Bridge then asked her "Who will punish you if you tell an untruth?" and the child answered "No one." The reply was perfectly accurate, in all probability, but the child's evidence was refused. Had she told a long, lying, silly rigmarole about Hell and the Devil, the magistrate would have treated her as a competent witness.

A Nottinghamshire parson, at a local Conservative dinner, has delivered himself in response to the toast of the "Bishop and Clergy" as follows:—If they looked back at what had been done during the past year they would find that nearly everything had improved except the Grand Old Man, and he was afraid he would never improve, for he had just received the following telegram from Hades:

Says the Devil, "This place is as full as can be,"
But I *would* like to make room if I can;
So he let Ananias and Judas go free,
And took in the Grand Old Man.

We do not presume to question the statement that this political parson is in direct communication with the locality in question, only he has forgotten that it is supposed to be ruled by the father of lies.—*Echo*.

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We don't wonder at a parson's receiving telegrams from Hades, for the Devil and the clergy have always been good friends, at least under the rose. What we should like to see the parsons able to boast is a telegram from Heaven. They haven't had a message from that quarter for nearly two thousand years.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Whyte has been lecturing at Edinburgh on Imagination. Among other things, he said that the first and the last pages of the Bible were the fruit of imagination. Whoever penned the first chapter of Genesis, containing the account of Creation, it was from his imagination that he copied it. And this in Scotland, the land of orthodoxy and heresy-hunts! What is the world coming to?

There was no mistake about Talmage having the influenza when in London. He got friends to offer him a good round sum and to put out big bills announcing his sermon at Holborn Central Hall, and was then unable to put in an appearance.

Talmage when in the East was forced to give his testimony to the devoutness of Mohammedans. He says that not one in a hundred thousand Christians would venture in public places to demonstrate his religious faith in the manners customary to the followers of the false prophet.

The Rev. Walter Walsh of Rye Hill Baptist Chapel, seems to be one of the shuffling Christians, who try to preach a brand new doctrine under guise of the old faith. "Lecturing on "Some Mistakes of Unbelief," he is reported as saying "They might say, too, that, Darwin knew more of science than did Moses, and Herbert Spencer was a better preacher of ethics than was Jacob, and with that he agreed. But unbelievers did not attack so much the theology of to-day as that of a past age." Christian Theology, he wished unbelievers to notice, has been moving on. Yes it has, simply because science and criticism have been at its heels, and it has moved so rapidly with Mr. Walsh, that Jesus Christ himself would not recognise it. "He that believeth not shall be damned" was disingenuously explained by Mr. Walsh as meaning only condemned or judged, irrespective of the other passages in the gospels which prove the belief in everlasting fire. But Mr. Walsh preaches the gospel of treacle with all the brimstone left out.

This is what the *Reporter's Magazine* says:—"If you want to make journalism pay, have nothing whatever to do with any of the religious papers if you can help it, as the majority of them pay very niggardly, whilst one or two are downright frauds."

The Rev. C. Lloyd Engstrom at the clerical meeting at Islington said of the cursing Psalms. "They need not be supposed to express any personal vindictiveness, but rather the sense of outraged justice." When the man after God's own heart says of his enemy "Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off," etc. We must suppose this pious wish towards fatherless children is the outcome of the sense of outraged justice. What greater outrages are there on justice than these defences of the Christian Evidence advocates?

Another Atheist didn't commit suicide, or rather another Christian did. His name was Moses Glass, and he dwelt at Frome. In a letter to a friend, Mr. Rawlings, he wrote—"Good bye, God bless you, as I hope he will forgive me." Talmage please note.

"Lay not up to yourself treasures upon earth" was hardly the motto of the late Rev. Hy. G. Watkins, vicar of St. John's, Potter's Bar, the value of whose estate amounts to upwards of £251,000.

Signor Baldacchino, secretary to the Congregation of Charity, Rome, has disappeared, leaving defalcations amounting to about 15,000 francs. He was very pious and was chosen by good people as the means of distributing their benefactions.

Who's Griffiths? Well, she advertises in the *Church Times* for a girl's school where the birch is laid on well. Fancy such an advertisement in the *Freethinker!* It is the Christians who cling like limpets to every form of stupid brutality.

The *Jewish World* seeks to show that modern scientific views upon life and death can be made to fit in with the Genesis story, as thus. In the earliest epoch of history, when life was manifested in unicellular organisms, death was unknown. The simple creatures of those days propagated their kind, much as Adam before the fall, by painless division. At last an ambitious amœba yearned for a more complex structure, and with it came death and the struggle with natural selection. The result of this reconciliation of science and Genesis is, of course, to make Adam a unicellular organism. But this need trouble no lover of his Bible.

The *North West London Gazette* reports a smart attack by Mrs. Besant on the inspiration of the Bible in a lecture delivered at Milton Hall. The reporter finds one thing in her favor—she does not, like Mr. Foote, go "out of her way to revile the Creator." The reporter forgets that Mrs. Besant has now got a God, while Mr. Foote has none.

The reporter asks how it is, if Freethought is spreading, that our meeting-places are so few. He should remember that, under the existing law, Secularism cannot receive a legacy. If a legacy is left it—as in the case of Mr. Spencer of Manchester—the Christian law sets the legacy aside. Surely, after robbing us of what we should possess, it is rather hard to ask us where are the places we have built with it.

Mr. Bradlaugh asked the House of Commons to abolish this infamous law, but an overwhelming majority refused to do so. It is high time that Christians ceased robbing us. If they treated us with common honesty we could smile at their impertinent questions.

Chief Rabbi Adler died at Brighton on Tuesday morning. He was a tough specimen of his race, but he was not distinguished by any special service in the cause of progress. We believe the poor East-end Jews, who made a fight against sweating, did not succeed in gaining any of his sympathy. There is a more distinguished Dr. Adler in America, a man of liberal ideas and character, with whom the deceased Rabbi was sometimes confused in the public mind.

The Philistines have a hard grip on poor Ernest Parke, who is doing twelve months' imprisonment for "libelling" Lord Euston. No one acquainted with Mr. Parke will doubt his being animated by a high sense of duty, and we hope the agitation for a shortening or a mitigation of his sentence will be successful. We feel a special interest in Mr. Parke for he is a Secularist. He was down for a toast at both annual dinners of the London Secular Federation, although his press duties prevented his fulfilling the engagement.

Enterprising burglars broke into the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, Birmingham, on Monday night and rifled the poor box. We don't know what Cardinal Newman thinks of it but, in our opinion, the crime of the burglars was less in breaking into a church than in robbing the poor. We hope the rascals will be captured.

Cardinal Newman's last days ought not to be disturbed by such a miserable incident. He is the only Catholic dignitary for whom we have very much respect, and we have spent many an hour over his exquisite pages. We can imagine his lofty disdain of mere ecclesiasiastics like Manning. When that bigoted priest was shouting damnation at Mr. Bradlaugh, the great Cardinal at Birmingham refused to sign a petition against the admission of an Atheist to Parliament; saying, in his quiet, dignified way that he did not understand the fuss that was being made; he only knew of one oath, the Christian oath, and that was abolished when Jews were admitted to the House of Commons.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 26, Secular Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell, 7.30, "An Hour with the Devil."

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. B. P.—Cuttings are always welcome.

PETER.—Your verse is hardly up to the mark.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A. Anderson, 5s.; J Murray, 1s.; G. J. Judd, 1s.; J. Mosenthal, £1 1s.; C. H., £1. J. Crabtree, £1.

NORTH DEVON.—Yes, the second series of *Bible Heroes* will be bound up like the first. There was a break-down with the last two numbers, but we hope to have them ready again some time next week.

P. BRABAZON.—Thanks. Extracts are always welcome.

A. B. MOSS.—Always pleased to hear from you. We know the younger lecturers require encouragement, and we have always done our best to give it, without being very cordially seconded.

G. H. JUDD.—Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is selling well in your district. We have dealt with H. L. Hasting's lecture before. His footnote about Thomas Paine's deathbed is a lie, and his statement that Paine crawled into a drunkard's grave would be best answered, perhaps, by a blow on the mouth.

J. KEAST.—We thank you for your efforts to promote our sale. So long as newsagents are too timid or bigoted to do justice to this journal, we have a claim on the good offices of our readers, who, by lending the *Freethinker* about, are able to materially promote our circulation.

J. BURRELL.—See paragraph.

AMICUS says: "I have read your open letter to the Bishop of Peterborough with great satisfaction, and am circulating the pamphlet amongst my friends. I hope many other readers will go and do likewise."

C. H. KELF (Newcastle).—Canon Talbot's answer is disingenuous. The Jews at the time of Christ are supposed to have spoken a Syrian dialect, such as we have a fragment or two of in the Gospels. That they spoke Greek is an absurd statement. Josephus says his countrymen in Palestine were averse to learning any language but their own, and he himself—an educated man of leisure—mastered Greek with great difficulty.

JAMES HOOPER.—It would be impertinent to question the solidity of a veteran like yourself. We know what gallant work you did in the stormy days of old.

A. DOEG, secretary of the Liverpool Branch, writes:—"I hope to see in next week's *Freethinker* that you have suffered no ill effects from your journey here. On behalf of the Branch I beg to thank you for your valuable counsel, and sacrifice of personal comfort, in what seemed to us a moment of danger."

W. ELDER (Paisley).—Pleased to see your "fist" again. We don't know of any good book against Swedenborgianism. White's *Life of Swedenborg* is very plain-spoken on the subject of his madness.

A. HINDLEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

IGNORAMUS.—(1) Mr. Holyoake's works in print can be ordered through Mr. Forder. (2) Yes. (3) Of course. (4) We don't know, unless the herding of children away from home breeds mischief. (5) Perhaps so. (6) Read the account of Socrates by Xenophon. (7) Jesus apparently meant that those who are interested in the things of this life are careless about the things of the next. (8) Yes. (9) Competitions without prizes are apt to be dull.

C. B. HYDE.—If you wish to join the N.W. London Branch you can do so any Sunday evening at Milton Hall. The general Secretary is Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. We hope to see a large accession of members this year.

G. STANDRING acknowledges receipt of 2s. 6d. from C. Williams for the London Secular Federation.

C. H.—We shall be happy to receive your "occasional donation," and beg to thank you for helping to lighten the burden of conducting this journal.

STUPID AWE.—The lady's explanation of the barren fig-tree business is sheer nonsense. Besides, Scripture says "the time of figs was not yet." Anyhow, cursing a barren fig-tree is a queer game for a wise man to play, much more an all-wise God. If that young lady ever gets married, and has no children, she would hardly recognise the Lord's right to curse her for it.

SHANKS.—You ought to be happy with thirty Freethinkers on board your ship. Don't quarrel with the pious folk who come on board to convert you. They are deuced malicious when crossed, and poor Jack has few rights. When you have a collar round your neck you must go easy. Kick out now and then, when it is safe.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Reading Observer—North-Western Gazette—Menschenthum—Western Figaro—Evening Standard—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—La Verité—Bulletin des Sommaires—Fritankaren—Jewish World—Der Arme Teufel—Liberator—Leicester Daily Post—Referee—Newcastle Daily Leader—Child of the English Savage—Manchester Guardian—Philadelphia Sunday Item—Freethinkers' Magazine—Der Lichtfreund.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

SIR DAVID WEDDERBURN, who presided over the National Congress in Bombay, has arrived in England. He gives a very encouraging account of Mr. Bradlaugh's health, describing him as quite a changed man. We hope Mr. Bradlaugh's presence will soon corroborate this good news.

INSTEAD of being at home nursing himself, Mr. Foote was lecturing at Liverpool on Sunday. The afternoon audience was far from large, but the morning lecture was well attended, and in the evening the hall was very unpleasantly crowded. Mr. Foote did his best to re-assure the Branch. There does not appear the least danger of a prosecution at present. The police appear to see that they far exceeded their duty, and the idea of treating Freethought lectures as "entertainments" under the local Act of 1889 is simply preposterous. But whatever follies the authorities may commit, the Branch will assert its rights, and will be supported by the whole Freethought party. Mr. Foote's remarks on this point were lustily applauded.

THERE are some able young men connected with the Liverpool Branch, well fitted to occupy the platform. Mr. Foote urged upon them, as well as upon the older members, the advisability of forming a South Lancashire Secular Federation for local purposes. It is to be hoped that this project will be matured during the summer, and carried into effect in the autumn. Mr. Foote promises all the help in his power, and ample publicity shall be afforded in our columns.

THOMAS PAINE'S birthday will be celebrated next Wednesday evening at the London Hall of Science. Messrs R. O. Smith and G. Standring, on behalf of the Secular Federation, have provided a good entertainment, and Mr. Foote will deliver a brief address on the author of the *Age of Reason* and the *Rights of Man*. Dancing will begin at 11 o'clock. The tickets are one shilling each, and the profits will accrue to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, which is in a sad state of depletion. There ought to be a big gathering.

OUR readers are again invited to circulate Mr. Foote's exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's "Converted Atheist." The articles that appeared in the *Freethinker* are reprinted, with a Prologue and an Epilogue, at the lowest possible price of one penny. One gentleman, living near the headquarters of the Wesleyan Sisterhood, has taken five dozen copies for distribution. Mr. Forder will supply quantities at trade price to private purchasers.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—We have received the following—A. Anderson, 5s.; Lover of Liberty, £1 10s.; H. E. L., £1; A Friend, 10s.; A Radical, £2.

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MR. R. FORDER acknowledges receipt of the following—J. Mosenthal, £1 1s.; F. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Powe, 2s. 6d.; H. Abbott, 1s.; J. Roos, 1s.; F. Roos, 1s.; J. Robinson, 1s.; C. H. G., 6d.; A. C. G., 6d.; S. Hartman, 5s.; A. Watts, 2s. 6d.

WE have just received a long letter from Captain Otto Thomson. He thanks us for keeping the Swedish persecutions before the Freethinkers of England, and says that the help we are sending is putting new courage into the veins of the gallant little band of heroes who are holding up the flag of the *Fritankeren*. Already their cause is attracting the quiet support of some influential people in Sweden, and letters of sympathy are coming in from the leading Freethinkers of America.

The *Reading Observer* gives a very admirable report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture in the Assembly Room. It also reports a lecture on the following evening by the great Barber of Northampton. This worthy could not help seeing that Mr. Foote had spoken like a gentleman to everybody's satisfaction; so he explained it on the ground that Mr. Foote was "feeling his way." "Wait till he is successful here," said Barber, "and then you will hear some terribly strong language." Well, if Mr. Foote tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, he showed himself a dexterous propagandist.

WHO on earth employed this ignoramus of a Barber to hold forth at Reading? According to the *Observer* report he opened his mouth as follows:—"The New Testament could not have been written in any other age than the first century, because the language of the New Testament ceased to be spoken after the destruction of Jerusalem." Gods and little fishes! What does the man mean?

MR. FOOTE'S lecture at Reading resulted in the formation of a Branch of the National Secular Society, which was started on Sunday evening with seventeen members. We believe the Branch will double its strength in a month or two.

J. MORISON DAVIDSON is contributing a series of "Apostles of Democracy" to the *Weekly Dispatch*. The second, which appeared last week, was on Thomas Paine. Mr. Davidson deals fairly with Paine's religious views, and denounces the humbugs who tried to convert him on his death-bed, and who, having failed to do so, bespattered his memory with slander. A generous tribute is also paid to gallant old Edward Truelove.

A CORRESPONDENCE has been taking place in the *Wigan Examiner* on the contentions between Papists and Protestants on the true Catholic religion, the Immaculate Conception, etc. We are pleased to notice that J. K. Tomlinson has struck in, and in smiting the old Romish Church he aims some pretty severe blows at Christianity itself.

VOLUME II. of *The Life, Labors, and Times of Robert Owen*, by the late Lloyd Jones, brought out under the superintendence of Mr. Malcolm Lloyd Jones, will shortly be published by Swan Sonnenschien and Co.

MR. J. CLARKE, our latest recruit on the platform, is to lecture at Liverpool on February 23, and he is anxious to spend a fortnight lecturing in the neighborhood. The South Lancashire towns would do well to engage his services. Mr. Clarke is not exorbitant. He only wants to live, in order to work.

MR. A. B. MOSS lectures in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, to-day (Jan. 26). He will be happy to see old friends and meet new ones. Mr. Moss is a zealous propagandist and deserves support.

THE Rev. W. Walsh delivered the first of his course of lectures on Sunday afternoon in the Nelson Street Lecture Hall, Newcastle. There was over an hour's discussion, and the Secularists are delighted with the result. The Branch is trying to bring about a debate between Mr. Foote and Canon Talbot.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—We have received the following: A. Cooper, 2s. 6d.; Amicus, 2s. 6d.; R. Bell, 5s.

HALL OF SCIENCE CHILDREN'S PARTY:—Mr. Ely, 6d.; W. T. Leekey, 3s.; W. J. Woillaume, 5s. and box of sweets; a box of sweets from R. A. Cooper, Norwich.—R. Forder.

THE Camberwell Branch is going to have a Children's Party on February 12. Subscriptions and donations of articles for the Christmas Tree will be gratefully received by the new secretary, Mr. W. Lappage.

A NEW and fine crematorium has been erected at Zurich, where we learn the cost of five burials will only be ten shillings. The movement does not progress so rapidly in France as we should fancy, judging from a list of only twenty-one, eleven men and ten women, who were cremated from January to October last year. It takes time to break down old customs, and no doubt a change of feeling upon the subject of burial is going on both in England and on the Continent.

I HAVE seen bodies cremated at the crematorium at Milan, and there is absolutely nothing repulsive in the process. I made up my mind to be cremated directly I had seen "how it was done." One can look forward with a certain amount of pleasure to spending one's time till the day of the trumpet-call as a nice little parcel of clean white ashes in a nice clean urn, but there is something repellent in the idea of passing a few centuries in a damp vault—merely a packing-case of corruption. "Tinned corpse" is an abomination, and the time has come to say so. We can only hurry cremation on by ceasing to mince our words about the present loathsome and pestilential system of human interment.—G. R. Sims in *Referee*.

WE read that the Rev. F. H. Stead, a congregational minister of Leicester, brother to the editor of *The Review of Reviews*, has resigned in order to devote a year to systematic reading and research. But for the fact that his modesty has been so well advertised, we should have a word of praise for Mr. Stead. We hope his study will be thorough, and that we shall henceforth congratulate him upon the result as we do now upon having escaped the shackles of the ministry.

THE *Freidenker* of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, issues an almanac with its number for Jan. 7. The *Freidenker* can be commended to all readers of German as full of interesting readable matter.

WE are glad to notice that the portrait of Mr. H. L. Green, the editor, adorns the January number of the *Freethinkers' Magazine*. Mr. Green is a long bearded man with a good head and keen, thoughtful, American face. There are also portraits of Miss Helen H. Gardener, the lecturess, and Miss Ira C. Craddock, the new secretary of the American Secular Union. Views of the medallion portraits of Palearia, Sarpi, Vanini, and Campanella, which adorn the Bruno monument, are also given. The literary contents include a lecture by Col. Ingersoll; "Religion or no Religion?", an open letter to H. O. Pentecost by A. B. Bradford; an able article on "The Pharaoh of the Exodus," by Prof. A. L. Rawson, who holds there is no proof the Jews were ever in Egypt, Reminiscences by Lucy Colman, and other interesting articles.

THE San Francisco Freethought Publishing Company is fairly started. *Freethought* has removed to new and larger premises, No. 838 Howard Street, San Francisco.

MISS SUSAN H. WIXON, editor of the "Children's Corner" of the New York *Truthseeker* and a writer in the *Boston Investigator*, has recently been elected to the School Board of Fall River, Massachusetts, her opponent being a popular Episcopal minister.

MR. SYMES has begun in the *Liberator* what promise to be important articles on "The Roman Catacombs." He points out the absurdity of supposing that a persecuted people, as the early Christians are said to have been, being allowed to excavate 350 miles of galleries, and shows that

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the symbols found in the Catacombs are rather Pagan than peculiarly Christian.

WE are delighted to hear from the *Liberator* that our Sydney friends will lay the foundation stone of their handsome new hall in Campbell Street in the present month of January. Mr. Collins and the Sydney friends are to be congratulated. There is no doubt Secularism has a large future before it in all the colonies.

THE French Federation of Freethinkers have started a monthly Bulletin, which may be obtained from the Secretary, 6 Rue de Jarente. We notice that the full report of the Paris International Conference, Sept. 15—20, 1889, is now in the press. It will consist of a volume of 320 pages and be published at two francs.

WE are glad to notice from *La Verité* that there is a decided improvement in the organisation of French Freethinkers, owing to the impulsion given by the Congress of September last.

MR. SAM STANDRING debated on Monday and Tuesday at Liverpool with Mr. George Wise of the Christian Evidence Society. The subject was Atheism, there were good audiences, and we hear that Mr. Standring gave great satisfaction to the Secular side.

PARSONS PULL THE STRINGS.

According to the codes issued by the Education Department, the religious opinions of any candidate for the post of a school teacher under a School Board are not to be inquired into when seeking employment. Yet the following advertisements appear in an educational contemporary :—

EMBERTON SCHOOL BOARD. — WANTED, 25th of March or earlier, a Certificated MASTER. Member of Church of England preferred.

GADDESBY SCHOOL BOARD.—WANTED immediately, for a Small Mixed School, a First Class Certificated MISTRESS. Must be Musical and able to play a small Organ in Church.

This shows how the Churchmen abuse their positions as Board School Managers.—*Star*.

WHAT DID HE DO WITH THEM?

A stranger in clerical garb, after looking in the window of Mr. Bunton, Banbury, walked into the shop and inquired how many copies of the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* (some of which were exhibited in the window) he had. Mr. Bunton replied, "About forty." "How much are they?" inquired the priest. "They are threepence per copy," was the reply. "I will take them," said the priest. No sooner said than done; the window was cleared of the three copies there were in it, and after muttering a few words, in which "Ought to be burnt" were clearly distinguishable, the priest walked off with his good-sized parcel of *Freethinkers*, and Mr. Bunton had the money to send for a fresh supply. He hopes to find a few more customers like this one.

OBITUARY.

It is my painful duty to record the death of Mr. William Perry, member of the Westminster Branch, N. S. S. He contracted Influenza which turned to rapid consumption. His end was very peaceful. His wish was that the Secular Service should be read at his grave. The interment took place on Tuesday afternoon the 14th. inst. at Kensal Green Cemetery. Mr. F. Haslam conducted the funeral service and read the beautiful words of the oration for the dead in an impressive and solemn manner. There were present members of the Branch, also from the political club of which the deceased was a member. The late Mr. Perry was a most zealous and earnest worker, always endeavoring to further the cause at every opportunity, and won the respect of all he came in contact with. For the last two years he had travelled with the Home Rule Van having visited every county in England. He leaves a widow (equally earnest) and two daughters to mourn his loss.—J. BURRELL.

I have just received a notification of the death of a staunch Atheist, Mr. Andrew Feeny, of Stranraer. He was one of the promoters of the Ulster Branch of the National Secular Society, and has been a steady member and supporter since its formation He was originally a Roman Catholic, and he left that creed through becoming convinced by earnest thought that it was not the friend of truth and humanity, and that its promises were greater than their hopes of realisation. Mr. Feeney had been ailing for a considerable time before his decease, but his convictions were in no way shaken, and he died an Atheist.—W. KNOX (Sec. Ulster Branch N. S. S.)

WHERE IS HE?

Where is the God of tradition,
Who rules the whole world by his will,
And calms the storm and the tempest?
Is he here? Alive? Is he real?

What does he—this God you worship?
Does he soothe your sorrow and fear?
Are the wrongs and ills all righted?
When you pray, is he quick to hear?

Where is he?—God, who loves justice?
Is not nature shamed by the name?
Are the honest e'er successful?
Aren't intrigue and scheming the game?

Is he not found in the dollar,
Whose impress the people adore?
By which some are highly favored,
Though vile in their hearts, to the core?

Has he gone to some mystic land?
Has he left this world and its care?
Or is he a name; no person?
A delusive belief, a snare?

In name we call all men brothers,
Yet rob them on every hand;
Keep from them nature's endowment:
A right to the use of the land.

Our laws are made for the robbers,
Who plunder and legally steal;
Live on the earth's best fruition—
Do naught for humanity's weal.

Oh, Thought! Thou mighty exponent!
Oh, Mind! Thy good work has begun!
Some wrongs e'en now thou hast righted,
But yet remains, much to be done.

HENRY BIRD.

THOSE POOR MISSIONARIES.

From the *West End Review* we extract the following :—Harrowing pictures are drawn of the perils and sacrifices which fall to the foreign missionary's lot. There is no class of self-denying divines which should have such a claim on our pennies as those evangelists who are without script or purse. Here is a deserving case :—

Preliminary Notice.—We are instructed by the Rev. H. R. Pigott (who is leaving the island) to sell at his residence, Baptist Mission House, Maradana, on Saturday, 7 Dec., 1889, all his excellent household furniture, mostly in nandun and satinwood, made to order. Handsome lamps, glass and china ware, rattan matting, cooking-stove, and general effects. Choice ferns and flowers in pots, several fine milch cows, bulls, and calves; a light pony dogcart, English and other choice poultry, &c. Also (if not previously sold) a large American organ (Mason and Hamlin's) fit for a church.—J. Auwardt and Co., Auctioneers.—*Advertisement from a Ceylon newspaper.*

AN INNOCENT.

Ever since the occasion on which the late Lord Beaconsfield wrote an important letter and dated it "Holy Thursday," there has been a craze for adopting this ecclesiastical nomenclature. A properly-brought-up parson, therefore, when he writes to one of his flock, heads his letter say, "Feast of Saint Port Winus," and the docile sheep commences his reply with, say, "Feast of Saint Barebones the Martyr." So thoroughly has this habit become ingrained, that it showed itself quite unexpectedly at the close of a recent watch night service, when a young and heavily moustached pastor was bidding good-bye to the tender ewe lambs of his fold. "Yes," said the pastor, "we have had a glorious Advent, a bright and happy Christmas Day, and now I wish you a happy New Year." "Thanks, thanks," exclaimed the gushingest of his young lady adorers. "And I'm sure we all hope you will have a jovial Circumcision—and many of them." The curate trembled violently; but he was equal to the occasion, for he replied, "Ah, you have forgotten the Innocents' Day, and (aside) I fancy you're one of them."

Fanny Emma Harvey, a lady residing at Marlborough Cresent, Bedford Park, when charged with using threats to the Rev. Ernest Kevill Davies of Longridge Road, Earl's Court, stated that the prosecutor's father the Rev. Kevill Davies seduced her while preparing her for confirmation.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN DILEMMA.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

Delivered at New York, Sunday, December 15, 1889.

(*Concluded from p* 28)

A great deal is said against long-faced Presbyterian ministers, but I declare to you that a Presbyterian minister who is *not* long-faced shows that he does not believe in his creed, in which case he is a deceiver and a humbug; or else that he does believe it and can still be jolly, in which case he is a loathsome monster.

Calvinism is a horrible doctrine, but it grows out of the belief in a personal God by logical necessity. Because it is horrible Presbyterians are beginning to shrink from it, but because it is logical they do not know what to do with it. And this is their dilemma.

If you will have a personal God he must be a devil. It was the logical necessity of this that led to the invention of the devil, who is simply a bad God upon whom all the ugly things may be blamed. But I leave it to any thinking person to decide whether the devil isn't a gentleman beside the Presbyterian God. It is no use to talk about putting a God of love in place of Calvin's God. The theory will not work. It does not fit the facts. There is no use to talk about there being a good God while popes and archbishops live in palaces, supported by servant girls and sewer cleaners; while Christian villains are in office and good Atheists are in prisons; while rotten men are millionaires and pure women are paupers. There may be a bad God, but there is certainly not a good one. The question that is up for decision is whether there is a Calvinist God or none. There is no logical middle ground. The great thought battle is on, and if the world gives up its Divine Monster it must go on to Agnosticism.

But the funniest thing imaginable is to observe how the Presbyterians are going to settle this question about their creed. They are going to settle it by majority vote. A number of doctors of divinity—the thing is sick enough, in all conscience, to need doctoring—are going to come together and decide whether there are any non-elect infants in hell or not. And they are going to decide it by vote! If ninety-nine Presbyterians say the infants are in hell and a hundred say they are not, why, then they are not. Facts manufactured by a vote of the majority! If I owned a marble statue that couldn't see the fun of that, I'd break it all up.

I can understand how a majority can make a minority *do* something. Because they possess the necessary power. But I cannot understand how a thing that is not true becomes true by a majority vote, or how a thing that is true becomes not true by a majority vote. How perfectly absurd the whole thing is. Some two hundred and fifty years ago the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church into all truth, taught the Westminster divines all that is in the famous confession. And now the same Holy Spirit is about to tell the Presbyterians of to-day that he was only joking then in what he said about heathens and infants being damned. Why, one of the Presbyteries has already decided, by vote, that only non-elect adults go to hell—that there are no non-elect infants. They say nothing about the exact age at which the non-elect person is in danger. But that was, no doubt, an oversight. They might have specified, as well as not. All they need is a majority vote to decide it. And now the interesting query arises as to whether the vote of this Presbytery settles the question or whether we shall have to wait for more returns.

I suppose it is not in very good taste to joke about such things, but, really, if there were not a funny side to it, I should lose my temper, or else burst into tears, over what seems to me to be one of two things: hopeless idiocy or shameless hypocrisy. And yet I suppose there are persons among the Presbyterians to whom it appears quite possible to create facts by a majority vote.

But there is one thing this voting does. It offers the tangible evidence that what I am always telling you is true. It shows you at a glance that every church is simply a machine for the management of religious politics. A creed is not meant to be a declaration of what is true. It is the formulation of a number of compromise statements upon which the religious politicians are willing to agree, and it is therefore, necessarily, *not true*. The Westminster Confession was framed for the purpose of uniting several parties in the Church. Every other creed is formed for the same purpose. A creed is to the Church exactly what a platform is to a political party. The Church is nothing more nor less than a religious political party. In the Catholic Church things are settled in the star chamber, because that Church is a monarchy. In the Protestant Church things are prepared in a caucus and settled in a convention, because that Church is a republic. The Church has its office holders chosen from among the clergy, and the clergy constitute a set of politicians, as ambitious, as scheming, as timeserving, as dishonest, as tricky, as any other set of politicians in the world.

Look at them as they sat in the Metropolitan Opera House a few evenings ago, almost within arm's length of the suffering poor, spending two hours over a course dinner, talking and laughing gaily, while an orchestra gave them music, and strains from the German opera in the main room of the building floated in upon them. After such a dinner, in such a place, the reverend politicians arose and began to discuss, in witty speeches, whether the heathen and non-elect infants are really damned through all eternity or not. And by and by they will decide that the Church has been teaching lies for two hundred and fifty years, and will start out with a fresh political platform, and declare that everybody will be damned who believes the old and does not believe the new creed.

How can sensible people have any reverence for such an institution? How can you fail to see that it was against such hypocrisy, such Phariseeism, that noble Jesus flung himself in scorn and hatred? How can you fail to see that one of the things that makes life worth living is the privilege of fighting against this organised hypocrisy, this infamous debaser of the mind, that has created a God who is the scandal of the world and will not give him up, if by any skill of platform making he can be kept upon his cruel throne?—*Twentieth Century.*

THE DEVIL HAS THE BEST OF IT.

A writer in the New York *Sun* has been figuring up an approximate estimate of the population of hell. He finds in round numbers the earth has a population of 1,300,000,000, of whom 300,000,000 are professed Christians, the other 1,000,000,000 being Mohammedans, Buddhists, Jews, pagans, and heathen. The whole race was condemned to eternal punishment for the sin of Adam, from the consequences of which there is no redemption save in the blood of Christ. Biblical chronology gives the earth a period of 6,000 years. From Adam's time to Christ was 4,000 years, during which period no human souls were saved. The population may then have averaged 1,000,000,000. Three generations, or 3,000,000,000, pass away in each centnry. Forty centuries, therefore, consigned 120,000,000,000 of men to eternal fire, and, for all we know, they are there now. In the 1,900 years which have elapsed since the birth of Christ 57,000,000,000 more of human beings have lived and died. If all the Christians, nominal and real, who have ever lived on the face of the earth have been saved, they would not number more than eighteen thousand millions. Now, if we deduct this latter number from the grand total of one hunded and seventy-seven thousand millions, we find one hundred and fifty-nine thousand millions of souls who are suffering the torments of hell fire, as against the eighteen thousand milions who have escaped. But this is not the whole truth. Nobody believes that more than ten per cent. of the professed Christians are saved. Calvinists themselves say that the elect are few. If this is a fact, heaven contains but eighteen hundred millions, against a population in hell of one hundred and seventy-five thousand millions. But what a horrible scheme of theology it is that thus crowds a place of eternal torment!

PROFANE JOKES.

Rev. Mr. Poser: "I defy you to give me a single reason why the Apostles should not be believed." Mr. Incredulous: "They were fishermen."

"Eh, mon," exclaimed an elder, in a tone of pathetic recollection, "our late minister was the man! He was a poorful preacher, for in the short time he delivered the word amang us, he knocked three pulpits to pieces and danged the guts out o' five Bibles!"

The judgment of Solomon was attempted by a Transatlantic judge recently. Two women claimed the same negro baby. The puzzled judge seized the baby, pulled the bowie-knife from his belt, and proposed to halve the child, with the unexpected result that both claimants rushed forward, exclaiming, "Boss, don't kill him; you may have him yourself."

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, "Proposal of a Society for the Reformation of the Upper Classes."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. G W. Foote, "An Hour with the Devil.'

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Three Bible Stories Astronomically Ex lained."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Bishop of Peterborough's Repudiation of Christianity"; 7.15, Capt Pfou des, "Buddhism." Social evenings every Tuesday. Debates every Friday at 7.30.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 86 Newington Green Road, N, 7, Mr. J. B. Coppock, "The Origin of the Present Phase of the Universe."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 8.15, Mr. A. Eagle will open a public discussion on "Christ's Sermon on the Mount.' Admission free; all are invited.

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, S. Standring, "The Present Crisis in the N S S."

Old Southgate—Cromwell Hal', 7, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "The Salvation Army."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. E. T. Garner, "The Lord's Prayer."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, G. Cave-Hill, "Monism;' 7, Robert Forder, "Signs of the Zodiac, Part II."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. A. B. Moss, 11, "What do Christians Believe?"; 3, "Old Souls in New Bodies;" 7, "The Mission of Freethought."

Derby.—Meeting at British Oak, Carrington Street, for Report and return of tickets of Paine Anniversary.

Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 122 Ingram Street, 2, Annual Meeting to receive Report, elect office-bearers, etc.: 6.30, Soiree and Concert in memory of Robert Burns.

Heckmondwike—Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 3, Mr. Henderson, "Pygmalion and Galatea;" to be followed by a tea and social evening

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, 11, Committee Meeting Tontine Society; 7, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, "Nature and Law."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, 8, the Rev. Walter Walsh, "The Bible, and How to Read it." Society's rooms, 4 Hall's Court, 11. Meeting of Sunday Music League; 7, an important business meeting of Members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, Graham Wallas, 11, "The Historical Abandonment of *Laissez Faire*;" 7, "The True Radical Policy."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—Jan. 26, Birmingham. Feb. 2, Manchester; March 2, Woolwich. April 12, Camberwell. May 25, Regent's Park.

E. TOLEMAN GARNER, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Jan. 26, Woolwich. Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 28, Woolwich: 30, Westminster.

MR. JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Feb 2, Hull; 16, Birmingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 54 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—Feb. 9, Sheffield; 28, Huddersfield.

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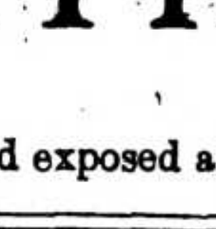

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 5] SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. BRADLAUGH HOME AGAIN.

Mr. BRADLAUGH is home again. He is looking decidedly better and has put on some flesh. But he is far from being his old self. It is a pity he could not take a three months' instead of a six weeks' trip. He has his reasons for returning just now to the land of liberty—and rain and fog; but it will be a dreadful pity if he goes to work and overtaxes his strength. He has the temperament of a man of action, and it must be hard for him to lie idle; yet his life is far too precious to waste, and we earnestly hope he will champ the bit, however impatiently, instead of starting off for the racecourse. Let him run when his strength comes back, and he will take many a prize before he retires from the field.

What struck us as most hopeful was the genial animation of Mr. Bradlaugh's face as he greeted us in his library on Tuesday. He was in good spirits, and that is half the battle. His trip had been a pleasant one, his reception in India was magnificent and touching, and he was naturally proud of the mementoes of his visit to dusky Ind. A beautiful rug lay on the floor; a fine shawl for Mrs. Bonner, sent by an Indian in memory of his own mother, hung from the back of a chair; and near by was a splendid silk turban, meant to give the "member for India" the appearance of a full-blown oriental. But these are only trifles. The principal things—caskets and other articles in silver and gold—had not yet arrived. They were being cleared, happily at the expense of the Indian Agency, and were coming on in a day or two. Mr. Bradlaugh has arranged to have them on view in the minor hall, upstairs, on February 16. Judging from the inventory, made out by Parsees in a good clerkly hand, they will be well worth seeing. They will afterwards go to Northampton for inspection by Mr. Bradlaugh's constituents.

Now Mr. Bradlaugh has, for the first time in his life, a collection of plate, he will feel a new anxiety. Burglars don't go for books, but plate!—there is a fascination in the very word. Oh the lumpy feel of the swag, and the joys of the melting pot! Mr. Bradlaugh will have to keep a good strong safe, and sometimes down at the House, about two-o'clock in the morning, he will say to himself "I hope the plate's all right"

Lecturing is out of the question with Mr. Bradlaugh for some time—no one knows how long. He has managed to cancel everything but an engagement at St. James's Hall, Manchester, which he will therefore fulfil. It is a mistake, however, if Mr. Bradlaugh will pardon our saying so. He ought not to go through the ordeal of three lectures in a monster hall in one day. If the engagement must be kept, we hope the lectures will be reduced to two.

Freethinkers will be pleased to see "the plate" on February 16, but ever so much more pleased to see Mr. Bradlaugh. Hearing about him is all very well, but they want to see him face to face. And it will be an eventful meeting. The old general—old in service at least—will bid farewell to the army. Fate beckons him away, and he must lay down the leadership. Would that it might be otherwise, but "there is no struggling against fate." The parting will be pathetic to both sides. Let it not be supposed, however, that Mr. Bradlaugh leaves us in any other sense than as our active leader. His sympathies will be with us, he will share our convictions, he will rejoice in our success, he will remain a member of our Society, he will advise us in our difficulties, and he will stand by us in any dark hour of persecution. This mitigates the pang of separation. We lose our leader, but only *as* a leader; not as a friend, not as a comrade, not as a counsellor; and though he cannot, alas, ride at our head, we can still say, "He is ours."

SACRED STONES.

THE essay of Mr. Grant Allen, in the January number of the *Fortnightly Review*, on "Sacred Stones" deserves more attention than has hitherto been accorded it, as an attempt to illustrate a large and important chapter in the history of early religion, and especially as a theory of the origin of Jehovah the God of the Jews.

One fault we find at the outset. By refusing to discuss the phallic theory Mr. Allen spoils his own case. He not only loses the powerful support of the rite of circumcision, but leaves it unexplained how the worship of a stone became one of the most advanced cults of antiquity. But Mr. Allen has before now expressed his disinclination for martyrdom. We appreciate his reserve, and allow his right to refuse to enter into the question, but deny his reason given that it is "not cognate to our present inquiry."

We can understand how a stone, or a cairn set up simply as a memorial of a burial place might on that account be invested with sacred character and be supposed to be the peculiar residence of the departed spirit and the proper place to make it offerings. No doubt this is sufficient explanation of a large part of stone-worship. On the other hand, there is abundant evidence of conical stones being worshipped as creative and considered as presiding over generation. The stone pillars of Baal and the wooden Asherah cones, the chief objects of adoration among the Phœnicians are usually held to be of phallic character. It is unquestionable that the Jews at one time worshipped Baal (see Hosea ii., 16; Jud. vi., 32), the substitution *bosheth*—in the names of Ishbosheth, Jerubbosheth, and Mephibosheth for Eshbaal, Meribaal, and Jerubbaal—signifying sexual shame. The place where the ark stood was indeed called Baale, or place of Bâal (2 Sam. vi., 2; 1 Chron., xiii., 6.)

That the early Semites were, in part, stone worshippers, will not be denied by any competent scholar. It is indeed admitted by a reviewer in the *Jewish World*, who, nevertheless, terms Mr. Allen's attempt to trace Jahveh to the ancestral fetish stone of the people of Israel "mental myopoea."

This worship, in fact, lay so deep that Mohammed was unable to eradicate it, as every year's pilgrimage

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to the Kaaba or black stone at Mecca testifies. The denunciations of the Jewish prophets, and the rectifications of the Jewish scribes were unable to erase it. In the story of Jacob's pillar we have an evident trace of stone-worship. The pillar itself was anointed by the patriarch (Gen. xxviii., 18), and the pillar itself, not the spot on which it stood, is called Bethel "the house of God." The very name shows that the stone was supposed to be the residence of a creative spirit. Dr. Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, p. 187, says, "it seems clear that the altar is a differentiated form of the primitive rude stone pillar." A similar practice of anointing stones, known as Baetylia, prevailed in Phœnicia according to Philo Byblius, and exactly the same anointing of the Linga is performed in India at the present day.

Mr. Allen points out that:—

"Samuel judged Israel every year at Bethel, the place of Jacob's sacred pillar; at Gilgal, the place where Joshua's twelve stones were set up; and at Mizpeh, where stood the cairn surmounted by the pillars of Laban's covenant. He, himself, 'took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen;' and its very name, Ebenezer, 'the stone of help,' shows that it was originally worshipped before proceeding on an expedition, though the Jehovistic gloss, 'saying Hitherto the Lord hath helped us,' does its best, of course, to obscure the real meaning. It was to the stone circle of Gilgal that Samuel directed Saul to go down, saying 'I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings.' It was at the cairn of Mizpeh that Saul was chosen king; and after the victory over the Ammonites, Saul went once more to the great Stonehenge at Gilgal to 'review the kingdom,' and 'There they made Saul king before Jahveh in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jahveh.'"

This last passage, as Mr. Allen points out, is very instructive, as showing that in the opinion of the writer, Jahveh was then domiciled at Gilgal.

There is no doubt the wandering Jews, like other nomads, carried their god about with them. Sometimes he was set up at Shiloh, sometimes at Baale. But the ark of the testimony (*Eduth* or significant thing) was his peculiar abode. This ark or travelling box of the Jewish god was *taboo*. It was taken into battle and relied upon for victory. When the Philistines saw it they said "A God is come into the camp" (1 Samuel iv., 7) When they captured the ark it gave them a secret disease. Although the scribes, as Mr. Allen says, evidently ashamed of the early worship they had outlived, protest somewhat vehemently more than once "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jahveh made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt;" yet this much at least even they admit, that the object or objects concealed in the ark consisted of a sculptured stone or stones; and that to dance or sing before this stone or these stones was equivalent to dancing or singing before the face of Jahveh.

When Jahveh, from being carried about in a box, got a house of his own, all its distinctive features were Phœnician.* What the Phœnician temples were like, Lucian tells us in his treatise on the goddess of Syria. The great pillars, the ornamentation of palm trees, pomegranites, and the lotus work of Solomon's joss-house were all Phœnician and all phallic.† Solomon himself "went after Ashtoreth" (1 Kings xi., 5) and built the mount of corruption for that "abomination of the Zidonians" (2 Kings xxiii., 13). We know how continually, despite the maledictions of the prophets, the people resorted to Baal and Asherah worship. We read (1 Kings xv., 13, Revised Version) that Maachah, the queen mother of Asa, "made an abominable image for an Asherah." This the Vulgate translated Priape.

Isaiah lvii., 6, referred to the custom of worshipping stones, and Jeremiah plainly indicates the phallic view, saying, "the people said to a stock (pillar) Thou art my father, and to a stone (cteis) Thou hast brought me forth" (ii., 27), and further that they defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks (iii., 9), (see too Ezek. xvi., 17). In the old hymn, known as the song of Moses, embodied in Deuteronomy xxxii, God is frequently called *Tsur*, "The *Rock* which begat thee, etc." Professor Robertson Smith allows that the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, "The Stablisher" and "In him is strength," "were doubtless symbols of Jehovah," (*Religion of the Semites*, p. 191.) Taking these things in conjunction with the rite of circumcision and the evidence that the bull was a symbol of Jahveh, that he presided over the opening of the womb, and that sacred prostitution was practised by Jews as well as by the Phœnicians and Babylonians, we think there is some reason for concluding not only that the original object of worship by the Jews was a sacred stone, but also that that stone partook of a phallic character.

J. M. Wheeler.

* See article "Temple" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

† The Rev. T. Wilson, in his *Archæological Dictionary*, article "Sanctum," observes that "the Ark of the Covenent, which was the greatest ornament of the first temple, was wanting in the second, but a stone of three inches thick, it is said supplied its place, which they [the Jews] further assert is still in the Mahommedan mosque called *The Temple of the Stone*, which is erected where the Temple of Jerusalem stood."

AN OLD TALE

WHICH HAS BEEN TOLD BEFORE.

Mary had a little lamb, such lambs have been before,
But this one, so says sacred history,
(The first often is) was quite a mystery.
A mystery, "not too deep," indeed,
"Just deep enough" to start a creed,
Which being opposed to sense and reason,
To doubt it is most awful treason. Such creeds have been before.

The babe was born, as babies are, much as they were before,
And Herod sent his men of war,
To "scrag" the bairnies near and far,
And though so very well connected,
As this one could not be protected,
Warned by an angel to decamp,
Joe and "the missis" went on tramp. Such tramps have been before.

The child grew up. Its nothing new. Small boys grew up before.
Little is known of good or bad
About the simple village lad.
The youth, too, was kept from public view,
Biding his time to "fetch" the Jew.
The man cured fits, healed blind and lame,
In fact went through "the same old game" all prophets played before.

He cursed a fig-tree, branch and root. No one did that before—
But no one, save a daft "galoot,"
At the wrong time would look for fruit.
He turned the water into wine,
And turned the devils into swine;
He stole a "moke" to meet his need,
He rode the fiery untamed steed, which no man rode before.

Leading a mob, a rabble rout, such mobs have been before,
He gave them, once! a good blow out,
That they might stay to hear him "spout"
Of Justice, which never interferes,
Mercy, which strikes through endless years,
Love, which unpitying marks our tears,
Love, that sees hunger, anguish, gloom,
Love, that relentless fixed his doom, thousands of years before.

He died! 'Twas a pious, savage age. It won't occur again.
Fanatics may prate, and priests may rage,
The growing years have turned that page. It won't occur again.
Above cruel superstition's tomb
The flowers of human peace shall bloom,
Reason and science no more dumb,
Have hailed the light. The dawn has come. It won't occur again.

Aitch Jai Aitch.

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

On "Christ and Humanity."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

You assert that the Church "has always been the pioneer, the first beginner of every advance in systematic education." Again I turn to the episcopal voting list. I find that in 1839 the Parochial Schools Bill was before the House of Lords, authorising magistrates to provide schools where they were wanted, out of the rates. It was rejected in a full house by a majority of two to one. The Bishops, however, showed a still greater disproportion. *Their* majority against the Bill was five to one. Three voted for it and fifteen against.

The Reform Bill of 1831 was supported by two Bishops and opposed by twenty-one. Next year the Bill was carried in the House of Lords by a small majority. But the Bishops still showed a majority against it, their vote being twelve to fifteen.

Against every proposal in favor of religious liberty the Bishops have been in overwhelming opposition. By twenty-five to two they helped to reject the first Bill for enabling Catholics to sit in Parliament; and even when the Bill was finally carried in the Lords by a majority of two to one, the Bishops were still recalcitrant, twelve voting for the Bill and fifteen against.

For the admission of Jews to Parliament the bench of bishops gave three votes, and twenty against it. Two bishops voted for the admission of Dissenters to the universities, and twenty-two against it. They never gave a single vote in favor of the Church Rate Abolition Bill. In short, they have opposed every progressive measure, and even when they saw it must be carried they had not the grace to go with the stream. Thus, my lord, has the Church been "the soul" of reform.

Your Grace finds that the motive power of the Church's energies is threefold—"Knowledge of God, the Memory of a Self Dedication, the reception of a Supernatural Gift."

What knowledge of God do the clergy possess beyond laymen? Revelation, as you call it, is accessible to both; and it has yet to be proved that clergymen possess any special organ of spirituality. What knowledge, my lord, has *any* man of God? There is speculation, conjecture, and dogma; but how much real information? All religions, all sects, claim a definite knowledge of God; and some of their votaries—to borrow Matthew Arnold's language—speak of him as familiarly as though he were a gentleman living in the next street. But the religions and sects contradict, and often vilify, each other; and their only absolute agreement is a common disagreement. Poll them all, and there would be an overwhelming majority against each; and Atheists would vote with the majority in every division.

You and I, my lord, are both men. I know nothing of God, and I believe you know as little. Multiply your ignorance by the number of the clergy, and the result is still ignorance. Upon this subject the philosopher and the fool, the poet and the dullard, are on the same level. Differences of wisdom and faculty only relate to this world. With regard to the supernatural every man's intellect is a blank. He may pretend otherwise, but he is able to produce nothing but the scribblings and sketches of fancy on the canvass of the unknowable.

Knowing nothing of God, the clergy presume to be his oracles. Knowing nothing of futurity, they pretend to disclose its secrets. They trade upon the ignorance of their fellow men. Their business is mystery. From the savage sorcerer to the civilised Archbishop there are many gradations, but no change in the profession. There is a difference of persons in a unity of essence. The priest dogmatises for a living, and we must die to find out his truth or falsity; and as dead men tell no tales, the well-feed prophet has no dread of detection. He goes on with his craft until men see that he knows no more than they.

By the Memory of a Self-Dedication I presume you mean that the clergy are in a special sense devoted to their calling. I do not believe it. I believe they go into the Church, as other men go into the army or the navy, the law or medicine, tailoring or shoemaking, farming or shopkeeping—for a living. I believe thousands of them know that the "call of the Holy Ghost" is arrant humbug. They take on the Church doctrines like the fixtures of a business. It was a clergyman, the Reverend Sidney Smith, that told the story of the young man asked to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles, who replied "Forty if you like."

The clergy's "reception of a supernatural Gift" can mean nothing but their reception of the Holy Ghost. They claim to derive it by apostolic succession, which is one of the greatest in the long list of Church frauds. Bishops impart the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Placing them on the head of a young man who is being inducted into holy orders, the Bishop sends a discharge of the Spirit through the kneeler's skull, and the current is strong enough to penetrate the thickest. When the kneeler rises to his feet he looks a trifle sillier than before. He has no more sense, no more character, no more courage—but he is full of the Holy Ghost, and millions of dupes have the folly to believe this impudent imposture.

Bishops hawk about the Holy Ghost as a trade commodity. When a church is to be consecrated, a Bishop enters the edifice as the builder leaves it. The stones, mortar, and woodwork are exactly like those of any other structure. But the Bishop—for a consideration—fills the place with the requisite amount of the Holy Ghost. Henceforth the building is sacred. Stealing from it is not only robbery but sacrilege. Yet it is not at all safer from accident, and no Insurance Company would grant a policy upon the church unless a lightning conductor were placed above it, to prevent the first person of the Trinity from making mistakes in a thunderstorm.

For a consideration, again, a Bishop will consecrate a cemetery. An arbitrary line is made with a tape and chalk; the Bishop stands on one side of it, discharges some Holy Ghost, like a clerical torpedo, and that portion of the cemetery is fit for the reception of Church corpses. But there is no discoverable difference between the two soils, and the corpses on either side of the line of consecration rot with equal celerity, unless the Church has the elevated ground, and all the drainage runs into the Dissenting graves.

Another use to which the clergy put their "supernatural Gift" is the manufacture of holy water. Aqueous fluid, supplied by an oirdinary Water Company, is put into a stone basin. Tried by chemical tests, it is precisely the same water as what flows from the domestic tap. But it is consecrated. There is a mysterious change. A little of the holy water, sprinkled on a baby's face, makes it a child of grace; and the price is only seven-and-sixpence. Henceforth God loves it, instead of hating it; and should it die, it will go to Heaven instead of Hell. No doubt the operation is worth the money if it does what you pretend. But I defy you to prove that it does anything of the kind. I maintain that baptism is on a level with fortune-telling, and one business is as disreputable as the other.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

MR. SYMES is continuing his articles on "The Roman Catacombs," quoting from the works of the Rev. J. S. Northcote, the Rev. W. B. Marriott, and Rev. J. P. Lundy, in proof that the symbols in the Catacombs were originally Pagan, and that no new doctrine can be found in the Christian creed.

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ACID DROPS.

God has been up and doing of late, and the list of casualties in this best of all possible worlds is a long one. Here are a few items. Terrific gale in the Atlantic, several wrecks, and fatal fire on a steamship; Knowstone Vicarage, North Devon, the residence of the Rev. Prebendary Matthew, burnt down; a Catholic church destroyed by an avalanche at Sierra City; five persons killed at a funeral at Chicago; a train on fire, and one person burnt to death in Russia; trains blocked up on the Union Pacific Railroad and passengers dying of exhaustion; lighthouse keepers at Fastnet Rock hoisting flag of distress, and unable to be communicated with. These are all found in one copy of a paper, and afford sufficient material for thought to suffice Theists for the rest of their lives.

The south wall of the new Throop Avenue Presbyterian Church in course of erection at Brooklyn was blown down by the wind and killed six persons. Such is the Lord's care over his buildings and people.

The publication of Mr. Justin McCarthy's second volume of the History of the Four Georges recalls the old story of the dying Queen's appeal to her husband to take a new wife after her death, and the King's earnest disclaimer of any such purpose; the assurance that he would have mistresses, and then the Queen's cry of cruel conviction from hard experience, "*Oh, mon Dieu, cela n'empeche pas!*"

But there is another and equally significant story of Sir Robert Walpole, in connection with the Queen's death. When they brought the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray with her, it was for no better reason, according to Sir Robert, who recommended the step, than that it would do neither harm nor good. "It will satisfy all the wise and good fools, who will call us Atheists if we don't pretend to be as great fools as they are." This shows that Sir Robert Walpole, like his son Horace, was of what the first Earl of Shaftesbury called the religion of all sensible men. When asked what religion that was, Shaftesbury replied, "sensible men never tell."

Mrs. Alexander Ireland lectured on Sunday evening at Toynbee Hall on "Browning as a Teacher." With Browning, she said, there was no "perhaps" or "possibly." Now this is only saying that Browning was cocksure where he was ignorant. It is a poor compliment to his judgment, but these rabid Christians are so anxious to make the most of Browning as to run the risk of disgusting sober people. Could there be a sillier notion than this—that because Browning was a great poet, he was a special authority on the gospels and the divinity of Christ? Shelley and Byron were great poets and they rejected the gospels and the divinity of Christ. But Christians must rest on "authority" of some sort, and they are treating Browning as their sheet anchor. Why not make a new Christ of him? He had more brains than the old one. Still, there was a sappy spot in them, where the cells generated "religion."

After reading Shakespeare through again, a few years before his death, Browning said he was struck by the perfect ease with which the great dramatist mounted the throne of poesy, while the rest of the tribe climbed with difficulty to their lower positions on the steps. Well, it is impossible to make out that Shakespeare was a Christian at all. He seems to have been a thorough Pagan. And we believe he would have smiled at the religious stuff which Browning thrust into the least enduring part of his work.

Tennyson sings—

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be.

Yes, the creeds come and go, but MAN remains, and the poet that lives is the one who takes man for his theme. Homer's gods and goddesses are now but fantastic fictions, but Hector holding in his arms the boy who is frightened by his helmet, and Achilles weeping over the dead body of Patroclus—these are immortal, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Talmage went to Jericho. What a pity he didn't stop there.

Talmage carries to America a block of marble from Mars Hill and a piece of stone from Calvary. They are to be built into his new Tabernacle. But why not put them into a quarter-dollar side-show?

Before leaving Liverpool the great, grand, magnificent Talmage went to Hawarden and saw the Grand Old Man. We don't suppose Gladstone would ever think of inviting Ingersoll to the castle, but he might do a great deal worse, for "Pagan Bob" would probably be the best company he ever had. Gladstone admits that Ingersoll writes with "a rare and enviable brilliancy," and that is a great deal more than any man in his senses could say of Talmage.

Talmage was interviewed after his Hawarden visit by a *Pall Mall Gazette* man. The Yankee preacher said "I am writing a Life of Christ, and I have been to Palestine with that object in view." Talmage is like the gentleman who knew the truth of Noah's Flood, for he had just visited the part of the world where it happened, and actually went half way up Mount Ararat.

Good God! Another Life of Christ! Every popular preacher takes a turn at it. Poor old Matthew, Mark, Luke and John didn't understand the business, although they were inspired; and, although nobody knows anything of the life of Christ except what they tell us, dozens of divines try to set them right. There really ought to be a tax on Lives of Christ—a pound a page at the very least.

Mr. Gladstone was asked by Talmage whether his faith in Christianity had wavered in his old age. It was a silly question, for old age is not the time when faith wavers. Mr. Gladstone replied "The longer I live the stronger grows my faith in God, and my only hope for the world is that the human race will be brought more into contact with Divine revelation." Very interesting, of course; but Mr. Gladstone's "faith" proves nothing. When he condescends to reason, as in the tilts with Huxley and Ingersoll, he makes a very poor show for his creed.

The London *Star*, reporting an interview with Talmage, describes him as follows:—"There is nothing of the smug piety look about Dr. Talmage. He does not clasp his hands, or show the whites of his eyes, or speak in a tone of intellectual agony, or do anything in that style. He is a practical religionist, and he looks it. He is a tall, spare man, with a keen, shrewd, practical face, thin hair, turning grey over the temples, and an unmistakable Yankee accent. His clothes have no clerical cut, his manner has no clerical flavor, his voice has no clerical intonation. He stands before you looking and speaking like a clever and exceedingly practical man of the world. He gives you the impression that if he had been born a New Englander, and had been thrown by circumstances into the nutmeg business, he would have been the smartest and the biggest man in the trade."

The full text of the Papal Encyclical Letter is now published in the *Tablet*. It shows that the old Pope is still hankering after his temporalities, and yearning to reorganise society under the sway of a crushing absolution. He says God—that is, the Pope—must be put before man—that is, the King. Yet everyone must remain in their appointed places, and the bishops must be obeyed, not only in matters of dogma, but (so the Letter implies) in everything else they may choose to command. The Letter shows that Pecci is more under the influence of the Jesuits than ever.

The Catholic journals have explained to their own satisfaction why the late learned Dr. Döllinger was not reconciled to the Church before he died. He was deficient in prayer. He said the mass, but laid aside the breviary. Hence his departure for *l.*

The Catholics are getting up a big pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the ensuing spring. It will have the Papal blessing and is expected to bring a pile of money into the Church coffers.

Dr. Parker is writing a story in *Great Thoughts*. It is a kind of antidote to *Robert Elsmere*. The last instalment contains some passages on "the comical side of God." That is a side with which Dr. Parker should be familiar. The

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Bible gives a lot of "the comical side of God," and a good deal of his savage side as well.

Hugh Price Hughes has recently published a book on *The Philanthropy of God*. It seems to us that God's philanthropy is very old-fashioned. For instance, he has sent us the influenza, and the microbes' butcher's bill is worse than that of a big campaign. This may be a blessing, but if so, it is a blessing in disguise.

Said Mr. Dashwood, at a public meeting of the Lady Havelock Branch of the Young Women's Christian Association—"I have never known a Christian young woman to wear a fringe, or a Christian young man to part his hair in the middle." Well now, if you look at the pictures of Jesus Christ, you will always see his hair parted in the middle. What is Mr. Dashwood thinking about? He will spend a bad quarter of an hour when J. C. gets hold of him.

NOT A CHRISTIAN YOUNG MAN.

He always was good to his ma and his dad,
And he played Sankey's hymns on the fiddle;
He looked on the Stage as the road to the bad—
But he parted his hair in the middle.

He never was known to descend to untruth,
And no man of a copper he'd diddle;
In all things he was a respectable youth—
But he parted his hair in the middle.

When a victim to praying and fasting as well
He gave up life's difficult riddle,
Old Charon remarked, as he labelled him "Hell,"
"He parted his hair in the middle."

—"Dagonet" in *Referee*.

Mr. Dashwood would have St. Paul's authority for a crusade against ladies' short hair. We advise him to go on that "lay" instead, if he has the courage to face the hornets' nest he would raise.

A good deal of correspondence on the subject of tithes has been going on in the Conservative *Standard*. The clergy say they can't get their dues, and the farmers say the tithes are ruining them. It some places it appears that the tithes actually exceed the rental of the land. Each party thinks of itself, and seems to forget the important fact that tithes, like all other Church property, is national property, and, whether enforced or remitted, it must be in accordance with the national will, and not in the interest of any particular class, whether farmers or clergy.

The heresy hunt after Dr. Marcus Dods continues to gather volume in Scotland. Several of the Presbyteries, alarmed at the prospect of students being educated by one unsound in the faith, have sent in petitions to have the matter inquired into.

A Mr. Nevins, who defends the plenary inspiration of the old Testament, says, in the *Church Times*, that there is no contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv., 24, which says that David bought the threshing floor and oxen for fifty shekels of silver, and 1 Chron., xxi., 25, which says he gave for the place six hundred shekels of gold, since, says he, they were two different transactions. This is a pure assumption. Precisely the same things are referred to in both chapters. But Christians will resort to any subterfuge rather than admit the existence of any flaw in their fetish book.

There must be an awful lot of Sunday school teachers in Portsmouth. According to a newspaper paragraph a thousand of them have signed a memorial to the mayor, protesting against the hawking in the streets on the Lord's day. They declare that the noise greatly interferes with the training of the young in the laws of God and mars the solemnity of divine worship They predict that the desecration will bring down the Lord's displeasure upon the town, and call upon the mayor to put an immediate stop to these lamentable violations of the fourth commandment.

We presume the poor hawkers are trying to get an honest living and keep out of the gaol and workhouse. Perhaps they make an unnecessary noise, but after all they may be less selfish than the godly folk who are so scandalised by their behavior. When we were last at Portsmouth we had to pass a gospel-shop on the road from the lecture-hall. Outside the door there was a gang of "respectable" worshippers—men and women—who monopolised the pavement right to the kerbstone. and every passer-by had to step into the muddy road. Yet we dare say they had been listening inside to "the glorious gospel of love."

The Rev. J. Bar-Pollock, of Gateshead, has been setting Darwin, Huxley, and Haeckel right on Evolution. He has his own ideas of evolution—obviously enough—and he draws them, not from Nature, but from the Bible. Poor Bar-Pollock!

The reverend gentleman said, amidst immense applause, that he didn't believe in an ape becoming the man who built the Forth Bridge. Well, now, it strikes us that if an ape and Mr. Bar-Pollock began building the Forth Bridge a mile apart from each other, they would get on at pretty much the same rate, and get finished about the same time.

Chu-Fong, who in New York has been known as the Chinese Napoleon of finance, has been arrested for forgery. He proves to have been even more of a gay Lothario than was reported. He was found in a house on Fifteenth Street, in the midst of a circle of pretty American girls whom he was supporting, one of whom was his former Sunday School teacher. The pious have now discovered that his Christianity was a sham. But Chu-Fong had doubtless been taught that all good things were for those who love the Lord.

Episcopal Bishop Huntington, of New York, thinks these two prayers should be put in the liturgy of the Episcopalian church:

Incline the hearts of employers and of those whom they employ to mutual forbearance, fairness and good will.

Suffer not the hire of the laborers to be kept back by fraud?

What for? To inform God that capitalists and laborers are not getting along together very well? To persuade God to do what he would not otherwise do? Or are they two new planks in the Church's religio-political platform? They certainly resemble such planks in that they mean nothing.—*Twentieth Century*.

Canon Talbot, in his course of lectures on "The Bible: How we got it, and how we should use it," after stating that English Christians had to wait 900 years before the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were translated into our own tongue—a very curious circumstance, if God was desirous of people reading his revelation—insisted on the great inferiority there must be between a translation and the original. This seems to us another reason why revelation should be direct. But, apart from this, we deliberately hold that much of the beauty of the English Bible has been given to it by the noble language of its translators. In truth, we yet want a literal translation of God's barbarous Hebrew and canine Geeek, and when that is made we predict that all the gilt will be off the gingerbread, the glamor of the Bible will be gone.

Advices from San Francisco report the collapse of a Chinese temple at Shantung and the loss of about two hundred and fifty lives. The people were witnessing a theatrical performance, which in China sometimes partakes of a religious character.

A youth at Bedford hanged himself on Monday morning in a barn adjoining his home, after attending a Christadelphian service on Sunday evening.

A religious crank named Robert Alexander shot at the Bishop of Philadelphia while he was conducting service at St. John's Church in that city. He probably felt himself inspired.

The Theosophical Society in India seems in danger of being eclipsed by a rival Psycho-religious Society, which has lately held a meeting in Calcutta, under the presidency of Dr. Salzer. From the address of this gentleman we learn that a great object of the society is to discover "how

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psychic energy may be employed to rule a person from a distance of many miles." Well India has been ruled from a distance of very many miles and we do not wonder that Hindoos are anxious to learn the secret. But we fancy they will discover little through the Psycho Religious Society.

The editor of *Great Thoughts* is chairman of the Jerusalem Cyclorama Company (Limited), which proposes to raise £28,000 to buy a cyclorama picture of Jerusalem and the crucifixion, which, having failed to draw in America, will, it is hoped, just suit the religious-minded people of England.

"Rector" writing in the *Church Times* objects to the assertion that it was a shark that swallowed Jonah as a contradiction to our blessed Savior, who in Matt. xii., 40, affirms it was a whale. Rector says that the spermaceti whale sixty feet long, has a throat wide enough to swallow a man. Pity J. C., did not inform us it was a spermaceti whale while he was about it.

Mr. Joseph English is demolishing Atheism at Wigan, but the *Observer* devotes all its report to the speech of his chairman, Mr. Thomas Freeman. We learn from this that the great English not only annihilated Atheism, but completely refuted Darwinism, to the entire satisfaction of an audience that probably knew as much about the subject as their anthropoid progenitors.

Poor Darwin! He spent fifty years in deep research and hard thinking, and never foresaw that his theories would all be exploded in ten minutes by English.

The *Manchester City News* remarks that the lay nurses in the Paris hospitals are more expensive than the sisters of mercy. Very likely. The sisters took a small salary in consideration of being allowed to proselytise the dying. They pestered those who did not want their attentions, and made themselves a nuisance. On the whole it is always best to pay properly for service. Those who render it for nothing, or next to nothing, have usually an ulterior end in view.

Complaint is also made that the Paris Municipal Council has removed all emblems of religion from the hospitals. And why not? Why should a sick Freethinker, or a sick Jew, be obliged to lie in bed and look at a crucifix? Any sick Christian who wants such an article can cuddle it in bed with him. But somehow the Christian never thinks he has fair play unless he rules the roost.

By way of being all things to all men, the Bishop of Exeter is visiting the factories in the city and addressing meetings of the men. Very democratic, no doubt; but, at the end, the Bishop returns to his palace and his big episcopal salary. It will be a long time before he imitates St. Paul so far as to make a decent living by sail-making.

"Muscular Christianity" flourishes at Fulham. The Rev. P. S. G. Propert has established a St. Andrew's Athletic Club, and the other evening the muscular Christians gave a public performance. There was plenty of boxing, and one of the winners got a very sanguinary nose. We should like to have seen J. C. at this entertainment.

There is one Rev. James, a Methodist divine and man of God, whom the wicked have been persecuting in Los Angeles, California. Ungodly L. S. Baisly sends here a lengthy newspaper report of the sore tribulations of this good man. Mr. B. says Los Angeles is "infested with preachers and other dead-beats." But this doesn't justify the ungodly in putting the wife of good Rev. James up to sue her divine spouse with all her might for a divorce, and to go on to the witness stand and tell how the man of God turned her and his home into a Turkish seraglio. It seems that the ungodly will never permit the messengers of the Most High to harvest their perquisites in peace. The holy men of God know the good book allows them all the wives and deputy wives they want. But just let one of them live in accordance with the divine law and see how quick man's law will yank him before the judge! It is a shame. We havn't heard what was done with the Rev. James, but have no doubt he was juggled out of all his women and gaoled!—*Ironclad Age.*

An astonishing number of people claim to have been Darwinians before Darwin. Professor Max Muller, in an article on "Thought Thicker than Blood" in *The Open Court*, enrols himself among the number. His claims are about as groundless as the rest, being based simply on the fact that in 1854 he believed in the unity of mankind, and said that "the common origin of the negro and the Greek admits of as little doubt as that of the poodle and greyhound."

We are glad to see the stand which Mr. Hopwood, Q.C., is making against our prison system. He says it is cruel, torturing and degrading; yet "we are fools enough, or hypocritical enough, to believe that this sort of *régime* can do good, can elevate, can reform!" The fact is, our prison system is based on the stupid and brutal Christian idea of punishment, and it will only be reformed as that idea perishes.

The Bishop of St. Davids, preaching on Sunday in Westminster Abbey, was good enough to say that he feared Dissenters did not always pay sufficient attention to moral teaching. Of course the Church does. Hence the number of clergy who get into trouble.

Alas poor ghosts! They can't get a recognition in the courts. Mr. Kinney, of Drogheda, found he had taken a haunted house, where the ghost not only made objectionable noises, but actually flung the furniture on the family when in bed. Mr. Kinney left the place and declined to pay "rint" like a true-born Irishman. But the magistrate said that ghosts were no excuse for non-payment, and made an order in favor of the landlord.

Mark this, dear reader. Mr. Smith, the defendant's solicitor, was prepared with plenty of witnesses to prove that the house was haunted, but the magistrate snapped his finger at their evidence. No quantity of witnesses would fix up the ghost. Just carry this reasoning a little further, and what becomes of all the Bible ghosts, for whom *no* witnesses can be produced? Not a single one of them would be able to make out a case in a law court—not even the great Jerusalem ghost, no nor the Holy Ghost.

Dr. Dale does not countenance the attempt to get rid of the good old orthodox theory of the Atonement. The Church through all ages, he says, has held the doctrine of atonement and substitution; Christ himself declared that he came into the world to give his life a ransom for many. This is at least honest. We like to see a Christian stand up for his creed, instead of crying "Please sir, I didn't mean it."

Dr. Parker is appealing to the world at large to support his Temple. But there is one sort of supporter he doesn't want—"the man who exhausts the patience and tries the Christian temper of members of the staff by his particularity in the selection of a sitting, who omits to pay the subscription at the time, and is never again heard of." "Such instances," adds the Doctor, "are by no means infrequent." Sad confession! There ought to be more honor among—Christians.

A sad story was that of the poor, forlorn Terra del Fuego woman who died in St. George's Union Infirmary. Separated from her savage companions who were exhibited at the Aquarium, she was for some time unable to eat, as the doctors didn't understand that she wanted raw horseflesh. Her dirt came off in layers, and she gibbered a protest against being washed. Still, she had a sense of religion. Go down as far as you will you find that. Father Herbert found she would pray and kiss a crucifix; so she made quite an edifying end, and no doubt she is now in "the happy land, far, far away." Anyhow she is far, far away from Father Herbert's fellow Christians who brought her over on show, as a kind of prize beast, and left her to die in a strange land.

Writing in the *Signal*, Mrs. M. Baxter, the wife of Prophet Baxter, says: "It is no great credit to our English Christianity that the native Hindoos believe that in order to be Christians they must also become drunkards."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Feb. 2, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London; at 7, "Why I am an Atheist."

Feb. 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

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IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

E. H.—We do not know the name of a bookseller or newsagent in Chester who sells the *Freethinker*. Perhaps some of our readers in that city can inform our correspondent.

J. H. S.—Mr. Foote is recovering, but the after-effects of the influenza are still troublesome. Thanks for the cuttings.

GREY-HEADED ATHEIST.—It was dealt with last week, and we cannot reprint the verse, otherwise yours should have followed it. This correspondent wishes to know of any newsagent at or near Walham Green who supplies the *Freethinker*.

A. DARTON.—Thanks. There are hundreds of good Voltaire stories, and some day we may make a collection of them.

R. E. W. (Liverpool).—Look at the difficulties. It is hard to obtain halls at all, and when we can obtain one, like the Lord Nelson Street Hall, the proprietor insists on charging us three times as much as he charges the religious bodies. Further, all religious bodies are more or less endowed, and the law does not permit Freethought to receive a legacy.

H. P.—Your letter is interesting, and your efforts at self-culture do you great credit. We advise you to read the following works:—Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Giles's *Christian and Hebrew Records*, Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth*, Havet's *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, Tylor's *Primitive Cuture*. Lecky's *Rationalism*, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* and *Supernatural Religion*.

A. HINDLEY.—Yes, there is a third Freethought journal, the *Agnostic Journal*.

A RECRUIT.—Always glad to receive cuttings, but the one you send appeared in the *Freethinker*—in substance—several weeks ago.

W. L. W.—Of the *Prisoner for Blasphemy* there are only shilling and sixpenny copies left. The latter are water-stained. Thanks for the cuttings.

W. H. BROWN.—Our readers do us, and other readers, a real service by sending us cuttings.

G. NAEWIGER, 5 Hull Place, Osborne Street, Hull, will be glad to receive any Freethought literature for distribution.

S. STANDRING.—One side has as much right to be heard as the other, and many of Mr. Symes's friends in England were anxious to know his view of Mrs. Besant's conversion to Theosophy. Mr. Symes doesn't mince matters, but we don't like him the less for that.

A. SWINNEY.—See "Sugar Plums." Your Sick Society seems extremely well managed.

No. 12.—Glad to hear you are still spreading the light.

ABDERITE says: "When, for the philanthropic purpose of helping some poor Christian to get the superstition out of his head, a *Freethinker* is left in some public place, it is a very good plan to first write on it the address of the nearest newsagent where it can be procured. I have recommended this plan to several friends of Freethought who had never thought of it before." This correspondent asks us to publish a complete list of newsagents who sell the *Freethinker*. We shall be happy to do so. Will the newsagents who see this paragraph send us their names and addresses?

H. O. THOMAS.—The address of the *Freethinker's Magazine* is 143 Main Street, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A. Its price is twenty cents a single number, or two dollars per year. Dr. Brown, in his *Oriental Researches*, published at Rockford, Illinois, goes further than Prof. Rawson in the same direction. He holds there is no proof of a Jewish nation before the Babylonian captivity.

R. CHAPMAN.—We are still considering the feasibility of inserting reports.

W. B. THOMPSON.—There is a half-crown edition of Marlowe published by Vizetelly in the "Mermaid Series." Mr. Rogers must have a strange pair of eyes not to see that Marlowe was far from a Christian.

W. HOLLAND.—Mr. Foote is gradually improving. Thanks for the cutting.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) Faith is belief beyond reason. It is not primarily an intellectual, but an emotional function. (2) The debate between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote was on Socialism. (3) David King's pamphlet is addressed to believers. There is nothing in it for a Freethinker to answer or consider.

W. MITCHELL.—The verse is meritorious in sentiment but defective in workmanship.

C. B. HYDE.—No thanks are necessary. We desire to see the N. S. S. include every reader of the *Freethinker*.

ADMIRER.—You don't seem to have much religion left. Thanks for the cuttings, but there are so many "converted Atheist" stories afloat that we can't deal with all of them. We want the Hugh Price Hughes one settled first.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Arme Teufel — Ironclad Age—Freidenker — Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt — Liberator—Fritankaren—Freethought—Secular Thought—Open Court—Evening Standard—Western Figaro—Western American—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Leeds Daily News—Twentieth Century—Devon Evening Express—Argonaut—Essex County Chronicle—Golden Perhaps.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

DESPITE the blusterous weather there was a fine audience at Camberwell on Sunday to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on the Devil. One old lady, eighty-three years of age, was brought by a grandson to hear a Freethought lecture for the first time. She was accommodated with a front seat, but even then her deafness prevented her from hearing very much. Perhaps this was fortunate, for at such an age the shock of such a lecture might have been disastrous. The people who did hear were apparently delighted.

THERE was one exception, however. Mr. Morden was in a dreadful temper. He mounted the platform, and was so uncivil and objurgatory that he soon communicated his ill temper to the audience. The poor man was awfully solemn too. He complained, for about the fiftieth time, of Mr. Foote's jocularity. In especial he denounced the saying that "people were rarely treacled but generally brimstoned into religion." Such facetiousness was beneath the dignity of the awful subject. Poor Mr. Morden! He is really to be pitied. A grain of humor would be a saving ingredient in his constitution.

THIS evening (Feb. 2) Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science. His subject is "Why I am an Atheist."

DR. T. R. ALLINSON, the famous medical reformer, has invested £50 in our publishing business, and gives us leave to announce the fact *pour encourager les autres*. It is a brave thing for Dr. Allinson to do, and it entitles him to our admiration even more than our gratitude.

WE beg to repeat that only members of the National Secular Society will be admitted to the meeting at the Hall of Science on Feburary 16, when Mr. Bradlaugh will formally resign the presidency and his successor will be appointed. Those who are not members, but wish to be present, should qualify themselves at once. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, will be happy to enrol them.

THE Metrcpolitan Radical Federation holds its annual dinner at St. Paul's Café, St. Paul's Churchyard, on Monday, February 10. The N.S.S. is represented on this organisation which is full of Freethinkers. Tickets for the dinner (3s.) can be had of the hon. sec., James Tims, C.C., 6 Queen Anne Terrace, Battersea, S. W.

THE first series of *Letters to the Clergy*, including all that appeared in the *Freethinker* during 1889, is in the binder's hands and will be ready in a week or so. Considerable additions have been made to the letter on Prayer, and a Preface has been written for the whole

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collection. The second series will be paged on from the first, so that those who wish to bind will have a proper volume. The price of the first series is one shilling for 128 pages of type.

AMONG the Sunday Society's lecturers at St. George's Hall, London, during the ensuing months of the season, we notice Mr. H. L. Brækstad. It is pleasant to see that some very pronounced Freethinkers are creeping into the list. Mr. J. M. Robertson crept in some time ago.

MR. FOOTE has undertaken to read a paper before the Shelley Society in March on the poet's Religious Opinions.

MATILDA JOSLYN GAGE, the co-editress with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony of the *History of Woman's Suffrage*, announces in the American papers that arrangements have been perfected for organising a Woman's Freethought Association of a national character. Mrs. Gage says: "Woman's political enfranchisement does not advance because women themselves are no longer progressive. The tendency in existing societies towards conservatism, apparent for some time, has now reached the point when it has become imperative that a new society should be formed of women brave enough to say of her own slavery, as the old abolitionists did of negro slavery, that the American church is its bulwark."

MRS. GAGE further points out that the Christian party in politics, both Catholics and Protestants, whose aim is union of Church and State, is vastly helped by women, and it is thus high time advanced women united in work for their own enfranchisement, and to arouse public thonght to a sense of the impending danger. A convention on the subject will be held at Washington, U.S., Feb. 24 and 25, 1890.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—We have received the following subscriptions:—Angus Thomas, 10s.; W. Gregory, 5s.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—J. A. Lampard, 1s. 6d.; J. Barnes, 1s.; A. F. W., 2s. 6d.; J. Gompertz, 2s.; H. M. Ridgway, 2s. 6d.; O. Bonser, per E. Truelove, 10s.; G. Corner, 2s. 6d.; S. Jenson, 1s.; T. Wand, 1s.; R. Weightman, 1s.—R. Forder, secretary.

Fritankaren translates into Swedish a recent letter from Mr. Foote to Mr. Lennstrand in Stockholm prison. We are pleased to notice that Mr. H. V. Berghell and others are worthily upholding the Freethought cause upon the platform during Mr. Lennstrand's enforced absence.

THE London, England, *Freethinker* issued an extra paper for Christmas. It is elegantly illustrated for the benefit and enlightenment of the pious followers of our Lord and Savior. Our heavenly father appears in his tripple god-ship—Father, Son and Ghost—one in three and three in one. The faithful would be greatly edified by religiously studying the special Christmas issue of the *Freethinker*. But just as likely as not they won't do it. It is shocking to observe how stubbornly they resist the efforts of benevolent heathens in all parts of the world to familiarise them with their Maker and his works and ways. —*Ironclad Age*.

UNDER the title "An Ancient Freethinker," the veteran Dr. L. Büchner is contributing a series of articles upon the Roman poet Lucretius to the *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee.

THE *Golden Perhaps* is a lively little paper of pronounced atheistic opinions edited by Dr. C. W. McCormik, and published at 912 Twentieth Street, Denver, Colorado.

A CREMATION SOCIETY has been established at Hamburg, with a capital of 80,000 marks.

PAINE'S birthday has been celebrated in America by a Freethought Convention at Seattle, Washington. Mr. C. B. Reynolds seems to have been the presiding genius.

THE Rev. J. P. Hopps, of Leicester, has written some plain words on the approaching Education struggle in the London *Echo*. "The Nonconformists," he says, "delivered themselves into the hands of the Philistines when they consented to the introduction of so-called 'religious instruction' into Board Schools, and thought they found salvation in merely excluding any formulary or catechism distinctive of any sect; or in that inane failure—a Conscience Clause." Mr. Hopps points out that the Conscience Clause throws all the odium and persecution upon the children who are withdrawn from the religious instruction, and heretical parents shrink from making their little ones targets for bigotry to shoot at. National education and religious education, Mr. Hopps contends, are quite incompatible; and he calls upon the Nonconformists to fight their battle upon the only principle that gives them a chance of victory—pure secular education.

MR. HOPPS concludes, "There is really no alternative. We must give in to the clericals, who will take public money and use it to the uttermost farthing for Church purposes, if we will let them; or we must grasp the real meaning of national education, which, when properly understood, will be sharply severed from priest and parson, church and chapel, catechism and creed, and put within the reach of every child an education given for its own sake, and worthy of the name of 'National,' because it steadfastly refuses to admit anything that could interfere with common interests and the common good. Let them 'paint an inch thick,' 'to this favor' they must come at last."

ENERGETIC Mr. Sam Standring debated on Tuesday evening at Plaistow with Mr. James Marchant on "Is Secularism Reasonable and Beneficial to Mankind?" The chair was taken by a live clergyman, the Rev. T. Given-Wilson. On Sunday morning Mr. Standring debated at Wood Green with a staff-captain of the Salvation Army.

THE third annual balance sheet of the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society is a modest but healthy document. Other Societies might go and do likewise.

LAST Sunday the Liverpool Branch considered our suggestion as to forming a South Lancashire Secular Federation. It was resolved to make the attempt, and the preliminary arrangements were entrusted to Mr. H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Liverpool, who will be happy to hear from the secretaries of other Branches. We print a letter from Mr. Smith in another column.

WE have received a copy of the San Francisco *Argonaut* which contains a very broad article on Christianity. It says, "We do not learn from heathen writers whether Jesus ever lived at all. Jewish historians, contemporaneous with the age in which He is claimed to have existed, afford but little proof of the fact. We search the pages of Tacitus, Suetonius, the elder Pliny, Herodotus, and all the Hebrew writers, and we are still in scholastic clouds whether the life and history of the incomparable author of the Christian faith and founder of the Christian church is not a legend." It is curious that an omnipotent God should leave the revolution of his incomparable Son in such an unauthenticated state.

IT was announced at a conference of trade and other societies convened by the National Sunday League, that one of the vice-presidents of the League was ready to bear the cost of the opening of the National Gallery, and the Bethnal Green and Kensington Museums on Sundays for one year, to test whether the people desire to attend or not. We trust the gentleman's generous offer will be accepted, and feel sure his money could not be better laid out. But, after all, the matter of the Sunday opening of the people's property is a matter of right and ought not to depend upon the generosity of individuals.

RESOLUTIONS were passed at the meeting, which represented twenty-eight trade societies and sixty clubs, declaring that the vast majority of the working classes desire the opening of museums and art galleries on Sunday.

IT was on the 17th December, 1876, that Mr. Symes delivered his first distinctively Freethought lecture. The subject was, "The Biography and Character of Jehovah, the Jewish and Christian God." Thirteen years form a good slice of a man's life-time. They have been spent in the service of Man, and their effects will surely appear in the future course of the race. An earnest life flowing into

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the great river of human existence is not lost; it may be hidden; but it tells; and the river is never again the same as before that affluent lapsed into it. The eddies such an inflow makes may constitute no storm; but they stir the surrounding waters; and in that stir things come to light that would otherwise have remained hidden; and the particles around swing and flow in curves they never could have taken but for this one life. Life is a serious fact, short as it is: its possibilities are simply tremendous. And an earnest life may change the destiny of a whole people. The man who treats life as a joke, or a thing to be trifled away, is a fool, and may be a criminal. Secularists should be in earnest, as this is their only life, and it is a short one—long enough perhaps, if properly used, too long if not.—*Liberator.*

HALL OF SCIENCE CHILDRENS' PARTY.—Per H. Courtney, 3s.; per G. J. Warren, 4s. 7d.; per W. Davey, 3s.; per Mrs. Forder, 1s. 6d.; per Mr. Sunderland, 3s.; per Mr. Bater, 5s. 3d.; per Mrs. Sunderland, 3s. 6d.; per Mr. Dumville, 1s. 3d.; G. Anderson, £3 3s.; A. Lewis, 2s.; J. Cobley, 2s.—R. Forder, secretary.

THE Rev. W. Walsh's lectures at Newcastle are pleasing the Secularists immensely. They find the discussion very profitable. Last Sunday afternoon Mr. Joseph Brown presided, and to-day the chair will be taken by another Secularist, Mr. Creswell.

THE Newcastle Branch is going ahead, making progress with the Sunday agitation, and keeping the city more or less alive. A deputation of the Branch interviewed Canon Talbot and invited him to a public discussion with Mr. Foote. But the wily Canon declined. He did not believe in discussion. Subsequently he wrote that his Bishop agreed with him as to "the unprofitableness of debate." But he had the Bishop's sanction for an offer to address the Secular Society. Of course the Branch declined this offer, and Mr. Joseph Brown wrote a careful reply which has appeared in the local papers. Canon Talbot appears desirous to win his laurels cheaply. He doesn't want to meet a "professional" champion of Freethought, forgetting that he himself is a professional champion of Christianity.

A SHERIFF'S SALE IN PARADISE.

BY HUGHES LE ROUX. TRANSLATED BY BENJ. R. TUCKER.

ON the morning of which I speak, Sheriff Leloucheur, of Paris, assuming for the occasion the function of auctioneer, in company with his crier and several acolytes, climbed the path to Paradise.

On account of the lateness of the season, white clouds creaked beneath their feet like snow, and covered, to right and left, as far as the eye could see, the perspectives of the sky. And Sheriff Leloucheur, heated by the ascent, said as he wiped his brow:

"It's a pity that this sale comes in winter. When I came here the first time, in spring, there was an enchanting view from the gate of Paradise; the earth was as green as my table-cloth. Ah! the situation was well chosen for a summer resort. But in winter it must be a little dreary, and communication is not easy."

They were beginning to see the end of the path, and at the top the walls of Paradise crowned with embattlements, the gate in pure Romanesque, sacrilegiously restored in the Jesuit style of the end of the last century. Two green placards were fastened to the panels.

On them was the announcement:

Sale of Furniture by Order of the Law.

And the word PARADISE was conspicuous on the placards, in big, ironical, impious letters, calculated to catch the eye of passers-by and fill with melancholy the souls of those who have kept a tenderness for the past and grow sad over ruins.

Sheriff Leloucheur was past the influence of these emotions. He approached the gate with a deliberate step, and raised his hand to knock, solemnly, like an actor.

At first there was no stir; then he heard a murmur of voices, the jingling of a rosary striking against a bunch of keys; then a hesitating approach; then a slow unbolting of the gate.

Finally the gate half opened, and an old man's face, with lashes falling over his eyes and a beard hanging like his lashes, peered out timidly.

It was the first time that the crier had accompanied his employer; yet he recognised Saint Peter at once, having seen his portrait on stained-glass windows in his youth.

"What can I do for you?" asked the door keeper in an agitated voice.

Sheriff Leloucheur answered:

"I come to verify the inventory. It is an indispensable formality before the sale."

At these words Saint Peter's chin trembled. He lifted his thin hands with a movement that caused the large sleeves of his surplice to fall back to his elbows.

"What!" said he. "We have got as far as that?"

The sheriff made a gesture of impatience:

"Come, Monsieur Saint Peter, we do not take you by surprise. The sale has been advertised, and you have been made keeper."

The saint shook his head.

"Excuse me," said he; "all this is so new to us.

Then, in a tone of gentle resignation, he added:

"Can you not save Our Lord this last humiliation? You know very well that we have removed nothing. We do not know yet where we shall go to seek refuge."

Sheriff Leloucheur's pantomime indicated that they were trying his patience too far.

"What! you expect me to fail in my duty! I suppose, however, that I must be contented with God's oath; upon what shall I swear him?"

"On himself," answered Saint Peter, with dignity; "I suppose you do not doubt his word?"

The crier insinuated:

"The word of an insolvent debtor. . . ."

But the saint's face expressed such indignation that, distrustful though he was, Sheriff Leloucheur yielded.

"All right," he grumbled, as he turned his back. "We will pass that part of it. This whole proceeding has been irregular to a degree. . . ."

Then, coming back to Saint Peter, he added:

"Get me a table, some chairs for my men, and some benches for the audience; the sale is advertised for half-past nine, and I see the people coming yonder."

In fact, dark and swarming groups were approaching the gate from the path. Already the murmur of voices could be distinguished. There were old-clothes dealers, women with baskets, hyena jaws, Jew noses, the whole army of unclean brokers, "fences," and corpse-devourers that follow the scent of suburban sales. In front and apart were some personages of importance, with new high hats and fur cloaks, talking familiarly.

The crier pointed them out to Sheriff Leloucheur. Immediately that functionary left his table.

"You here, gentlemen? . . . What good luck! Then I am to have the honor of selling to you?"

"To whom is he talking?" asked a dealer of his neighbor in the crowd.

"It seems that they are theatrical managers: M. Rochard, of the Ambigu; M. Duquesnel, of the Porte-Saint-Martin; MM. Clèves and Floury, of the Chatelet."

"And the little dark man yonder, who has such an amiable air and is biting the head of his cane?"

"That is M. Koning, of the Gymnase."

"Why do they come here?"

"They see the stage-setting, like everybody else, and buy properties."

"The bidding will be warm."

"Hush! they are about to begin."

Sheriff Leloucheur was standing on a chair behind his table. In his most emphatic voice and with a gesture on a level with the occasion, he pronounced the words:

"Gentlemen, the sale is opened."

Immediately the crier, facing the public, announced in a shrill voice:

"The first lot that we sell consists of domestic and wild animals: the ox and the ass of the stable, the eagle and the lion of St. Mark. And first the ox."

"Two hundred francs is bid."

"Two hundred fifteen!"

"No one says a word? Sold to M. Rochard!"

"What are you going to do with that quadruped?" asked M. Koning of his fellow-manager.

"I want him for an understudy to my cow in the play of 'La Fermière,'" answered the sympathetic manager, "in case of an epizootic. You cannot imagine how difficult it is to find horned beasts that are not afraid of the footlights. This one must be used to noise and light."

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Meanwhile the crier had disposed of the four evangelical animals. Amid silence he announced :

"A lot of white robes and halos, thrones and dominions, crowns, palms, gold, silver, white metal, zinc, angels' surplices, martyrs' tunics." . . .

"Thirty thousand francs!" shouted MM. Clèves and Floury as one man.

A syndicate of dealers in religious articles disputed valiantly for this lot. It was knocked off, however, at seventy thousand. And Rochard, bending over, whispered in in Koning's ear :

"I'll bet you the Chatelet is going to mount a mystic fairy spectacle."

"A bad scheme," said Koning. "I wouldn't risk a thousand louis on it."

But the sheriff had risen, and he repe after his subordinate in an emphatic voice :

"Do you hear, gentlemen? We are going to sell the thunder."

A religious silence ensued, amid which a bantering voice suggested :

"Suppose you try it in our presence, to see if it is still in working order?"

Immediately—by the will of God—the thunder roared.

It roared tremendously, like a faithful old thunderbolt bursting for the last time in the service of a master long obeyed. The effect was such that it terrified the irreverent audience. A few persons fainted, and M. Koning thought to himself :

"I should like to have it for my storm in 'L'Abbé Constantin.' It is much better than the tempest of 'Le Roi S'Amuse,' in which Claretie imitates the thunder with a wheelbarrow."

So he acquired this old instrument for frightening men while the sheriff's falsetto proclaimed the next item :

"We will now sell a lot of musical instruments—harps, harmoniums, lutes, æolian harps. I hear a bid of fifteen hundred francs."

"Sixteen hundred!"

"Sixteen hundred fifty!"

"Seventeen hundred!"

"Twenty-five!"

They turned around to look at the bidder. He was a handsome fellow with an engaging face, a light colored beard, and a seductive smile. The sheriff winked as he quickly let fall his hammer.

"Sold to M. Colonne!"

The managers turned around.

"You too? You here?"

"Yes, I came to get all this old trumpery, and then to engage some choruses of virgins. It is so difficult to find disciplined chorus-singers."

This transaction closed the sale. Sheriff Leloucheur was adjusting his collar, when the crier whispered in his ear.

Immediately he exclaimed :

"Pardon me, gentlemen! I had forgotten! The jewel of the collection! The pride of the amateurs!"

And swelling his voice till it was audible in the very last row, he shouted :

"Saint Peter's key!"

On the instant the groups pressed forward, moved not by the merchant's scent for a bargain, but for curiosity.

"We have an offer of ten thousand francs, signed Alphonse de Rothschild," declared the crier, placing his hand to his mouth in the form of a shell.

Before the hammer could fall again, some one responded :

"Twelve thousand!"

The size of the bid was a severe shock to the expert dealers, used to haggling over five-franc pieces.

The man who had ventured it wore a large-checked overcoat and a soft brown felt hat. Previous to this he had not opened his mouth.

When the bidding reached twenty thousand francs, his voice showed not the slightest agitation. At fifty thousand he was as phlegmatic as ever. At one hundred and ten thousand his opponent's fire was extinguished.

"One hundred and ten thousand, gentlemen; let us hurry. One hundred and ten thousand, the bid is from the second row. There is no error. Come, it is worth more than that. A historic curiosity! One hundred and ten thousand! No new bid?"

He raised and lowered his hammer with jerky little movements—the nervous beats of an orchestra leader who wants to put life into his musicians.

A last pause suspended the ivory instrument; then, as if overcome by a sudden resolution, the sheriff concluded :

"Once, twice, three times! One hundred and ten thousand? Sold at one hundred and ten thousand!"

The man with an overcoat nodded his head, and the admiring crowd whispered as they moved away :

"He is an Englishman!"

. . . An hour later.

The gate of Paradise is swinging. the auctioneer's table abandoned. Along the again deserted path an august personage glides, borne on the clouds. Rays of light, obscured as if by ground glass, shine upon his face and the straight folds of his tunic. And at a respectful distance in the rear the mass of faithful seraphim, angels, saints, martyrs, virgins, follow the dethroned Lord in the road of exile.

Suddenly he whose sight is piercing sees in the road, ascending from earth, an aged man in a hurry. He is dressed in a green coat, with an opera-hat under his arm and a sword at his side. His smooth and chubby face, slightly inclined in an attitude of benevolent attention, betrays a sentiment of becoming condolence.

"Why, it is Ernest Renan," says the Lord to himself in surprise. "Why is he coming to meet me?"

The Academician is soon within speaking distance. And controlling the fit of asthma that stifles his words and makes his speech spasmodic, he says :

"Ah, my God! I arrive too late! . . . How sorry I am! . . . I should have so much liked to soften your painful moments! . . . I know these law people! . . . they are in a hurry to go ahead. . . . they do not delay . . . hence a lamentable brutality. . . . And toward a person like you! . . . so respectable! . . . of such ancient consideration."

The Lord lifts his hands in a gesture of sovereign pardon and oblivion.

"They have not left me," he says, "where to lay my head."

Then the illustrious expounder bows and bends in deploring reverence, and asks indulgence for the ingratitude of men.

"These are deplorable excesses. . . . But we will repair them. A pious person has just built, in the heart of Paris, opposite the Exposition, a retreat for Gods in exile. You were not expected so soon. But I am on good terms with the keeper. I will see that he reserves for you an honorable place, the lodging to which you are entitled in the Museum of Religions."

A SOUTH LANCASHIRE FEDERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

THE note in last Sunday's *Freethinker* referring to the formation of a Federation of Lancashire Secular Societies, is indeed a "Sugar Plum." If full advantage of Mr. Foote's generous offer of assistance, in the work of constructing such a Federation, is not taken by Lancashire Societies, the neglect will reflect upon them and also upon individual Secularists, the deepest disgrace. Surely there can be no doubt as to the necessity of such an organization; and as to the utility of such, the success of the Tyneside Federation, and that of London, is sufficient demonstration. By means of a number of societies acting in concert, much more work, more solid work, more satisfactory work, can be accomplished. New societies, in towns hitherto strangers to freethought lectures, would spring into existence. The best lecturers in the ranks of Secularism, and possibly able speakers not attached to our party, might be engaged to make a tour of the federated and neighboring towns, without the waste of time, labor and money now expended in travelling long distances for every engagement. The first-class lecturers, and even new aspirants to the platform, would have a better chance of a fair return for their labors. There are many towns in Lancashire, at comparatively short distances from each other, where priestcraft is working mischief, and freethought opposition unknown. An effort ought to be made by the existing societies to establish branches there. Halls are now more easily obtainable than formerly, and even where halls are not to be had open-air lectures (on fine days) could be given, (and would be, willingly no doubt) by some of the branch lecturers.

The above being but a rough outline of the programme of work for the proposed Federation, Societies are invited to communicate with Mr. H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Liverpool, for further information.

Mr. L. Small, 27 Churchill Street, Liverpool, and the writer of this note, are willing to lecture for local societies, or in towns where no organization exists.—H. SMITH.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Why I am an Atheist."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "The Son of God."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Musical evening, orchestral band, etc.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N, 7, Mr. J. Hunt, "Pagan Origin of Christianity."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, Mr. J. Cooke will open a debate on "God is," being a reply to Mr James Marchant. Discussion invited; admission free.

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. R Forder "Did Jesus Christ ever Live?"

Old Southgate—Cromwell Hall, 7, Mr. L. Keen, "The Christian God."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Secularism and Socialism Compared"

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Miracles."

Westminster.—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. G. V. Roger, "Objections to Housing of the People."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mrs. A. Besant, 11, "Socialism in Theory and Practice;" 3, "What Is Theosophy?" 7, "The Inspiration of the Bible."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, 11, Committee Meeting; 7, Mr. Gowland, "Christianity an Impediment to Progress."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Society's Rooms, 4 Hall's Court, 3. Meeting of Council of North Eastern Secular Federation. Tea will be provided in Rooms at sixpence each. In the Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, the Rev. Walter Walsh, 2.30, "The Origin of the Bible."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Miss E. A. Hawksley, "An Hour with the Ancient Philosophers."

Huddersfield — Littlewoods Buildings, Upperhead Row, Mr. J. Grange (Farsley), 2, "Is the Bible a Book of Truth?"; 6.30, "The Life and Writings of Thomas Paine."

Hull—Cobden Hall Waltham Street, Mr. J. Hooper, 10.30 "Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought;" 2.30, "Concessions of Theology to Science;" 6.30, "The Ten Commandments, and how they are kept."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—Feb. 2, Manchester; March 2, Woolwich; 30, Woolwich. April 12, Camberwell. May 25, Regent's Park.

TOLEMAN GARNER, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 23, Woolwich: 30, Westminster. May 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18, Regent's Park.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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SALVATION BY SIMILARS;
OR RELIGIOUS HOMŒOPATHY.

MR. FORDER'S article on "A Bible Disease," in which he refers to the curious statement that the Philistines when smitten with emerods made golden images of the disease, reminded me of an old intention to write upon this subject. Few persons of those who read this story or the similar one in Numbers of how when the Jews were bitten by serpents Moses set up a brazen serpent which had the effect of curing the wounds, are aware of the large part played by this doctrine of Salvation by similars among the superstitions of mankind, or suspect that it had any share in forming Christian theology.

Some one has called the homœopathic doctrine *similia similibus curantur*, like things are cured by like, "a pleasantry founded on an hypothesis." Be this as it may, the hypothesis extends back to the very beginnings of thought. To connect things similar is, we may say, the first step in philosophy. It is a recognised principle in savage thought that things like each other, however superficially, affect each other in a mystic manner. Thus in Melanesia, according to Mr. Codrington, "a stone in the shape of a pig, of a bread-fruit, of a yam, was a most valuable find because it made pigs prolific and fertilised bread-fruit trees and yam plots."

Many curious customs and superstitions may be traced to this belief. In old medical works one may still read that to eat of a lion's heart is a specific to ensure courage, while other organs and certain bulbous plants are a remedy for sterility. This notion, which largely affected the early history of medicine, is known as the doctrine of signatures.

Certain plants and other natural objects were believed to be so marked or stamped that they presented visibly the indications of the diseases, or diseased organs, for which they were specifics; these were their signatures. Hence a large portion of the ancient art of medicine consisted in ascertaining what plants were analogous to the symptoms of disease, or to the organ diseased. To this doctrine we owe some popular names of plants, such as eye-bright, liver-wort, spleen-wort, etc. The mandrake, from its supposed resemblance to the human form, was credited with marvellous powers, and anyone who will take the trouble to inquire into the folk-lore concerning plants and disease will find that much depends upon the appearance of the remedy. The custom of sorcerers making a waxen image of the person they desired to affect is founded on a similar notion.

But what has this to do with Christian theology? More than one would think, as we shall perhaps find if we examine the ideas of the people among whom it arose. One of the most curious peculiarities of Christianity is its doctrine of a God crucified for sinners. So strange, so repugnant to reason as such a doctrine is, it was quite consonant to the thought of those who held the belief in salvation by similars. If Paul said since by man came death by man came also the resurrection of the dead, the development of the doctrine necessitated that if it is God who damns it is also God who saves. Any casual reader of Paul must have been struck by the antithesis which he constantly draws between the law and the Gospel, works and faith, the fall of man and the redemption through "the second Adam." The very phrase, "second Adam," implies this doctrine, which is summed up in the statement that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii., 13). It is the old toper's doctrine "you must take a hair of the dog that bit you."

God in order to redeem man had to take on sinful flesh and be himself the curse in order to be the cure. Hence we read in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, chap. xvi., that "they who endure in their faith shall be saved by the very curse." Thus may we understand that which modern Christians find so difficult of explanation, viz., that the whole Christian world for the first thousand years from St. Justin to St. Anselm believed that Christ paid the ransom for sinners to the devil, their natural owner. Christ in order to become the Savior had to become the curse, had to die and had to descend to hell, though of course, being God, he could not stay there. Hence his being likened to the brazen serpent, that remnant of early Jewish fetichism which was smashed by Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii., 4). John makes Jesus himself teach that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness [as a cure for serpent bites] even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."

So Irenæus says (Bk. iv., chap. 2), "men can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing in Him, who in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth on the tree of martyrdom, and draws all things to Himself and verified the dead." That is, Christ was made sinful flesh to be the curse itself, just as the innocent brass appeared a serpent because the form of the curse was necessary to the cure. Paul dwells on the passage of the law "Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree," with the very object of showing that Christ, cursed under the law, was a blessing under his glad tidings. The Fathers were never tired of saying that man was lost by a tree (in Eden) and saved by a tree (on Calvary); that as the curse came in child-birth* and thorns, so the world was saved by the birth of Christ and his crown of thorns. Justin says, "As the curse came by a Virgin, so by a Virgin the salvation," and this antithesis between Eve and Mary has been carried on by Catholic writers down to our own day.

As the Christian doctrine of salvation through the blood of Christ has certainly no more foundation in fact than the efficacy of liver-wort in liver diseases, we suggest it may have no better foundation than the ancient superstition of salvation by similars.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Notice too 1 Tim. ii., 15, where women are said to be saved by child-birth, their curse.

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

On "Christ and Humanity."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[CONTINUED.]

The clerical gentlemen with their "supernatural gift"—in other words, with the assistance of the Holy Ghost—have carried on the great work of Salvation. They have prepared men and women for Heaven, booked passages for them on board the ship of Faith, and guaranteed them a safe voyage over the sea of Death into the port of Felicity.

Doing good for men and women in this life was a mere accident of their profession. Morality itself they despised and derided unless it wore their colors. They taught that there was no Salvation outside the Church, nor any goodness apart from its dogmas. "We have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God," says your tenth Article, "without the grace of God by Christ preventing us." Nor is this all. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God," says your thirteenth Article, "and we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." The best man on earth was sure of damnation if he stood outside the Church pale. "They also are to be held accursed," says your eighteenth Article, "that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to the Law, and the light of Nature."

But now that people will no longer be damned for nothing, and even doubt your ability to send them to Heaven or keep them out of Hell, the wiser clergy see that a new move is necessary. The meaning of Salvation must be enlarged. It must include "the Salvation of Society," and "the Salvation of the Individual" in this world. The clergy are to be the savers of bodies as well as the savers of souls. They are to take up "the Social Problem." Socialism and Individualism are to be mastered, Henry George is to be read and digested, the better housing of the poor is to be tackled, and all the intricate problems of industrial life are to be solved by clerical brains. "No young man," you say, "can be considered as fully equipped for Ordination until he has some knowledge of these subjects."

How pretty, my lord! But do you think the brains of an ordinary curate will stand such a strain? Remember that the Church does not get the pick of young intellects. For the most part it gets the refuse. And is it possible, with such material, to make the Church a dominant force in the evolution of Society?

Religion, my lord, at the very best, cannot head the march of progress. When it is not the principle of retrogression, it is only the principle of order. It is the chief Conservative influence, sanctifying vested interests and inherited ideas. This is its particular *rôle*, and you can no more alter it than you can stop the motion of the earth or make it revolve from east to west.

Let me also remark that when the Church "gives herself to social problems and moral duties" she is descending from her throne and mixing with the crowd. Becoming the handmaid of morality, she admits that ethics are higher than religion, and acknowledges her old servant as her present mistress. She signs her own death warrant and rings her own knell. Like the lion tamer, she found safety in her imperious look. When she softens it into a pleading gaze her spell is broken. The moment she waits upon Morality she abdicates her crown for ever. She admits that she was only a usurper, or at best a regent, and gives place to the lawful sovereign. For awhile she may be tolerated at Court, but she will fall into disfavor, and finally be banished, as Morality learns to sway the golden sceptre.

I do not expect you to admit this, and I therefore return to the clergy and their labor of Salvation. You protest that they will still maintain their Doctrines, and not lose them in the Service of Men. And what are their doctrines? Some of them you enumerate—such as the Inspiration of the Bible, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection of the Body. It is a terrible cargo, my lord, which will sink you to perdition. You see that the Church is in troubled waters, and that the force of scepticism is very great. You admit that "at present there is something like a balance of currents," but you declare "there can be no doubt which will prevail." You have no doubt which will prevail, nor have I. But there we part company. You believe the Church will triumph, and I believe she will be overthrown.

You recognise the spread of Atheism among the French workmen, and you are apparently not blind to the fact that it is permeating the English workmen also, but you seek to dispose of it by a mixture of prophecy and false explanation.

> "Atheism only comes to hand as a weapon, since the wish to exaspera'e the masses leads leaders ignorant of the true spirit of Christianity to think that a religious patience here, and the hope of glory hereafter, must make men acquiesce in injustice and a low standard of daily existence. We shall hear little of Atheism when they know what Christianity does teach."

My lord, you are mistaken. Atheists are not ignorant of "the true spirit of Christianity." They have learnt it in the school of history and experience. They are not to be deceived by the plausible pretences of its modern apologists. They judge Christianity by what it did, and what it does, when unchecked. In the days of its supremacy it opposed science, kept the masses in ignorance, sanctified the robbery and oppression of kings and nobles, persecuted heretics, drenched the earth with blood and tears, built dungeons for honest thinkers, invented and applied the most diabolical instruments of torture, illuminated the black night of its despotism with the fires of a myriad stakes, where it burnt the best of men for the crime of *being* men, and lifted up the crucifix over their agony as a symbol of the loving-kindness of Christ.

Still in holy Russia, in Spain, and other countries where it is supreme, we see its inevitable fruit. And by that fruit the Atheist judges it; not by what it produces after many grafts of science and civilisation. Freethinkers in Spain have recently been condemned to six years' imprisonment for "insulting the Church," that is, for approving the erection of a statue to Giordano Bruno at Rome. Viktor Lennstrand is suffering two years' imprisonment in Sweden for lecturing against Christianity. Even in England, where you mouth about "the immense benefit of allowing free discussion," the Blasphemy Laws are in full force. Six years ago I was imprisoned for "blasphemy" like any common felon, and I have yet to learn that *your* voice was raised against the iniquity. No bequest to a Freethought Society is legal. Four years ago an Atheist left £500 to enable the Manchester Secularists to obtain their own premises, and the money was intercepted by a Christian legatee on the order of a legal tribunal. More recently still Mr. Bradlaugh brought in a Bill to redress these grievous wrongs, and it was rejected by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons.

So much, my lord, for your Christian love of "free discussion." Atheists see it is a platonic affection, not meant for practice, but to inspire an elegant composition. They know that Christianity always persecutes to the full extent of its power, and is always as wicked as the moral sense of the community will tolerate.

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"What Christianity does teach" is as open to an Atheist as to an Archbishop. Read the Sermon on the Mount, my lord, and see whether it does not offer "future glory," recommend "religious patience," and bid men to "acquiesce in injustice, and a low standard of daily existence." When the Atheist proclaims these facts he points to chapter and verse. He also points to the long record of popular misery under the sway of the Church. He does not "wish to exasperate the masses." He only preaches the divine gospel of discontent with evil and revolt against injustice. He tells the people to think for themselves, to throw off the fetters of superstition, to beware of a creed which once blighted the world and would do so again if it had the power, to study the problem of their secular welfare, to make the most of earth instead of dreaming of heaven, to build up the Republic of Man instead of the Kingdom of God. This is not "exasperating the masses." It is urging them on the path of wise and durable progress.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

"ABOVE THE CLOUDS."

A few days ago death destroyed a poor woman's only child, and the mother having wrung her hands piteously and bewailed her sad loss until her heart seemed almost breaking, was at last consoled by a Scripture reader, who informed her that the "dear little one" had been called "above the clouds" to the home of its Heavenly father, where the mother would ultimately join her offspring if she would but trust implicity in Christ. The poor creature seemed satisfied for awile, but at length burst into tears again, as though to demonstrate that human affection is stronger than superstition.

This sad incident set me athinking. "Above the clouds" I said! How far above them? Then I thought of the suns and stars that stud the universe. How many billions of miles of space separate some of the stars from our earth, and whether it was possible that somewhere in the illimitable universe, there could be a place where the souls of children as well as those of grown persons could be located, eagerly awaiting through untold ages the sound of the heavenly trumpet, which should announce that the earthly career of all men was at an end. Then I remember that I had a sister once who died in her childhood, and who a few moments before her life ebbed away, expressed the hope that she might meet her brothers and sisters in the "realms above!"

She was only eight, when her young soul, according to the theologians, was wafted to heaven. It would, indeed, be a great joy to me to see her beautiful face again. Have souls in heaven a materialised form? Maybe I shall live till I am sixty. Will the young soul of my sister remain young in heaven? or will years spent in heaven make any appreciable change in the appearance of her soul? How will she recog-my "old soul" when I arrive there?—a preposterous idea, I imagine my Christian friends to say, as though I should ever go "above" while there's the slightest possible room "below!" But if I have an immortal soul, unbelief will not kill it; and if all mankind are summoned to heaven on the Day of Judgment, we shall all at least have a glance at the heavenly throne, and probably meet the souls of a few relatives and friends before our own trial comes on.

Suppose while I am lingering outside the heavenly court of justice I should meet the soul of my dear young sister, what means will one spirit have of identifying another? Suppose my soul were to come within reasonable distance of that of Socrates, how would it be possible for me to converse with him? Do all souls speak one language? or is there a heavenly college where linguistic difficulties may be overcome? Souls are to sing in heaven, but without mouths or tongues. Some earthly hen-pecked husbands will be glad of this. They will be perfectly satisfied to do without the tongue of their wives' spirit. Some of the male souls will be glad also to be relieved of feet, as it will remove all doubts as to there being any heavenly corns or bunnions to trouble them as they pace the golden pavements above.

Then again, we shall have to consider the climate of these heavenly regions. If it is hot it will not suit Esquimaux souls, unless they should like a change after so many years of snow. If the climate is cold the number of "perishing souls" will be enormous. Hindoos, Chinese, Italians, Spaniards, will assuredly go in search of the "realms below." But enough! What do scripture readers know about heaven above! Nothing. And the parson knows just as much; but these charlatans for ages have played upon the hopes and fears of the ignorant as upon a stringed instrument; and thus the minds of the poor are perpetually filled with wild chimeras, which drive them into actions whose effects are detrimental alike to the happiness and progress of the race.

Arthur B. Moss.

HOW THE CHINESE REGARD CHRISTIANITY

In the numbers of the *Freethinker* from Aug. 28 to Sept. 25, 1887, appeared "Why I am a Heathen," by a Chinaman. Wong Chin Foo, the writer, had been a resident in Christian countries and knew the character of the Christians around him as well as the weak points of their religion. In China arguments against Christianity naturally partake more of an appeal to Chinese prejudices, especially to their moral sense of filial piety. To the Chinese the injunctions to "Let the dead bury the dead," and "if any man come unto me and hate not his father," etc., "he cannot be my disciple," appear perfectly unnatural.

Mr. Medhurst notices a tract written against him by a Chinaman, in which it is argued that "it was monstrous in barbarians to attempt to improve the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire when they were so miserably deficient themselves. Thus, introducing among the Chinese a poisonous drug, for their own benefit to the injuries of others, they were deficient in benevolence; sending their fleets and armies to rob other nations, they could make no pretensions to rectitude; allowing men and women to mix in society showed they were deficient in propriety, and rejecting the maxims of the ancients showed them wanting in wisdom. Truth was the only good quality to which they could make the least claim. Deficient therefore in four out of the five cardinal Virtues how could they expect to renovate others." The Chinese also resent the notion that a dead Jew was superior to their moral teacher Confucius. They point to the immoral lives of Christians, and especially to their deficiency in filial piety, and they do not forget to notice that among the followers of the dead Jew offices are accorded to the rich and noble, while among the followers of Confucius all positions are open to competitive examination.

Was it a slip or ironical? The *Daily Telegraph*, after stating that Earl Sydney's illness had become acute, and that prayers were offered on his behalf at several churches and chapels, added—"Lord Sydney, *however*, yesterday appeared much improved."

If parsons would but shorter preach,
How thankful we should be!
And practise half of what they teach,
How thankful we should be!
If Church and State were joined no more,
If all paid tax, both church and store,
And free schools flourished evermore,
How thankful we should be!

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ACID DROPS.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* discovers another gross case of persecution in France. It appears that M. Saboraud, elected for La Vendée, has been unseated on the ground of clerical influence. A protest was made in the Chamber by Bishop Freppel, who claimed that the clergy had a perfect right to warn their flocks against voting for candidates hostile to religion. The Bishop was replied to by M. Ribot, a moderate Republican, who declared that the clergy had absolutely no right to busy themselves with politics, whether in or outside the Church. This rule was too often forgotten; but the Republicans would not permit the clergy to direct the consciences of their parishioners against the laws and institutions of the country; a declaration which was loudly applauded by the Left.

"Cannot these French Republicans," says the *Pall Mall*, "see that they do far too much honor to the sacredotal theory by forbidding the priest to do anything a man and a citizen is free to do? Surely the true Liberal is against sacredotalism equally when it is invoked as a claim for privilege or as a pretext for proscription." But this is all nonsense. The *Pall Mall* forgets one thing—the French priests are state-paid. Is it likely that a Republican government is going to pay the priests to fulminate against Republican candidates? Of course the clergy can secure the same freedom as other citizens by ceasing to take the cash of the State. But their claim to have the money and the freedom too is simply preposterous.

The Queen's printer is not devoid of "cheek." As a memento of the Exhibition he presented President Carnot with a handsomely-bound Bible, of the pattern used in English cathedrals. Considering that M. Carnot is a Freethinker, this is a piece of exquisite taste. Of course he accepted the gift, in a polite gentlemanly way, but instead of keeping it he passed it on to the National Library, where it will be kept merely as a specimen of printing and binding.

There was a terrible fire at Washington on Monday morning. Mr. Tracey the Secretary of the Naval Department, nearly lost his life, and his wife and an unmarried daughter perished in the flames. Miss Tracey occupied a front bedroom on the third floor. According to the *Daily News* correspondent, "she could be seen at the window in the light that flickered in between the blinding smoke and flames, clad in white, her hands in an attitude of prayer, and her face uplifted. The flames gradually hemmed her in, and she finally perished."

How many who read this fearful story will learn its lesson? Here is a woman burnt to death *in the attitude of prayer*. The only answer she heard was the hiss of the flames as they hemmed her in. Yet the incident will be quietly forgotten, and the clergy will go on preaching their lies—for a living.

The list of English publications the prohibition of whose sales has been decreed by the imperial censorship in Russia has just been printed in London. It includes Ingersoll's *Social Salvation* and his *Household of Faith*.

Hardly a week passes without some instances of clerical bigotry endeavoring to obstruct the Burials Act. A correspondent of the *Daily News* writes: "Will the State-appointed religious teachers ever all learn obedience to the law? The devices for rendering funerals under the Burial Act of 1880 most difficult, or for attaching to them a social stigma, are many and various. In the case of a funeral in a parish in the diocese of Gloucester, on Tuesday, the procession, on arrival at the churchyard, found the main gates closed and locked against it, and it was intimated to the officiating Nonconformist minister that a side entrance some distance off was open."

As that was not the usual entrance for funerals, the minister very properly declined to go to it. After a search the sexton was found, and the gates were unlocked, but not until the mourners had been kept long waiting in the roadway in front of the churchyard gates. At the service itself the sexton, whose special duty it is to assist at burials, declined to sprinkle earth on the coffin as it was lowered into the grave, saying that he had been instructed not to do so. It does not seem to have occurred to him that there may be risk in obeying instructions which are illegal.

Mr. Joseph Brown's letter to the Newcastle papers on Canon Talbot's avoidance of debate with a representative Secularist has evoked articles from both the *Leader* and the *Chronicle*. They speak of Mr. Brown and the Newcastle Branch of the National Secular Society with respect, but between the lines you can see they regard the Freethinkers as infernal nuisances, who will not let the city live in peace; which, of course, means leaving Christianity in undi-puted possession.

The *Leader* professes to love discussion, and says "let it be free, vigorous, honest, unrestricted." But a platform debate is "palpably ridiculous." Of course it is—if you feel you are on the wrong side. No doubt the *Leader* will frown at this suggestion, but when the frown subsides it might just ask itself this question—Why is it that the Secularists are so eager for discussion and the Christians so reluctant?

The *Chronicle* goes to the length of saying that the attempt of the Secularists to force Canon Talbot into a discussion is "unseemly." Hoity-toity! What airs the Christians give themselves! Then the Canon's offer to address the Secularists in a quiet way—that is, *his* way—is described as "generous." More airs! And more food for Secular mirth.

Lord Randolph Churchill and other persons of influence have signed a memorial, urging the danger of the accumulation of decomposing human remains near great populations They do not, however, point out that the true remedy is cremation, which might be made cheaper than earth burial

Madame Blavatsky takes her title of "The New Cagliostro" as a honor. At least we judge so from finding the initials H. P. B. appended to an article in the last number of *Lucifer*, entitled "Was Cagliostro a Charlatan?" H. P. B. contends that the so-called impostor was really a hero and martyr of Theosophy, one instructed by the Adepts to astonish the world and partially reveal the secret doctrine. H. P. B. casts doubt on "Cagliostro" having died in prison, and even hints that he may be still alive and on the earth! Cagliostro's character is not of transcendant importance nowadays, but as his career illustrates human gullibility, we shall give a short account of him next week.

"Economist" writes to the papers that he "recently met with a collection instituted by a Bishop which, on the face of it, cost as much to the public as the amount contributed." This is nothing unusual. The appeals for the heathen would be not so frequent, if the heathen got all the cash and there was nothing for the middlemen.

Archdeacon's Farrar's "eloquent discourses" on Christian missions have been as barren as the east wind. Concluding his last discourse, he said that he thought some of his listeners would have found their hearts stirred-up to render financial help, and he had announced that he would be pleased to receive donations, but he had not received a single sixpence.

According to a pious contemporary a minister at Beccles has been presented with a copy of Farrar's "Early Days of Christianity in Morocco."

Mr. C. R. Haines has published, through the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a kind of answer to Canon Taylor in the form of a volume entitled *Islam as a Missionary Religion*. Reviewing this work, the *Academy* says he doesn't understand the subject, and laughs at his talk about Mohammedanism spreading itself by the sword, as though Christianity hadn't done the same thing. "Moslems," says the *Academy*, "are so passionately attached to their religion because they believe it to be not only the best religion, but the only true religion. They appeal to the lofty morality which the Koran inculcates as the chief evidence of the divine mission of its founder. They attribute the marvellous spread of Islam, and the hold it has on its disciples, to its own intrinsic excellence; and they are unable to understand

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how any heathen tribe if offered the choice between Islam and Christianity, could possibly fail to choose the former."

Flora Trinder, a domestic servant and a Salvationist, was charged on Monday at Bow Street with stealing a cheque for £10 and forging the endorsement. She was arrested at a Salvation Army meeting in Tottenham Court Road. Of course the affair is a small one. But just imagine how the religious and "anti-infidel" papers would shout if the police went into a Freethought meeting and arrested a Freethinker for theft.

Another suicide from religious melancholia. Mrs. Knight, of Rushden, after going to the Old Baptist Church and partaking of the sacrament, went home and cut her throat. The doctor had previously attended her for religious monomania. Oh, the blessedness of religion!

Eleanor Martin, of Plymouth, suffered from religious mania, which drove her to commit suicide. The jury returned the usual verdict of insanity, but forgot to add a rider, "brought on by religion."

In the Queen's Bench a farm bailiff named Carpenter, aged 70, was awarded £150 and £50 damages against the Rev. F. J. Aldrich Blake, rector of Welsh Becknor, Herefordshire, his late employer, for five alleged false and malicious prosecutions, and also for libel. Mr. Steward, a cattle dealer, who was charged with conspiracy with plaintiff in the previous case, also recovered £50 damages against the same defendant. The defendant conducted his case in person, as his counsel returned their briefs in consequence of not being able to agree with defendant as to the conduct of the case.

The Bishop of Bangor has had to prosecute the Rev. John Williams Meyrick, rector of Llandegfan, for wilful contumacy in refusing to perform divine service at the church, or to allow a curate to officiate in his stead. Finding no service conducted there, the bishop sent a curate, but the rector considered the church as his own property, and he was not permitted to enter the building.

Mr. Wm. M. F. Round writes in the American *Forum* on "Immigration and Crime." Mr. Round finds that the Irish contribute to the American criminal classes out of all proportion to their numbers. He shows that while the Irish are 3·6 of the foreign population, they furnish 9·2 per cent. of the prison population. We believe we do no injustice to their religion in largely holding it accountable for this. Without taking into account its doctrine of absolution, Catholicism, by encouraging its adherents to "increase and multiply," is a direct cause of their poverty, and so of the vice and misery which always follow in poverty's train.

An American murderer, Thomas J. Cole, who killed a friend with a hatchet while he was sleeping, will shortly take his place in glory. He is very devout and is constantly attended by Father Daley, of the Church of the Annunciation, Philadelphia.

Bishop Barry has addressed a West-end meeting on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society. His remarks on "unbelief"—which means, of course, unbelief in *his* religion—were worthy of his cloth as well as the Society for whose funds he was pleading. He said that the chief root of unbelief is "sheer ignorance." Well now, we have a pretty large stock of unbelief, and if Bishop Barry thinks it is all the result of ignorance, we shall be happy to give him an opportunity of exposing it in public. His knowledge ought to settle our ignorance in a single evening's debate. Let him smash up the Editor of the *Freethinker*, and he will do a good deal of damage to Freethought; and, for our part, we are ready to be smashed up, if Bishop Barry is disposed to try his holy hand at the business.

The second root of unbelief, according to Bishop Barry, is "moral evil, whether vice, crime, or sin." Now if we were to say what this sort of nonsense invites, we should call Bishop Barry a libellous humbug. But we won't say it. We simply remark that if moral evil is a cause of unbelief, the Bishop will find plenty of preventive work in his own Church without going outside.

Fancy a man being prompted by "moral evil" to disbelieve the Hebrew yarn about the first woman being manufactured out of a spare rib! Fancy a man being moved by "vice" to suppose that Darwin knew far more about biology than Moses! Fancy a man being impelled by "crime" to smile at the story of a missionary taking a three days' trip inside a whale! Fancy a man being instigated by "sin" to think that miracles are the offspring of ignorance and credulity! Really, when you reduce the Bishop's little argument to the concrete, its bigotry and vulgarity are lost in its infinite absurdity.

Bishop Barry complained, too, that unbelief shows "an impatience of anything like mystery" And then he went on to juggle about "mystery," like a professional purveyor of the article. There was the "mystery of matter," the "mystery of life," and so on. Everywhere you come to mystery at last. Very true, but that kind of mystery is simply ignorance. We see no further because the light fails us. But *your* mystery, O right reverend father in God, is artificial. It is not natural darkness, but smoke. Or, to drop metaphor, while natural mystery marks the end of knowledge, religious mystery marks the end of sense. A mystery of nature is something we don't understand; merely this, and nothing more. A theological mystery is something very different. It is a flat contradiction between the priests' doctrines and the facts of life.

Take an illustration. You go to church and hear the preacher say that God is infinitely good and loving, as well as infinitely powerful. You come home and find your house on fire and your children mere smoking masses of charred flesh. In your agony you ask why the infinitely loving and all-powerful God allowed such a tragedy to happen. "Ah, my brother," says the priest, "it is a mystery." In other words, it is a fact giving the lie direct to his hollow mouthings.

We have just a parting word for Bishop Barry, and it is this—Let him quote from the Bible with a little less looseness. We are well supplied with "sheer ignorance," but we know whether a text is right or wrong when we see it. The Bishop advised his audience "to follow the Apostolic injunction to give a reason for the *faith* which is in them." Now the Apostolic injunction (1 Peter iii., 15) is to "give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the *hope* that is in you with meekness and fear." Of course we don't expect meekness and fear from a Bishop, or any other Christian controversialist, for their religion "bosses the show" now, whereas it sang very small in the days of Saint Peter. But we do expect them to quote correctly from their own fetish, the inspired Word of God. Nor is this a small point; for the "hope" spoken of by Peter is a very different thing from "faith," as may be seen from Paul's famous panegyric on charity. The Christian's *faith* is retrospective. It means his belief in the miraculous career, death, resurrection, ascension, and teaching of Jesus Christ. His *hope* is prospective. It means his expectation of a reserved seat in heaven.

The Young Women's Christian Association is going in for a "Universal Week of Prayer." What will they pray for? Good-looking husbands, says the cynic.

Baptism by total immersion—which is undoubtedly the rule of the English Church, sprinkling being the exception—will, I hear, in future be insisted on at all public christenings at the Chapel of Ease, High Street, Ilford, where the infant of one of the clergy was triply immersed a Sunday or two ago as a start. I hope the youthful clergy, who generally hold babies as if they feared the children might tumble to pieces, will be careful if this immersion practice increases. No one but a parent knows how slippery a wet baby is; and just imagine the declension in female favor of a favorite curate who let an infant—before it was quite regenerate, perhaps—tumble into a deep font and get drowned, or even catch cold!—*Weekly Times.*

The *Bournemouth Guardian* publishes a curious letter from a Baptist missionary at Stanley Pool, Central Africa. He says "The people here buy slaves, and fatten up and kill and eat them." But he is glad to say he is on good terms with them, and concludes by saying "I am quite

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happy"—there being no chance, we presume, of the missionary being treated like the slaves.

The Lyons judges have a queer law-suit to settle. A pious lady had the lower jaw of a saint, Jean Soanen, Bishop of Senez, who flourished in the reign of Louis the Fifteenth. A broker introduced her to a lumber-shopkeeper, who had the holy man's skull to dispose of. The purchase was effected, but the lady refused to pay the broker's commission, and he sues her for his little bill. No doubt the Court will fight shy of discussing the authenticity of the relic, but it may turn out that the lower and upper jaws don't fit.

A want of aggression in the Church was complained of by the Rev. T. Green at the annual meeting of the Congregational Churches in the Manchester district. We hope the complaint will stir the Church up, if only to defend itself. Fighting a Church that doesn't hit back is like punching a feather-bed.

Hugh Price Hughes has been addressing a big meeting at Bolton in behalf of "the great London Mission." "Oh help us," he exclaimed, "and every nation under heaven shall share our joy." He then resumed his seat "amidst a burst of enthusiastic applause." Somehow he forgot to say anything about his "Converted Atheist. We hope to make him wish he *never had* said anything about that wretched imposture.

The Rev. R. S. Blair told a recent meeting of the London Primitive Methodist Ministers that during the last six years there had been a great development of antipathy towards the Churches. He attributed it to the Sunday meetings of workmen for the discussion of social questions. But the Rev. Thomas Guttery said it was owing to the want of sympathy shown by the clergy to the workmen in their labor troubles. Anyhow *the fact* is admitted, and it is a growing fact. All the Churches are becoming more and more mere middle-class organisations.

The trashy paper that rejoices in the title of *Anti-Infidel* says of Mr. H. L. Hastings, the American Christian advocate "his teaching is unscriptural, and consequently productive of infidelity." Does the reader want to know whence comes this recrimination among the Lord's defenders. Both lay claim for their publication to the same title of Anti-Infidel Library. Hence these war-whoops.

Pious frauds are ubiquitous. When they cannot take hold at home they slip off to the other side of the world, and try to catch on there. We gather from *Freedom*, of Sydney, Australia, that certain Christian advocates in that city are circulating with much detail the statement that Mr. Bradlaugh, during his late illness, embraced the Christian religion and renounced his connection with Freethought. Possibly the pious bigots who circulated the tale trusted to Providence to settle Mr. Bradlaugh outright, so that the lie might go the round unrefuted.

Christ lived and died (perhaps!) more than eighteen hundred years ago. He left the Holy Ghost with his Apostles to enlighten them. They preached and made converts, and by-and-bye the New Testament came into existence as the infallible Word of God. Churches arose, sects abounded, quarrels prevailed, and in the course of time Christians butchered each other by the million to settle disputed points of faith. But still the matter is as unsettled as ever, and the *Christian World* is inviting ministers to say "What is a Christian?" Reading their answers is a beautiful lesson in Christian harmony.

Ten years ago, while passing through Stratford-on-Avon, Mr. Toole, the English comedian, saw a rustic sitting on a fence. "That's Shakespeare's house, isn't it?" he asked, pointing to the building. "Yes." "Ever been there?" "No." "How long has he been dead?" "Don't know." "Brought up here?" "Yes." "Did he write anything like the *Family Herald*, or anything of that sort?" "Oh, yes, he writ!" "What was it?" "Well," said the rustic, "I think he wrote for the Bible."

A pious yarn went the rounds of the American press telling how one John Chana, of Pottsville, became a hopeless paralytic, and died after cursing his Maker in a terrible manner. An inquirer wrote to the local paper to ascertain the truth of the story. He was told that certainly the man, a Hungarian, had died in a paralytic fit, but from natural causes, the chief one being the constant use of whiskey. There was no truth whatever in the story that he had cursed his Maker, or, as some others said, the Virgin Mary. No doubt other cases of wicked blasphemers suddenly punished, if similarly examined, would prove similarly groundless.

Converting the converted is a very old form of missionary enterprise. We do not wonder, therefore, that three English clergymen, Messrs. Pitman, Dickenson, and Knight, are going out to labor as missionaries in Canada. It is stated that they propose "to work in one of the large Canadian towns." "Imagine," says the *Toronto Mail*, "missionaries leaving all, bidding farewell to friends, and starting out fully equipped to work in Toronto, where there are thirty Anglican churches already." We fear the *Toronto Mail* doesn't allow for the glutted condition of the clerical market in England.

When Stanley returns to England he should go about preaching. He is constantly talking about Providence, which he appears to have discovered in Africa. Speaking at the Cairo banquet, he gave an account of poor Emin's tumbling into the street, and then added: "There upon the ground was the most pitiable sight it was possible for me to witness. Man proposes, but God disposes. Over and over again have I seen that a mysterious power guides human affairs, and here was a signal proof of it." Surely this is rough on Emin. It *looks* hard, at any rate, that poor Emin should be battered about, and half killed, to furnish Stanley with a fresh lesson in theology.

In an article on the London Clubs, the *Echo* complains of "the hard, narrow, bitter Secularism" which dominates so many of them, and which is "as superficial as it is unlovely." All these epithets only show that the *Echo* doesn't understand the Secularists of the Clubs. They are not on the look-out for a "lovely" creed. They are honest enough to want a *true* one.

The *Echo* thinks this "hard" Secularism might be "softened by the best poetry and music." We venture to say there are more readers—and lovers—of true poetry among Freethinkers than among any other section of the community. The *Echo* makes the usual orthodox mistake of supposing that a hard head means a hard heart. It generally means the reverse.

The Buffalo gals have been going it. Two thouand Polish ladies in that city mobbed a Catholic priest appointed to suceeed their favorite pastor. Two hundred policemen had to protect him, and the Buffalo gals fusilladed them with salt and pepper. Twenty guardians of law and order were put *hors de combat*. We are not informed what became of the priest.

Weep, weep for our darling priest!
They've packed him off to another living.
Curse, curse the horrible beast
The Holy Church in his stead is giving!

O the darling eyes and the kissable mouth
Of the beautiful priest we're grieving after!
This one's the ugliest, north or south.
Greet him, girls, with shouts of laughter.

Pinch him, punch him, scratch him, tear him;
Give him the ten commandments galore.
Ugly wretch! we can't abear him;
Buffalo gals will have his gore.

Bobbies round him! Give them pepper,
Right in the eyes, and salt as well.
And as for him, the dirty leper,
Give it him, gals, as hot as hell.

A coffin and grave for the ugly creature!
But oh for the darling that's gone away!
The grace of God was in every feature.
Honey come back, and come to stay.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Feb. 9, Oddfellows' Hall, King Street, Blackburn, at 10.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 2.30, "Defence of Atheism—in reply to the Rev. J. Ogmore Davies"; at 6.30, "An Hour with the Devil."

Feb. 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.
March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.
April 6, Milton Hall; 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A. BRITON.—2 Chron. xxi., 20, and xxii., 1 and 2, say that Ahaziah, the youngest son of Jehoram, was forty-two when he began to reign, and he was made king instead of his father, who died at forty. But that was in the days of miracles.

T. CARVER.—Yes, Mr. Foote will be nominated for the Presidency of the N. S. S., and if elected he will accept the office. He has not asked anyone to nominate or second him, nor has he made the slightest canvas, or even mentioned the subject at all until now, when he is pointedly asked and feels it an honorable thing to answer. Branches have written to Mr. Foote on the subject weeks ago, but he preferred to say nothing publicly, so that the meeting on the 16th inst. might act with spontaneity.

F. TOWNSEND, 11 Leather Lane, E.C., supplies the *Freethinker* and exhibits a bill.

AMICUS.—Our invitation for capital is still open, but we do not intend to give any more prominence to it at present.

GLASGOW SECRETARY—Your Guide Notice was sent to Stonecutter Street, and reached us too late for insertion last week. Our editorial address is 14 Clerkenwell Green.

H. J. BARTER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

No. 12.—Glad to hear from you. Peg away.

P. BRABAZON.—There is truth in what you say. But if we find room for reports, in the sweet by-and-bye, it will involve a new departure for the reporters. Glad to hear the West Ham children's party was a success

A. WHEELER sends us the annual balance-sheet of the Finsbury Branch. The income is small, but the Branch only does open-air work and pays its way. We congratulate the few working men who hold up the Freethought flag on Clerkenwell Green.

J. CASPAR.—Thanks.

H. COURTNEY.—Mr. Foote is nearly quite well again. See "Acid Drops."

J. C. B.—There is no Secular hall in Swansea. Sorry to hear that, in shifting about, you have such trouble in getting the *Freethinker*.

H. J. S.—It is uphill work, as you say. But those who know you respect you, and that is the great thing after all.

JOSEPH BROWN.—You are doing a splendid work in Newcastle. The Branch should be proud of such an able and energetic secretary.

H. PORTER.—Under consideration.

J. RAWLINSON says Freethinkers should be on their guard against the Mr. English referred to in one of our last week's paragraphs.

BATH FRIEND.—Shall be dealt with in our next.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Newcastle Daily Leader—Chat—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Echo—Bulletin des Sommaires—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Ironclad Age—Independent Pulpit—Yorkshire Chronicle—Truthseeker—Freedom—Liberty—Our Journal—Church Reformer—War Cry—Der Lichtfreund—Echo—Gravesend and Dartford Reporter—Sunday Chronicle—Boston Investigator—Bournemouth Guardian—Menschenthum—Evening Standard—Kensington Churchman—Progressive thinker.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE influenza having abated, and the evening being fine, there was a great improvement in the attendance at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Why I am an Atheist." The audience was both large and enthusiastic. Mr. Standring enrolled a dozen new members of the National Secular Society.

MR. FOOTE lectures to-day (Feb. 9) at Blackburn. The afternoon lecture, a "Defence of Atheism," is in reply to a local minister whose discourses on the subject have been reported in the Blackburn press. As few Freethought lectures are delivered in this town (at present; it will be better by and bye), it is to be hoped that the Freethinkers in the district will not only attend themselves, but try to bring some orthodox friends with them.

THE London Secular Federation will organise courses of week-night free lectures—followed by discussion—in several districts of the metropolis. A beginning is to be made at the Hall of Science on Thursday evenings, February 20 and 27, and March 6 and 13. The lectures and subjects will be as follows:—(1) G. W. Foote, "Freethought and God." (2) J. M. Robertson, "Freethought and the Bible." (3) G. Standring, "The Church and the People." (4) G. W. Foote, "Freethought and Christ."

AS we have said, the admission to these lectures will be free, but there will be a box at the door for the donations of Freethinkers inclined to assist the experiment. We may add that the Christian Evidence Society has been invited to send representatives.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges £1 from W. H. Reynolds.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMPSON has been elected chairman of the Stockholm Branch of the Utilistiska Samfundet, and puts a great deal of energy into the organisation. We cannot sufficiently admire the bravery of this good captain, who has broke up his home at Eskilstuna in order to be in the position of danger at Stockholm. We notice that already the typographical appearance of *Fritankaren* is much improved. But money is needed to assist it, and thereby sustain the organisation and maintain the prisoner. We trust a good share will be forthcoming from English sympathisers.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON writes us that the "Gotha Hofrath," the court before which two prosecutions against Mr. Lennstrand were pending, has declared him "Not Guilty." This, accompanied with a pointed judicial explanation directed against the Court of King's Bench in Stockholm for its former sentences against Lennstrand, has delighted all friends of freedom in the northern peninsular. It is another item showing the decline of the power of bigotry.

SO far so good, but unfortunately this is not all. The prosecutors have appealed to the Higher Court of King's Bench, and that court, it is only too likely, in its customary subserviency to Church and State, will add some months' imprisonment to our brave young friend, who, Captain Thompson assures us, is cheerful and stout hearted as ever and fully worthy of the sympathy he receives from all quarters.

MORE money is wanted for the Swedish Prisoners' Fund. Every Branch should make a collection at once. Mr. Forder holds over a further list of acknowledgments till next week.

OUR exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's "Converted Atheist" is being well circulated. A Lancashire friend has paid for six dozen to be distributed among Wesleyan ministers. The Chatham Secular Society has bought a parcel for distribution. When the present supply—a good one—is exhausted we shall be happy to print more.

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– THE Rev. W. Walsh has concluded his pleasant addresses on unbelief, and the Newcastle Branch is delighted. It has gained six new members by the discussion. If other ministers will follow Mr. Walsh's excellent example the city will soon be converted to Freethought.

LAST Sunday's council meeting of the North Eastern Secular Federation was the best attended since the first start. It was decided to engage Mr. Clarke for a fortnight's tour. Other useful business was transacted.

Good Friday is to be commemorated by a social gathering of Secularists in the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle. Those who mean to attend should write to Mr. Joseph Brown, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle.

MR. A. B. MOSS gave great satisfaction at Manchester on Sunday, and his evening lecture on "The Mission of Freethought" drew a capital audience.

MRS. ELIZABETH H. CHURCH, of San Francisco, died a staunch Freethinker, and left one hundred dollars each to Mr. S. P. Putnam, of *Freethought*, Mr. H. O. Pentecost, of the *Twentieth Century*, Mr. H. L. Green, of the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, and Chas. Watts, of *Secular Thought*. By her wish Mr. Putnam conducted the funeral service, and her nephew, an Irvingite clergyman, had the grace to express his "sincere appreciation" of the manner in which her wishes were carried out.

"ACCOMPANYING the regular issue of the London *Freethinker* comes a Christmas number. It contains sixteen pages, neatly covered, and profusely illustrated with comic pictures. The reading matter is varied all the way from sober reasoning to humorous joking. The *Freethinker* is one of the ablest papers in the Liberal ranks. It is edited by Mr. G. W. Foote, who has no superior as a controversial writer. He can find more weak places in the armor of sanctity, or rather Christian hypocrisy, than any one we are accustomed to read after. He never writes a dull sentence, and invariably hits the mark aimed at. Mr. Foote is happily aided by two splendid writers, Messrs. J. M. Wheeler and W. P. Ball; besides, Mr. Forder is an admirable business manager. There are no dull, heavy and pointless papers in the Liberal field that we know of, and the *Freethinker* is abreast with the ablest and liveliest of them all."—*Independent Pulpit* (Texas).

THE *Independent Pulpit* also congratulates Mr. Wheeler on the completion of his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, and says he has "performed a noble service to Freethought." It hopes "some Liberal publisher and bookseller in America will arrange to put the work on sale." So do we.

MR. WHEELER'S work has not yet reached America in the bound form. Copies have been sent, however, and we may soon expect reviews in the Freethought papers.

MR. W. W. COLLINS will leave Sydney on a lecturing tour in New Zealand immediately after the laying of the foundation stone of the new Sydney Freethought Hall. There is a large Feethought population scattered in New Zealand, which we trust Mr. Collins will do something to unite in an effective organisation.

THE *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* has a very good letter from Mr. Chas. H. Kelf in answer to Canon Talbot on the question "Did the Jews at the time of Christ understand Greek?" Mr. Kelf quotes from Josephus, bk. i., against Apion, to show that even this eminent and learned man did not learn Greek until after he was taken captive in the war with the Romans. How preposterous is it then to suppose that Jewish fishermen understood and wrote in pot language.

"No.

"Brou SAM STANDRING says the North Middlesex open- like the Is will resume operations in March. He will be yes, he writ from a few volunteer lecturers.

"I think he w

naster versus the sky pilot again. The

A pious yarn *Dartford Reporter* gives in extenso an telling how one J uments used by Mr. R. A. Brown, head- er Grade School, Gravesend, in favor of Evolution, which are to be replied to by the Rev. W. Tucker, who argues in favor of "Special Creation." The schoolmaster has put a strong case for the sky pilot to answer.

THE London School Board, on the motion of Mrs. Besant amended by Mr. Stanley, has decided in favor of Free Education. We congratulate London on the vote, and hope it will powerfully assist the rational re-organisation of our public school system.

"ALASTOR," whose name often appears in *Secular Thought* (Toronto), turns out to be the financial pillar of the paper. He has been making up the weekly deficit for some time. But unfortunately he is unable to bear the strain, and he is obliged to ask the Freethought party in Canada to do more for their only journal, unless they want to see it drop. We earnestly hope the appeal will elicit a generous response. *Secular Thought* ought to be maintained.

WE have received from New York the *Truthseeker's Annual*, which has now become a permanent American institution. It gives as frontispiece a photographed bas-relief illustrating Bruno's martyrdom, and an account of the inauguration of Bruno's statue (the event of 1889) by T. B. Wakeman. The *Annual* gives a Freethinker's Almanac, but there are also many other attractive features. An account of Freethought in the United States informs us that the progress of the movement, though quiet, is satisfactory. One of the most attractive pieces is a story by Miss Helen H. Gardener entitled "The Boler House Mystery," and one of the most telling is *The Inventions of Science and The Inventions of Christianity* in which illustrations of the principal scientific instruments are given side by side with the instruments of torture invented and used by the Church. An article on "Why I left the Church" by H. O. Pentecost is so interesting that we shall reprint it for the benefit of our own readers. The *Annual* is capitally got up and reflects great credit on the publishers.

NEXT Sunday (Feb. 16) the long-expected, eventful meeting will be held at the London Hall of Science. Mr. Bradlaugh will formally resign the presidency of the National Secular Society, and state his reasons for doing so. Should his resignation be accepted—and it is hard to see how it can be rejected—his successor will be appointed. Only members of the N. S. S. can be present, and we repeat (for the last time) that present non-members who wish to attend, and see and hear Mr. Bradlaugh, must enrol themselves without delay. If they leave it till the last minute they will find themselves too late.

MR. BRADLAUGH has kindly arranged for his Indian presents to be on exhibition in the minor hall, upstairs, before and after the meeting. By the way, the meeting commences punctually at eleven.

THE N. S. S. Executive has instructed Mr. Forder to arrange for a luncheon at the Manchester Hotel, in Aldersgate Street. London is a dreadful place for obtaining refreshments on Sunday, and friends from the country, as well as some from the suburbs, will be glad to have a certain meal in front of them. Mr. Forder should be informed during the week by those who desire tickets.

THE TRUE RELIGION IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

A correspondent of the *Midland Counties Express* gives the following dialogue as a sample of what goes on in a State-aided school not far from Wolverhampton:

Q. "Children, you know which is the *True Church*, don't you?"—*A.* "Yes, sir."

Q. "You know that there is *only one* True Church?"—*A.* "Yes, sir."

"Yes," says he, "the Lord Jesus Christ made our Church, you know. He had nothing to do with the making of these little petty chapels that are about, did he?"—*A.* "No, sir."

"Now, you children that belong to the True Church, put up your hands."

Up goes a forest of hands.

"Now, you that go to the chapels, put yours up."

Only a few are held up.

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AN INTERRUPTED SABBATH CALM.

(*Founded on fact. A childish recollection.*)

'Twas in the parlor's sacred shade
We sat, in Sunday clothes arrayed—
A little band of scholars small,
Who learned their creed and knowledge all,
And morals too, by book and rule,
At good, dear Madame Blobbs' high school.
The Sabbath twilight shadows fell,
As to the organ's solemn swell
We sang in clear and ringing tones
From some hymn-book of "Mary Jones."*
At least, they sang, my school-mates dear,
But I, less mindful or sincere,
Was sitting in a corner dark
Where none my sinful deed might mark;
And with my handkerchief at play,
A drama sweet did there essay,
Enacting, as head bobbed to head,
What Francis unto Sarah said.
But short my sport, for Madame dear
Did chance to draw my corner near
As my *dramatis personæ*
Had dropped from high civility;
And, like the Tuscan spears at Rome,
Would drive the morning kiss well home.

"You bad, you naughty, wicked child,"
Cries Madame Blobbs in accents mild,
"To mar this holy Sabbath calm
With such vain sport," and grasps my arm.
My childish soul rebels within
Against this awful charge of sin.
And loud protests with stamps and sobs.
"Obstreperous," says Madame Blobbs.

The cane, at least three inches broad,
Was kept upon a smooth sideboard
Behind a set of polished trays
That held good cheer on festive days.
She snatched the cane, and jogged the trays—
They slide, and naught their progress stays;
Then clatter down upon the floor,
Clang, clang, ter bang; a roar-r-r-r-r.

O, what a crash and jar and din!
The scholars shriek and teachers grin,
And governess staid with "Sabbath joys,"
Does bravely strive to drown the noise;
But all in vain. Some laughed, some ran,
While danced my feet a wild can-can;
And loud and fast upon my back
The cane came down thwack, thwack.

'Tis done, that great chastisement's done;
The noise subsides, so, too, the fun;
The organ once again doth peal,
And voices sweet the twilight thrill.
But I'm a bed, choke-full of woe
And sin. Ah me! 'twas long ago,
And I am still a wayward child—
An Atheist in the "desert" wild;
But, strange to say, no rude alarm
Now mars my Sabbath evening's calm.

ALFRED LOVETT.

COL. INGERSOLL has been delivering a discourse in New York on "Crimes against Criminals." He thinks the American treatment of them not humane enough. Habitual criminals are beings with a mental twist. They are so to speak morally deformed. Punishment in the ordinary sense he deems useless. The worst criminals he would keep apart from the community just as we treat lunatics. Less depraved criminals should have a chance of cure by kindness. Col. Ingersoll would have prisoners paid for their work, that is what they earn beyond their cost placed to their credit, and paid them when discharged. No doubt this would give them a better chance of starting an honest life, and as to the objection, where would the money come from, we think it would be such a stimulus to perfunctory prison labors, that it might make those institutions self-supporting.

* "Mary Jones and Her Bible," Services of Sacred Songs," Sunday School Union.

POETRY IN LAW.

LAST week Colonel Ingersoll was defending a man in a breach of promise case. Here are some of the little bits of poetry that appear in his address to the jury:

When a man gets to a point where he'll lie, there isn't much choice of subjects.

You must take it for granted that men of ordinary sense do not act like extraordinary fools.

I'll go as far as anyone to whip naked through the world the man who deceives a good, pure, and confiding woman.

A marriage without love is immoral. I don't care how many forms you go through, I don't care if all the churches in the world, united beneath the dome of heaven, filling all the air with incense, pronounce them wedded, if that sweet perfume called love does not arise there is no marriage.

The woman who marries a man because he is rich, for a title, or for office, place, or power, is not a virtuous woman, and the man who marries a woman for any such reason is not a virtuous man, but a contemptible wretch.

She knew that he could obtain a divorce only by perjury and fraud, yet she was willing to marry him, and be divorced only by papers and perjuries, and not by facts.

Epithets are so cheap that you can make money on lies at fifty cents a hundred.

People who are fond of music are sometimes dangerous.

There is no evidence that her heart was ever quickened one-hundredth part as much as it would have been by the sudden appearance of a mouse.

If I got such love letters as hers, I'd keep 'em until summer and then carry 'em in my pockets hot days.

Oh, what an orator is love! What honeyed words run over the rose of his lips.

When another commits a fault it is a great dead tree half decayed, bare and hideous, but when we do it ourselves, oh, my God! think of the reasons, climbing around it like a thousand clinging vines, covering with soft loveliness every branch and twig, turning it into a beautiful object.

His love letters are sincere and good; who would have thought there was so much blood in the old man?

She was coldly and placidly correct, as correct as a crystal pane upon a frosted window.

I think any woman in the world is repaid for an ordinary breach of promise by being taken to hear Wagner's music.

"Tristan," that Mississippi of melody, flowing deep and strong, with hundreds of little tributaries bursting over the rocks into flowers of foam.

Every heart is like a theatre in one respect; there are certain effects produced, but you don't want everyone to see all the ropes and pulleys.

A VOICE FROM CARLILE'S COUNTY.

I WISH to make a few hasty remarks on the *Freethinker*, and to express approval of the general ability with which it is conducted. Whoever writes the short paragraphs on passing events, comments on assertions in orthodox periodicals, etc., does his work with admirable skill, with wit, sarcasm, humor, "sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer," and accomplishing in eight or a dozen lines as much destructiveness as could be accomplished by a column of close logical reasoning. I have mentioned the "solemn sneer" of Gibbon, of which Carlyle says, "As soon as I had read the twelve volumes in as many days, I put down the books, and never afterwards believed in miracles." The finer the wit, the keener the edge of the instrument, and the absence of even a tinge of vulgarity, the more effective the remarks become. I could give numerous instances, if I had time to refer to the pile of *Freethinkers*, as I put a pencil-mark against the best. The leaders are good and instructive, both Mr. Foote's and Mr. Wheeler's. "Letters to the Clergy" are able and argumentative, and have a value as a book of reference, as I see they are to be published in book form. Ingersoll's oration on the death of Horace Seaver, ought to be published as a pamphlet—his turning to the corpse and addressing it is startling and has fine dramatic effect.—DELTA (Plymouth).

["Delta" is informed that the *Freethinker* paragraphs are all written by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler. Ingersoll's oration on the death of Horace Seaver may be included in a little collection of his funeral addresses.—EDITOR.]

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REVIEWS.

The Psychology of Attention. By T. Ribot (Authorised Translation). "Open Court" Publishing Co., Chicago. Price 75 cents.—Dr. Ribot occupies the chair of comparative and experimental psychology at the Collège de France. He enjoys a European reputation, and apparantly an American reputation also, for the present volume is one of a series with which the "Open Court" Publishing Co. is enriching the philosophical literature of the United States. The translation seems admirably done: indeed, except for the title page, the reader would imagine himself perusing an English work. As for the study itself, we have no hesitation in pronouncing it a very important contribution to positive psychology. Space does not permit of a lengthy *critique*, and a thinker of Dr. Ribot's eminence is not to be dealt with superficially or piecemeal. We content ourselves, therefore, with heartily recommending the volume to all our readers who are interested in the deeper problems of life and mind, and who desire to see them treated in a purely scientific spirit.

Religious Systems of the World. London: Sonnenschein and Co.—This is a collection of the Sunday afternoon lectures delivered at South Place Institute in 1888—89. We venture to hope it will have a wide circulation. A few of the lectures are unimportant, but the rest are well wortny of attention, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere such a bird's-eye view of religions, sects and philosophic systems. The writers include Elward Clodd, Canon Rawlinson, Dr. James Legge, Professor Beal, Sir Alfred Lyall, Arthur Lillie, Oscar Browning, Rev. Elward White, Rev. John Clifford, Sir F. Pollock, Frederic Harrison, Dr. Stanton Coit, etc. Two writers specially known to the Freethought party are J. M. Robertson, who contributes an able and learned paper on Mithraism, and G. W. Foote, who writes on the Gospel of Secularism.

Will Shakespeare, Tom Paine, Bob Ingersoll, and Charlie Bradlaugh. London: R. Forder, (6d.)—This pamphlet is from the pen of a veteran Freethought scholar, and is very good reading. The author's object is to show that "Will," "Tom," and other diminutives were no marks of disrespect, but a sign that the man was "a jolly good fellow." We believe this is about the truth. But it won't do to turn it upside down, for some names can't be diminished at all, nor some without vulgarity; and of course we don't choose our own names. It appears pretty certain that "Tom" was applied to Paine by his contemporaries without a tinge of insult. That is entirely posthumous—a bit of retrospective Christian charity.

Horrors of the French Revolution. By Charles Watts. "Secular Thought" Office: Toronto (10 cents.)—An excellent reply to the orthodox libellers of the Atheists of the Revolution. Mr. Watts reduces the "horrors" to their proper proportions, shows how small they were in comparison with the horrors of kingcraft and priestcraft, and finds their causes in the brutal oppression of the French people in previous centuries.

Christianity, Defective and Unnecessary. By Kate Eunice Watts. "Secular Thought" Office: Toronto (10 cents.)—A spirited, well-written pamphlet, that ought to be circulated among women.

Our want of halls is often cast in our teeth by those who uphold the laws which prevent the endowment of Freethought. They should turn to Gregory's *Christian Church*, vol i., p. 118, where he says of the Christians, "They met in private houses, and only in the third century did they become respectable and were permitted to erect places of worship."

Obituary.—I have the painful duty of recording the death on January 30, aged 33, of Mr. Samuel Pratt. The interment took place on Saturday, the 1st inst., at West Hartlepool Cemetery. By his death the members of this Branch have lost a consistent advocate. He was deeply respected by his fellow workmen, who came to his grave in large numbers. At his request I read A. Holyoake's service at his grave. Every word was listened to by all present with due decorum, and no truer description of his aims and aspirations through life can be given than the perusal of that service conveys. —James McNamee.

BLASPHEMY AND BLASPHEMY.

Well, and so the Bolton Guardians of the Poor have decided to accept Mr. Elliston's invitation to his pantomime on behalf of the workhouse children, after all—but not until one, a Mr. Ramsden, who said he had never been to a theatre in his life, had spoken of "the baneful influence of such entertainments on the young," and another, a Mr. Dutton, had said that "he could not ask God's blessing on a child whom he took to the theatre." Why, if he can't, he can't—and there's an end of that. It is still conceivable that the Creator of the Bolton Workhouse children may know whether they should be blessed or cursed without waiting for instructions from Mr. Dutton. Nay, when you come to think of it, what monstrous, amazing blasphemy is this, that a bombastic, inflated, self-sufficient, prosperous prig should dare to pretend that the relations of the Deity towards the poor castaways of his creation require to be arranged and directed by Mr. Dutton's officious intercession!

And what is to be said of the self-righteous ignoramus who, having never been in a theatre himself, presumes to pronounce damnatory judgment on a pleasure which unquestionably brightens the work-a-day life of thousands, and of which he, by his own confession, can know nothing? Just think of the delight which the bright and tinselled glories and wondrous unaccustomed drolleries of a pantomime must produce in the preternaturally staid and gloomy mind of a child innured to the bleak hospitality of the workhouse! Then think of the Jack-in-office who, having never seen a theatrical performance in his life, assumes the responsibily of meeting with a churlish and slanderous denial the kindness of the man who would gratuitously provide this rare delight for a whole legion of hapless waifs! And then they dare to prate of how *they* shall dispose of "God's blessing"! Faugh! Foote was sent to prison for blasphemy. Are there no laws to punish the audacious and revolting impiety of these blasphemers of Bolton?—"*Dangle*" *in Sunday Chronicle.*

WAS COMTE AN ATHEIST?

Mr. Alfred W. Benn writing in the *Spectator* in reply to Mr. F. Harrison, says, "Comte was beyond all doubt an atheist." Mr. Benn gives several citations in which Comte speaks of the substitution of the love of humanity for the love of God, and other passages incompatible with a belief in theism.

But Comte said "the atheist is the most irrational of theologians." To us it is evident he meant the person who spends his time in seeking to prove a negative. There is no doubt that Comte was anti-Christian, and as Mr. Benn points out, he says that the founder of Christianity exhibited "a mixture of hypocrisy and fascination always incompatible with a true superiority of heart and mind."

The parishioners of St. George's, Southwark, have been paying £180 a year to the rector in accordance with an Act passed in 1807. They have, however, through their vestry, made a protest by taking a poll upon the subject as to whether the rate should be continued or not; 905 persons voted against it, and only 78 in favor. As, however, the discontinuance will involve the parish in heavy penalties, the next step must be a proposal in Parliament to repeal the Act under which the impost is levied, and this, we trust, will be taken up in earnest.

Robert Burns' literature is very extensive and mixed. Some of it shows how ninnies can be inflated. Some is a combination of cant and unction, and when a Scotchman goes in for that sort of thing he licks creation. The Rev. Andrew Douglas, we notice, has been holding forth at Arbroath on "The Influence of Robert Burns on Religious Thought in Scotland." The reverend gentleman's poetical faculty may be estimated from his extravagant praise of the "Cottar's Saturday Night," which is one of the least poetical of Burns's pieces, and not a distinctively Burns piece at all. Then the Douglas claims Burns as "the first" who had the courage to protest against the dreadful doctrine of everlasting future torment. Now this is simple nonsense. Burns did indeed, like a true great poet, fling the Greek-fire of his sarcasm at the Church Creed of his time. He did revolt against the teaching of a burning hell. But he was not "the first" to do so. The protest was made by Freethinkers before him.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant "Deluges: Biblical and Other."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Uselessness of Prayer."

Claremont Hall, 7, J. M. Robertson, "How the Bible was Made."

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 88 Newington Green Road, N, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "The Gospel of Evolution."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, A members' special meeting; important business.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, E, 7.45, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Mission, Character, and Teachings of Christ."

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God: Where and What is it?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. R. Forder, "A Night with Old Nick."

Old Southgate—Cromwell Hall, 7, Adam Taylor, "Things as they Are and should Be."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Secularism: the Socialists' John the Baptist."

Westminster.—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "David the Royal Psalmist."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Holy Matrimony."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. R. S. Bransby, "Is it Rational to Believe in Theosophy?"

Cardiff—Queen Street, large hall (entrance from Working Street). Mr. J. Clarke, 11, "The Absurdity of Prayer;" 3, "The Progress of Secularism;" 6.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?" Tickets at door.

Derby—British Oak, Carrington Street, 6.30, Mr. H. McGuinness, "Half an Hour with Colonel Ingersoll;" after which an important business meeting to organise an open-air propaganda for the coming spring.

Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 127 Ingram Street, 5.30, Special meeting of the members of the N. S. S.; 6.30, Open discussion, "The single Tax."

Heckmondwike—Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a Meeting and Reading.

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, Mr. J. Spencer, the popular Lancashire Reciter; 3 and 6.30, "Humorous and Dramatic Recitals from the Best Authors."

Hull—Cobden Hall, Waltham Street, First Anniversary of Branch, Musical Entertainment. Quarter's subscription due; members please note.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, 7, Mr. Bergmann, "Noah's Deluge."

Manchester—Rusholm Road, Oxford Road, All Saints. Social Evening and Entertainment at 6.30.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—11, Meeting on the Sand Hill of Sunday Music League to collect signatures to petition; 2.30, Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, the Rev. Walter Walsh, "On the Origin of the Idea of God and Creation;" 7.30, Society's Rooms, fortnightly financial meeting.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr Sydney Oliver, B.A., 11, "The Moral Basis of Socialism;" 7, "Practical Municipal Socialism."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "Evolution and the Origin of Life;" 7, "Mind and Body."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Mr. A. B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 2, Woolwich; 30, Woolwich. April 13, Camberwell. May 25, Regent's Park.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich: 30, Westminster. May 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18, Regent's Park.

Mr. James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Feb. 16, Birmingham.

E. Stanley Jones, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—Feb. 9, Sheffield; 23, Huddersfield.

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The Freethinker

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

ON "CHRIST AND HUMANITY."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[CONTINUED.]

I DO not think, my lord, that you will find Atheism so easy to dispose of; nor do I believe that the beautiful spectacle of Church Union will assist the consummation. You beseech the Church of England to "silence bickerings and postpone controversies," which you are "ashamed to name," to "devote her energies" to social problems, and to "strike out agencies for their solving." Meanwhile you are presiding at the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln for ritualistic practices, and adjudicating on the momentous questions of whether he looked this way or that, stood on this leg or the other, or burnt candles when he could see without them. The prosecution and the defence of Dr. King will probably cost fifty thousand pounds: a sum of money that might have established a large co-operative enterprise among industrious artisans, and helped to solve the great "Social Problem."

I will follow you, however, in your mapping of the "social work of the Church," and see whether Christianity has the promise of human elevation. You refer to Slavery, and its abolition, for an illustration of how Christianity "writes itself down in the Morals of the community."

> "To the slave, in all their epistles, the Apostles speak most tenderly. Of him Christianity was most careful. Not in preaching against the institution a crusade which would have endlessly multiplied their miseries, but by instilling such views as would first ameliorate the system, and make it at last impossible."

This is the usual clerical method of claiming for Christianity every moral reform since the days of Christ, on the same principle that made Tenterden steeple the cause of the Goodwin Sands. You admit that Christianity did not preach against Slavery; indeed it is not condemned by a single text in the New Testament. Jesus does not seem to have given it a thought, and Paul and Peter took it for granted as a permanent social institution. After the accession of Christianity to power, under Constantine, the position of the slave was actually rendered more odious and degrading. Century after century the Church passed ecclesiastical laws for slaves, and lived upon their forced labor like their secular exploiters. These facts are undeniable, and all the rest is mere private opinion. According to your view, it took Christianity ever so many centuries to "ameliorate the system," and nearly two thousand years to "make it at last impossible." This is a frightful time to be required by a divine faith to abolish the most flagrant of injustices. Surely the ordinary progress of civilisation and humanity might have abolished it unaided in such a tremendous period of time.

You make another remark on Slavery in a subsequent chapter, which evinces the same priestly prepossession.

> "From the beginning of the world slavery was an institute of Humanity, until in our fathers' days, in our own vale of Keston, a servant of Christ resolved that the world must know it no more. And now a great nation would sooner suffer a dire war than tolerate slavery in its borders."

As an Evolutionist, I regard this as a childish view of the abolition of slavery. No single man, whether a "servant of Christ" or of any other master, could have overthrown such an institution. But if you insist on discussing individuals, I must point out that slavery was branded before the days of your "servant of Christ" by the sceptical Montesquieu with exquisite irony, and by the arch-heretic Voltaire with mingled wit and passionate indignation. Thomas Paine cried out in 1789, "I despair of seeing an abolition of the infernal traffic in negroes"; but soon after—in the language of Professor Newman—"the first public act against slavery came from republican France, in the madness of Atheistic enthusiasm." Christian England did not abolish slavery in her West Indian colonies for another generation.

Let me ask you, my lord, if Christianity is to be as long in abolishing poverty as it was in abolishing slavery. What a lively prospect it opens to the "suffering population"!

Intellectually speaking, you are alive to their misery, and as a man I dare say you would like to diminish it. "The Apostle," you say, "spoke of a suffering population. We know of one which can only just exist, hanging on a sharp edge of illness, hunger, uncleanness physical and moral, incapacity mental and bodily, in full sight of abundance, luxury, and waste."

Admirably expressed! but what a commentary on Christianity and its methods! If after all these centuries of preaching and soul-saving, a multitude of our people "only just exist" in such dreadful, degrading circumstances, is it not high time that we tried another system than the one which has so wasted its opportunities? For Christianity is not a new, untried thing; it is hoary with age, and colossal it its pretensions. During half the period of definite human history it has held sovereign sway over the Caucasian race, and for many centuries its supremacy was despotic. Yet now, after its use of unlimited power and wealth, the shameful confession has to be made by an Archbishop of the Church of England, that poverty, drink, prostitution, gambling, and other vices are specially rampant in Christian countries.

It is hard to "only just exist," always "hanging on a sharp edge of illness and hunger," to say nothing of intellectual and moral frustration, in "full sight of abundance, luxury and waste." As a man your Grace must feel it, but as an Archbishop it does not seem to disturb your equanimity. Your eloquent words are not corroborated by a still more eloquent example. During the London season your Grace may be seen in Rotten Row, riding a splendid horse, and followed by a mounted groom. Your clerical appearance might attract the attention of a poor wretch, who had left his squalid home, and

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wandered into the Park, to see for a moment the pride and pomp of the world in which he was an outcast, and to brood over his inexplicable misery "in full sight of abundance, luxury and waste." He might ask a bystander "Who is that parson on horseback?" and be informed, "That is the great Dr. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury." Your grace would be an object-lesson in practical Christianity. And as the poor wretch on foot watched you and your groom riding among the wealth and fashion of London, and looked down at his own rags and tattered boots; as he thought of your palace and of his own garret; as he contrasted your magnificent salary of fifteen thousand pounds a year with his own miserable pittance; as he dreamed of what your wife and children might be in their luxurious home, and then felt more keenly than ever the pinched and bloodless faces of his own dear ones; I fancy there would surge up within him the elements of a sermon that, if it found fit utterance in burning words, would drive the cavaliers and amazons pell-mell to their homes, and put shameful fire on your lordship's face. Nay, such a sermon, if preached with "the throat of the whirlwind," would blast the bench of Bishops, rock and rend the Churches, fill the people with a passionate, unconquerable hatred of Christianity, and make them see and feel that dogma and priestcraft are the parents of nearly all the evils over which the Church sheds hypocritical tears; and thenceforth they would know Christianity as the Janus of civilisation, with a face of pretended pity to the suffering poor, and a face of sleek connivance to the spoliators and oppressors of mankind.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

CAGLIOSTRO.

The annals of occultism know no more famous name than that of Cagliostro. While all else advances human folly remains almost stationary. The pretensions and career of all miracle-mongers and those who trade on human gullibility are remarkably similar, and in exposing the life of this notorious impostor we can hardly fail to throw some little light both upon his predecessors and successors.

Anyone who desires to closely study the character of the cleverest charlatan of last century—we cannot say of modern times, for we fancy a living rival outdoes him—may be safely referred to Carlyle's admirable essay, written, as it is, with all the sympathy a detester of quacks can bestow upon a charlatan. A writer coming after Carlyle gleans but a stubble ground. Yet in this case that powerful genius did not quite cover the whole field. Two important English studies of Cagliostro have since been written, one in the *Dublin University Magazine* (1871), and the other by an occultist, Mr. A. E. Waite, in his recent *Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers*. Since Carlyle's essay, moreover, two attempts have been made to whitewash Cagliostro, one by Charles Sotheran in a little tract published by D. M. Bennett in New York in 1875; and the other by Madame Blavatsky in the last number of *Lucifer*. We do not wonder at Madame Blavatsky having made a close study of her predecessor in occult arts. Cagliostro whitewashed, there might be some chance of his successor shining as an angel of light. But the lady's exculpation simply consists in setting down all that he tells against her hero as inventions of the Jesuits, unmindful that a pretty full report of his career can be gathered, apart from that published from his own confession and that of his wife, when finally arrested at Rome.

Cagliostro, like Jesus Christ, seems to have cast doubts on his own parentage, and of course Madame Blavatsky also seeks to make him a child of mystery. Giuseppe Balsamo, as Mr. Waite, another Theosophist, candidly says, "whatever has been advanced to the contrary by himself or his admirers, was the son of Peter [Pietro] Balsamo and Felicia Bracconieri, both of humble extraction." He was born at Palermo, Sicily, June 8, 1743.

His father died a few months after his birth. Left to the inadequate control of his widowed mother, he betrayed even in his earliest years a selfish and indolent disposition. He was sent by an uncle to the Seminary of the St. Roch, where he proved his aversion to discipline by running away. Then placed in a Benedictine Convent he came under the tuition of the convent apothecary, from whom he learnt the first principles of chemistry and medicine. Even then it was remarked that he seemed eager to discover those secrets which could be turned to account by charlatans. After several escapades, scandalous to the fathers, this black sheep escaped from the convent and returned to the maternal fold. Here he is said to have employed his talents, first in forging tickets for the theatre, and afterwards in forging a will; and it is even said he killed a man in one of the many brawls in which he had a share.

After cheating a credulous goldsmith named Marano out of sixty ounces of gold, under pretext of finding a hidden treasure, he fled to Messina, where he is said to have met the adept Althotas, who is said to have been an Armenian, with whom he went to Egypt, there to be instructed in the occult sciences, Egypt then playing the part which has since been assigned to Thibet. Possibly this adventure with the adept and the visit to Egypt is entirely mythical. Certainly he found out a method of making gold, by setting up a gaming house in Naples, for the benefit, that is the bleeding, of wealthy foreigners who visited the city.

At Rome he pretended to piety, and found many illustrious dupes. Here he married the young and beautiful Lorenza Feliciani, in whose charms he saw the pathway to fortune. Balsamo was no beauty. On the contrary, a most dusky, bull-necked, mastiff-faced, sinister-looking individual. Thus is he pictured by Carlyle, from engravings executed for admirers: "A most portentous face of scoundrelism; a fat, snub, abominable face; dewlapped, flat nosed, greedy, full of greediness, sensuality, ox-like obstinacy; a forehead impudent, refusing to be ashamed." Like many another ill-looking man, he gained a pretty wife, chiefly, we may suppose, by his brazen impudence. All his biographers concur in describing Lorenza as a charming person; slight in figure, of graceful bearing and with captivating eyes.

Madame Blavatsky ascribes her hero's misfortunes and ill repute to a bad wife, but his other whitewasher Mr. Sotheran says "Through changing fortunes, in evil and in good report, she remained a true and faithful wife." Certain it is that Balsamo made his wife the principle instrument of his fortune. Henceforth he was known under various aliases, as the Marquis Pellegrini, Don Tischio, Count Melina. Belmonte, Fenix, Anna and Harat were other of his aliases before he finally took to theosophy, and the title of Count Alessandro di Cagliostro. Balsamo sought without scruple to undermine his wife's notions of honor and to make her beauty the means of advancing his own fortunes. They travelled from place to place, he living on her prostitution, setting his honor at the highest price obtainable. But the course of scoundrelism does not always run smooth, and if at one time we find them riding with postillions, at another they are begging on a pilgrimage. Cagliostro, after a brief practice as doctor at Madrid, comes to London—

> "The needy villain's general home
> The common sewer of Paris and of Rome."

But here he got landed in the King's Bench prison at the suit of his landlord. From this retreat he was rescued by the charity of Sir Edward Hales. Soon after we find him decorating the summer-house of Doctor Benamore, not however to his satisfaction, and

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it is also said that he repaid his employer's kindness by seducing his daughter.

Giuseppe and Lorenza, once more friendless and in poverty, decided to return to the Continent. At Dover they met a certain Monsieur Duplaisir, and with him they journeyed to Paris, Madame la Comtesse in the postchaise with Duplaisir, whilst the complaisant count jogged behind on horseback. At Paris, Lorenza became the mistress of Duplaisir, and the three lived together some months, but Balsamo, seeking too much money, Duplaisir proposed to Madame that she should commence business on her own account. What was not sufficient for three, and one of them Count Cagliostro, would amply suffice for two alone. The fair Lorenza agreed. But the Count was not to be shaken off so easily. He obtained an order for her arrest, and she was imprisoned for several months in Sainte Pélagie. Figuier in his *History of the Marvellous in Modern Times* says that at a later period when Cagliostro, uplifted by notoriety and fortune, returned to Paris with a superb equipage, he strenuously denied his first sojourn in the capital and the disgraceful episode of Sainte Pélagie. He maintained that his wife, to whom he now gave the name of Seraphina, had no connection with the imprisoned Lorenza Feliciani, nor he, the Count Cagliostro, with the quack who had been prohibited from continuing his rogueries. But certain legal documents of irrefutable authenticity substantiate the contrary assertion of his enemies.

J. M. Wheeler.

(*To be concluded.*)

WHY I LEFT THE CHURCH.

By the ex-Rev. H. O. Pentecost.

From the "Truthseeker" Annual.

In 1871, I think, I was ordained as the pastor of a small mission Baptist church down on Long Island, in a neighborhood in which the people were divided into two classes—those who dug clams for a living and those who didn't. Or perhaps I might say those who could read and write and those who couldn't. Being in the bivalve mollusk region, the church over which I was called to preside was naturally of the hardshell variety.

I came very near not being ordained. It happened in this way. I had immersed some new converts in the brook down by an old mill while I was simply a licentiate. In the Baptist church a young man intending to preach is first licensed by some local church and afterward ordained by a council of ministers, and it is supposed that he will neither baptise converts nor administer the "Lord's supper" until after he has been ordained. When I was up before the ordaining council I was quizzed about baptising those people in the brook. I told the small magnates assembled that I thought I was called by God to preach, and therefore had my authority from him to baptise as well as to administer the communion. One of them asked what I thought was the good of their coming all the way down on Long Island to ordain me if I considered myself ordained already. I told him that I thought there was no good in it. Then he wanted to know what I would do if they refused to ordain me, and I told him that I would go on just the same. It was like the firing of a bomb among the members of the council, and I was told afterward that if it had not been for my brother, who was one of the leading ministers in that association, I would not have been ordained.

I mention this circumstance to show that from the first moment of my entering the Christian ministry I had no respect for the machinery of the church. I knew even then that ordaining councils and all that sort of thing, mean simply that the parsons already manufactured wish to control the market—wish to impress each incoming member of the profession with the fact that he is created by them, and, therefore, to a greater or less extent, amenable to their authority. The regularly ordained clergy of each denomination constitute a Parson Trust, and even in my callow days I saw and understood it.

I said that "my" church (that is the way ministers habitually speak of the churches of which they are pastors—"my" church) was a hardshell Baptist church. That means, for one thing, that it was a close-communion church—one that would not allow members of any but regular Baptist churches to sit with them at the "Lord's table" and eat a small piece of bread or cracker and sip a few drops of wine in commemoration of the death of their savior. Well, I got into trouble over that doctrine, in which I never did and never could believe.

There was a Congregationalist, whose summer residence was in the neighborhood, who gave almost all the money that built the church edifice. One Sunday this man and his family remained to the communion service, I saw one of the deacons omit to offer him the bread and wine. I knew these deacons and the whole church were mightily glad to get his money, and I thought if they were so ready to establish and maintain financial fellowship with him, they might as well indulge in a little spiritual fellowship as well. And so I took the bread and wine over to the man and his family myself. That was too much. A council of ministers was called and my resignation was accepted on the spot. It looks all very picayune to me now, but it was a large-sized trouble then.

I mention this circumstance, also, to show again that, although I was a firm believer in what are called the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, I never was a "churchman."

Now let us have done with details.

My first disappointment with and grievance against the church was that she was so far away from the teaching of Jesus. He taught plainly (supposing the gospels to be true) that we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless we are poor; but the church teaches that we should save money and accumulate, so as to be able to do good with it. He taught that we should lay up treasures only in heaven, but the church loves the man with a bank account. He taught that we should live without anxiety from day to day, as the birds and the flowers, but the church despises those who follow his teaching. He taught that we should give to those who ask of us, but the church turns such persons over to the Charity Organisation Society or has them arrested. He taught that we should love our enemies, and turn the left cheek to him who strikes us on the right, but the church upholds the shooting of burglars, the hanging of murderers, and war. He associated with the kind of persons with whom the church will have nothing to do, except at incalculably long range, through its Howard and Florence missions—as one who holds his nose and lifts a filthy rag on the end of a long stick. He preached no system of doctrine, and said that they who love God and their fellow-men shall enter the kingdom of heaven. But the church has long creeds, full of doctrines that Jesus never dreamed of, and distinctly declares that those who think they can be saved by simply loving God and serving their fellow-men are heretics. In short, I saw that the church is worshipping Jesus as God, but declining to follow his teachings, on the ground that they are visionary, impracticable and false.

(*To be continued.*)

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes advocates Methodist Sisterhoods and asks for £1,000 a year for the experiment. He hopes to to hear some day "hundreds of sisters who at their own cost, without receiving one penny from our churches, will do the kind of work we have indicated," and become cheap advertising touts of the gospel shop run by the author of *The Atheist Shoemaker*.

Charles Lamb was once persuaded to attend a Methodist "Experience" meeting in company with a friend. The friend spoke with great fervor and self-abasement, and finally Lamb himself was called upon to address the meeting. He rose and stuttered out, "I have nothing to say as to myself, but I can quite c-c-confirm what my friend has said as to his being a m-m-miserable sinner."

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ACID DROPS.

The last blessed Sabbath was Hospital Sunday in Manchester. Three special services were held in the cathedral, and the total of the day's collections reached the magnificent, sublime, unprecedented figure of £39 7s. After this wonderful effort, it is far from surprising to hear that the evening preacher, the Rev. John Henn, claimed hospitals and dispensaries as entirely due to Christianity. Prior to the Christian era, he said, such institutions were unknown. Now, this reverend Henn is hatching a chalk egg. He may deceive ignorant spectators, but people who know what's what are not so easily taken in. Why, even in a little volume published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (*Buddhism*, by Professor T. W. Rhys Davids), it may be read how King Asoka, long before the days of Jesus Christ, established hospitals not only for men, but also for beasts. Then again, if Mr. Henn will turn to Mr. Walter Pater's beautiful *Marius the Epicurean*, he will read that the Grecian temples of Æsculapius —the god of healing—were "really also a kind of hospitals for the sick, administered in a full conviction of the religiousness, the refined and sacred happiness, of a life spent in the relieving of pain."

O thou Henn, hatching the chalk egg, do get off it and incubate a real one. Cease cackling sectarian bigotry, and perhaps you'll draw a bigger collection for the hospitals. The sum of £39 7s. for a whole day's begging in Manchester cathedral shows you are on the wrong tack. Anyhow, don't lie in the pulpit gratuitously. You have to do a certain amount of lying professionally, but for God's sake—or your own—don't do it *con amore* and give such full measure, pressed down, and running over. Give the truth a chance now and then, and you'll feel the better for it the next morning.

The only item in the Queen's Speech especially interesting to us as Freethinkers is the promise of "A Bill for improving the procedure by which tithe is now levied, and for facilitating its redemption." Should not this last clause read "and for handing over permanently to the Church of England national property, to which its right of use becomes year by year more imperilled"?

The silly young glutton who is now playing "the young Pretender" in Paris, is very pious as well as a lover of costly wines and *recherché* repasts. After polishing off his sumptuous breakfast on Sunday morning he asked to be allowed to go to mass; but the keeper told him that nobody at the Conciergerie ever made such a request except disorderly women, and that his presence amongst them would give rise to hilarity. So a chaplain was brought in to minister to the young man's spiritual wants, and it is to be hoped that the Body of God, which he no doubt swallowed, mixed up well with the food from the restaurant.

We have often told people to laugh and grow wise. Now we find the *Christian World* siding with the blasphemer. Its advice is "Love God and laugh," but it pleads for "fun," and in the long run the bright spirit of laughter will vanquish all the solemn ghosts of mystery and imposture.

The Rev. Bernard J. Snell preached—we beg pardon, lectured—at Manchester on Sunday afternoon on "The New Democracy." But although the subject was political he gave the lecture a pious twang. For instance, he said that out of mistakes came progress, as out of chaos came cosmos. Out of *chaos!* Fancy an "educated" man, at this time of day, talking such nonsense! Science knows nothing of chaos; can't indeed conceive chaos; and doubts if it ever existed except in the heads of theologians.

Mr. Snell wound up by declaring that politics and religion must go hand in hand, otherwise religion would not be real and politics would not be unselfish. How pretty! But let us work it out. Religion is to borrow *reality* from politics, and certainly it wants it. In return religion is to lend politics *unselfishness*. But how is it to lend what it hasn't got? The fact is, that while religion has been prating about what it would do, political reform has gone and done it; and while religion has been canting about unselfishness, political reform has been carrying out that big instalment of it known as Justice.

Our parsons are always imitating the sacerdotalism of Rome, and while it only consists in putting on gorgeous vestments and other histrionic accessories, churchgoers are content with it as part of a well-got-up show supplying them with a respectable Sunday entertainment. But how would they like the genuine article as expounded by Priest Harrington to his dupes? He is reported as saying there is as much difference between a priest and a layman as there is between God Almighty and the Devil himself. This is priestism pure and simple, and though our High Church clergy would not venture to say it, there are not a few of them who would like to.

The demand for an Abridged Bible was exemplified lately by the rebuff a colporteur got from a Scotch fisherwoman —"Na, na. We're for nae Bibles here. Bairns hiv nae business t' ken aboot sic things." She had probably read some of the stories in Genesis with considerable disgust.

Sky-pilots are always supposed to have a call from the Holy Ghost before entering on any particular office. Such advertisements as the following from the *Church Times* seem to indicate that there may possibly be in some cases other inducements of a more temporal character:—"Advowson for sale, beautifully situated in Berkshire, near the river; net income about £300; excellent house and grounds; small pop.; near a station. Incumbent aged nearly 80.—Mr. Corbett, etc." Such advertisements may be found in any issue of the Church papers, notwithstanding the existence of a Society for Abolishing Purchase in the Church.

Hynoptism threatens to be held responsible for most of the crimes and all the miracles. An American hynoptiser who calls himself "Prof." Seymour, explains the miracles of Christ by his own performances. Instead of feeding five thousand, J. C. "psychologised" them into the belief that they had a good square meal, and also we suppose into the belief that twelve baskets full of fragments were left over. We suppose, too, the death on the cross and the ascent into heaven were equally "psychologised." Our impression is the early Christians were so credulous they did not need much psychologising.

When at the British Museum hunting up the true history of Cagliostro our sub. had twice the fortune to meet Madame Blavatsky, with her arms glittering with golden bangles and her fingers sparkling with diamonds. It may surprise some that a lady who claims to have access to occult knowledge, and to libraries far vaster than the British Museum, should seek for material for *Lucifer* in that library. It is also curious that the learned lady should twice leave her umbrella behind her. But her head is filled with more important things than umbrellas.

Over nineteen tons of embalmed cats have been landed from Egypt at Liverpool. These were once the divinities of the Egyptians, and a large find of their remains being recently discovered, they were sold for manure at £3 13s. 9d. per ton. When the Christian pantheon is emptied there will not be the shade of a phantom of a ghost of any divinity. Not enough will be realised to manure a single crocus in a flower-pot.

Some people may have wondered what the conferences of sky-pilots on the Lord's second coming are carried on for. An answer comes from America, where a conference of twenty preachers, presided over by the Rev. Israel Hollock, was held at Brusby Mountain. Wilkes County These worthies meant business. They did not fall at loggerheads about the interpretation of scripture. No. They solemnly agreed that J. C. was due this very year, and that they would preach he was coming. As a consequence much excitement prevails, which it is said will even affect the crops, farmers who believe the holy message concluding it is no use to make any provision ahead. What should people want with crops if they have Christ?

Dr. Kirker, giving at the Portsmouth Literary and Scientific Society "Sanitary Notes on Egypt and Palestine," expressed his belief that the plagues of Egypt might be accoun'ed for by natural phenomena. Thus the plague of

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boils was probably an epidemic preceded by an unhealthy season. The darkness which might be felt was very likely a dense fog. The apparent turning of pools of water into blood might have been caused by stagnant water being discolored by the surrounding soil. The plague of frogs would be a natural result of the destruction of fish in contaminated waters, for the frogs would then be sure to assert themselves.

Dr. Kirker forgets that the plagues were given as signs of the miraculous power of Jahveh, but we fancy from what he says of the plague of lice in which the Egyptians saw the finger of God, that he is somewhat sceptical as to that finger. He is reported as saying: "With regard to the development of insect life, he did not think it necessary to dwell on those two plagues, for everyone who had visited Egypt would be inclined to feel that the troubles of the ancient Egyptians and the Israelites were shared by the inhabitants in the present day." Dr. Kirker did not venture to refer the destruction of the first-born to any known natural phenomena, and seems indeed to hold loose-minded rationalistic views quite inconsistent with the inspiration of the Bible.

What a modicum of logic and common sense goes to the making of a minister! Here is the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes boasting of an "answer to prayer." He besought the Lord for £500 by a certain date, but he also took the precaution to inform the St. James's Hall congregation of the fact on two successive Sundays. Luckily the cash arrived on the very evening it was wanted, as it always does in these stories; and Mr. Hughes asks Professors Huxley and Tyndall what they think of it. Well now, if he asked our opinion, we should say that he is either a clever humbug or an awful fool. Fancy keeping a secret by telling three thousand people! Mr. Hughes should pray for what he wants in secret, taking care to let nobody but God know, and see if the money comes *then*.

The Rev. Wm. Frederick Gover, of Oaksey Rectory, Wilts, is a muscular Christian. He is said to be more familiar with prize-fighting than preaching. This clerical prop of the Primrose League recently interrupted the speakers at a Liberal van meeting, and has since been committed for trial for aiding and abetting in a drunken brawl and prize-fight.

It was a moonlight fight. Mr. Gover acted as second to one of the pugilists, picked up his man five or six times, called out "Time," and used language showing he was more in his element there than in preaching that if struck on the right cheek one should turn the left also.

The Abbé Martin, who insured his brother's life for a heavy sum and then endeavored to strangle him in his sleep, has been sentenced by the Allier Assize Court to penal servitude for life.

While Mrs. Roberts was worshipping in a chapel at Plasynddod, Wales, she was suddenly seized with paralysis, and died before relief could be obtained.

Thomas Hesketh, confectioner and lay preacher, of Heavily, is charged with the wilful murder of the infant child of Elizabeth Parker, with whom he is said to have cohabited for more than two years. The body was exhumed by order of the Home Secretary. Hesketh is committed for trial.

There have been "scenes" at Rotterdam over the opera "Falka," in which a drunken monk appears on the stage. Of course there have been plenty of drunken monks *off* the stage, but a drunken monk *on* the stage the Catholics regard as blasphemy. The police have had great difficulty in quelling the riot inside the theatre, and a big fight took place outside, the police having to use their sabres. All the rumpus seems to have been got up by the Catholic papers: so true it is that religion always encourages peace and goodwill.

The "Strict Baptist Church" in Highbury Place made a mistake. It admitted into fellowship a lady who had not gone through the process of dipping. But she was physically deformed, and this was held to render the ceremony impossible. The "London Association of Strict Baptist Churches," however, held the plea to be invalid, and excluded the church at Highbury. This brought the elders and the congregation to a sense of their awful position. They caved in, found they had been hasty, and made arrangements for giving the deformed lady a dipping. She was seated in a chair, wearing a specially designed dress, and was properly soused in the baptismal tank. Thus all's well that ends well. The Church is received back into the Association, and the deformed lady has had the holy bath which is indispensable to all emigrants to heaven.

For absurdity *The Reaper*, an Evangelical paper emanating from Glasgow, beats the comic papers all to fits. Among the gems we have culled from the February number of this magazine are the "China Inland Mission is praying for 1,000 additional workers." "Spain, France and Italy debased and down-trodden by the papacy, or cheated and misguided by infidelity, have great demands upon Christian sympathies, prayers and efforts. The one great desideratum is that the Lord's people be anointed and filled with the holy spirit." "The beast from the sea s unquestionably the same with Daniel's weakened iron and clay condition of the Roman Empire." Of Mr. Bradlaugh "to rank such a man with Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone is a crime against humanity."

The Reaper falls into ecstacy of admiration at an Irish lady in Africa who is "the terror of the wife-beaters in her district." Directly she hears a woman's cry, divining the reason, she starts forth to the rescue, and whether it is the moral influence she has acquired over them, or her tall imposing presence, that produces the desired effect, the irate husbands desist immediately at her word of command. This lady need not have gone to Africa to quell wife beaters. She would have made a good missionary in our own black country.

The Rev. M. Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald* and author of *Louis Napoleon: the Destined Monarch of the World*, shifted his date for the final winding up of creation from year to year. 1890 for the past few years had been his favorite date for the beginning of the end, but he now shows symptoms of placing it a little further off. Perhaps some one has offered him seven years' purchase for his house and other property, which must be very considerable in amount. To prey on human credulity is a better paying game than to expose it, and Mr. Baxter must have netted something considerable by his prophecies of the near approach of the end of the world.

The *Echo* says: "The Prophet Baxter is still starring in the provinces, and frightening many worthy old ladies of both sexes with his predictions of a multitude of coming horrors. Meanwhile some correspondent with a memory has recalled the fact that in the spring of 1888 the prophet advertised 'wars and troubles and revolutions between 1888 and 1891.' This period being now more than half over, it is really high time that the wars and revolutions commenced."

Preaching on Sunday at St. Margaret's Church, Archdeacon Farrar said he feared the corruption of the Church from within rather than from the infidel or sceptic from without. Well, so long as the Church goes to bits, it doesn't matter whether the explosion happens inside or outside. We rather fancy it will be a double explosion—inside and out at the same time, and Dr. Farrar may be alive to weep over the rubbish.

"If the Jews," says the *Echo*, "did nothing else for mankind but institute the Sunday, they would entitle themselves to everlasting honor." Such is the kind of ignorance that passes for knowledge in anonymous journalism. Every scholar is aware that a day of rest was known before the time of the Jews, and that the Jews themselves derived it from the civilisation of Babylon.

We did not join in the general laudation of sister Rose Gertrude who went out to take charge of the leper hospital on the island of Molokai. The newspapers were very hysterical, and it was difficult to discover the young lady's real motives. No doubt there was a feeling of natural disinterestedness in her, but she may also have been instigated by her religious advisers, and this does not seem

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improbable in the light of a recent letter by her father. This gentleman, a Devonshire clergyman, says that she was "both beguiled and received into the Roman Church secretly, when quite a girl." He also says that she "preferred to receive doctrines on authority, without having to inquire and decide for herself." This is the kind of nature that priests find it very easy to sacrifice.

Mr. Gladstone will begin in April a series of articles on "The Old Testament" in one of the monthlies. We hope he will be more lucid than he was in the article that Ingersoll replied to. We shall deal with Mr. Gladstone's articles as they appear, and we hope he will give us something to criticise.

Mr. Gladstone's articles, reprinted as a pamphlet, should sell well in the streets, especially outside churches. "Here you are, sir, the Grand Old Man on the Grand Old Book—sixpence!" Sounds well, doesn't it?

The Rev. Walter Walsh, who has been enlightening the Newcastle Secularists on four Sunday afternoons, has a "Monthly Messenger" in connection with his Church. The February number devotes a corner to the "young folks," for whom it prints "a Biblical puzzle." Here it is:

"A Young Student was asked:—'How many boys are there in your class?' He replied:—'If you multiply the number of Jacob's Sons, by the number of times the Israelites compassed Jericho, and add to the product the number of measures of Barley which Boaz gave Ruth, divide this by the number of Haman's Sons, subtract the number of each kind of clean beasts that went into the Ark, multiply by the number of men that went to seek Elijah after he was taken to heaven, subtract from this Joseph's age at the time he stood before Pharaoh, add the number of stones in David s Bag when he killed Goliath, subtract the number of furlongs that Bethany was distant from Jerusalem, divide by the number of Anchors cast out when Paul was shipwrecked, and subtract the number of persons saved in the Ark, the remainder will be the answer.'"

Here you are, ladies and gentlemen; this is the sort of stuff they offer your children! Why, a child had better be engaged in "mischief" than occupied with such imbecility.

Mr. Walsh sometimes writes as though he superintended that children's corner. For instance, he says—"The Creator adapts all things to the natural wants of his creatures. If there is an eye, there is a flower to gratify it; if an ear, music to please it. If there is a bird, there is an atmosphere for flight; if an animal, a solid globe for it to tread on." He might have added that, if there is a parson, there is a pulpit for him to preach from. Mr. Walsh's theology (and science) is like that of the divine who found a mark of Providence in the fact that large navigable rivers generally flow by capital cities.

Mrs. Parmley has been conducting "a week's gospel mission" at Chester-le-Street. Her concluding discourse dealt considerably with the *Freethinker*, which the lady said, had recently published "a series of obnoxious and hideous figures" on the book of Ruth. Mrs. Parmley is evidently as accurate as others in her line of business. We should like her to tell us *when* we printed a series of illustrations on Miss Ruth and her adventures in the barn.

Mrs. Parmley chose a queer text from a queer book for her discourse on Ruth.—"A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me." This is the first half of the thirteenth verse of the first chapter of the Song. The second half we *dare not print*, but of course Mrs. Parmley knows it. The ladies—especially Catholic ladies—have a wonderful fondness for that old Song of Songs which *isn't* Solomon's. But they ought to drop it when they mount the rostrum and address mixed audiences of men and women, and boys and girls.

Among recent records of divine beneficence we note the terrible colliery disaster near Pontypool, Monmouth, resulting in the loss of over 170 lives; a fatal fire at Southampton, where two children were burnt to death, while their frantic mother, blinded and scorched by the fire, vainly endeavored to save them; influenza in Mexico so fatal that there are not hearses enough to convey the bodies of the dead; avalanches and floods in America, occasioning loss of life and enormous destruction of property.

The *Oldham Evening Chronicle* has an amusing account of a "marriage" at the Salvationist Temple. The smartly written report was appropriately headed Salvationist Burlesques, for the marriage was, of course, only a dodge to raise coin, the legal ceremony having taken place previously.

A divinity student named E. Q. Coles has been charged with an indecent assault upon a young lad in the vestry of St. Stephen's Church, Kensington.

"Supplied for the Service" is stamped on copies of H. L. Hastings' lecture on the Bible, which are being circulated on board Her Majesty's ships off Portsmouth. Surely there is nothing to equal the impudence of these religious zealots. Some pious jack-in-office must have permitted this manœuvre, and if religious equality were a fact, as it will be some day, he would be brought to book for his impertinence.

Mr. Moody, the American revivalist, thinks Christ will soon put in a second appearance. When he comes Chicago won't be ready. Won't it, though? We guess it would ask him to repeat that wave-walking performance on Lake Michigan, and some enterprising caterer would offer him half the gate money.

Moody says the infidels can keep on barking at Christ. He just keeps on shining like the moon. Precisely so. Most of his teaching is moonshine, especially the parts that Moody isn't fool enough to obey.

"Love not the world nor the things of the world," says the Holy Ghost. But the Rev. John McNeill differs from the Paraclete, ay, from the whole blessed Trinity. He advises a young man to fall in love with a young woman. No doubt his advice will be extensively followed.

Courtship and Marriage were the subject of a recent sermon by Prebendary Harry Jones. He said they were of divine origin, and perhaps this is true. Anyhow, there is a God the Father and a God the Son, and perhaps God the Holy Ghost is the wife of the one and the mother of the other. Will Prebendary Jones preach a sermon on Jehovah's courtship? It would draw—especially with magic lantern illustrations.

Stands Scotland where it did? Hardly. A ship was launched at Govan on Sunday afternoon, a monster of 8,500 tons, and 500 feet long; and what was worse, thousands of Scotties watched the performance. Guid God, mon! What's auld Scotland comin' tae?

The first step has been taken in the proceedings against Dr. Marcus Dods for heresy. The case is likely to prove a lively one, and is sure to make the heresies complained of more familiar to theologically backward Scotsmen.

A Jewish woman in Philadelphia made complaint recently before a magistrate that she had been taken by her husband before a rabbi and constrained to accede to a decree of divorce under the Hebrew law. The couple had lived together for fourteen years, and the husband's only motive for his course was that he desired to marry their servant girl, Dora Goldbeck, with whom he had already been living on terms of intimacy. The man's contention that he was acting strictly in accordance with the divine law received little attention from the Christian officials of the United States.

It is stated that the custom of granting divorces without regard to the laws of the commonwealth prevails especially among the Russian Jews, of whom large numbers have in recent years emigrated to America. In Russia the rabbis are granted legal jurisdiction over this subject, and when they emigrate the rabbis still continue to exercise this jurisdiction. The decree is written in Hebrew, and a copy given to each of the parties, who suppose it to be a valid and absolute divorce. Like other religionists, the Jews put their religion above their allegiance to civil law.

At the Golden Gate, St. Peter—"Who are you?"
Applicant—"I was the manager of a London syndicate."
St. Peter—"Well, you go to—the other place. This place is not for sale."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Feb. 16, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road; at 7.30, "An Hour with the Devil."

Thursday, Feb. 20, Hall of Science, Old Street, E.C., at 8 "Freethought and God." Free Lecture, with unlimited discussion."

Feb. 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. GORDON.—Mary Ann Girling, the so called Shakeress, died at the community she founded called "The People of God," on Sept. 18th, 1886. She claimed to be an incarnation of Christ The sect, after suffering great hardship near Hordle, Lymington, Hants, disbanded.

JOHN STOKES, a bricklayer's laborer, sends us a subscription of nine shillings, acknowledged in another column, for the Swedish Prisoner's Fund. If handsome is as handsome does, John Stokes should be an Apollo. Several better-off readers might take a lesson from him.

W. CARTER.—Thanks for the cutting. No wonder Canon Talbot shirks a debate with Mr. Foote. His lecture on the Gospels is a tissue of assumptions and misrepresentations, apparently designed to bamboozle an ignorant Christian audience, and the disingenuous reference to Matthew Arnold is simply disgraceful.

C. G. SPENCER.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

M. CLAY.—Many thanks for cuttings.

D. WOODHOUSE.—Much obliged for the papers.

WILLIAM SIMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

B. INGHAM writes that he got his newsagent to expose the *Freethinker* and take a few copies for sale, guaranteeing him against loss from unsold copies. The result is that he disposes of half a dozen extra copies already. Other readers might go and do likewise.

J. EVANS.—See "Acid Drops."

D. MCINTYRE.—Of course there are good as well as bad things in the Bible; otherwise it would have been kicked out of the world long ago. The Koran—the Bible of the Mohammedans—can be obtained at almost any book-shop.

H. CHAPMAN.—Greatly pleased with your letter. We are glad to know that Freethought is spreading in the Navy, and that our publications are doing such good work there.

W. STRAKER.—We are much obliged for the copy you send us of *Il Secolo Tartufo* by Mantegazza.

G. WISE.—Haven't you some friend who could prevent you from making such ghastly mistakes? Here you are, only a fortnight after your two nights' public debate with Mr. S. Standring, complaining that the Secularists are shy of discussion. By the way, unless you want your letters disregarded, you had better couch them in language of ordinary politeness in future.

J. H. THOMAS.—It is a long subject, and we have had our say. Thanks for the cutting.

H. SANDERSON.—Thanks for your good wishes. We hope we shall always have your respect.

W. TENCH.—We don't think there is any Branch at Norwich. There ought to be though.

A. D.—Green's History would be more serviceable to you than Hume's or Smollett's. The early Fathers can only be obtained complete in the Ante-Nicene Library, an expensive collection. *Supernatural Religion* is in three volumes at 36s. All Dr. Bain's books are good. Darwin's chief works are in seven-and-sixpenny volumes. Never mind Christian insults.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Some of them might be useful.

W. LAPPAGE.—The report question is still open.

H. COURTNEY.—We will deal with the matter next week.

J. ROBINSON.—There is no biography of Huxley or Spencer. Write to Mr. Forder for the others, enclosing stamp for reply as to volumes and prices.

J. F. HAMPSON.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

J. S.—Thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cambria Daily Leader—Liberator—Liberty—Western Figaro—Menschenthum—Western American—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Open Court—Eastern Evening News—The Reaper—Portsmouth Evening News—Freethinkers' Magazine—Lichtfreund—Dundalk Democrat—Manchester Guardian—Der Arme Teufel—Chester-le-Street Advertiser—Lucifer—Bulletin des Sommaires—Southampton Times—Wiltshire Times—Tit-Bits—Swindon Advertiser—Oldham Evening News—Answers—Consett Guardian—Devon Evening News—Bristol Mercury—Kensington Churchman—Weekly Dispatch.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lectures on Sunday at Blackburn were delivered in the Oddfellow's Hall, the lessee of the theatre having declined to let it again for fear of losing his license. The hall appears to have seen better days, and the audiences were only middling; but there was plenty of questioning and discussion after the lectures, and two reporters took notes of the afternoon lecture in reply to the Rev. J. Ogmore Davies's sermon on Atheism. The Blackburn Branch consists almost exclusively of working men, and it lost its financial pillar when Mr. Umpleby removed to London. We hope, however, that last Sunday's meetings will bring the Branch a few new members.

THE meeting of the National Secular Society at the Hall of Science, London, to-day (Feb. 16) will commence at 11.15 instead of 11 as previously announced. The change has been made to accommodate many members from the country.

THOSE who want to view Mr. Bradlaugh's presents from India will find them in the minor hall, upstairs, before or after the meeting. A luncheon will be provided at the Manchester Hotel at one o'clock. Tickets can be obtained of Mr. Forder before the morning's business begins.

NEXT Thursday evening a special course of four Free Lectures will open at the London Hall of Science under the auspices of the Secular Federation. Mr. Foote will speak on "Freethought and God." The subsequent lecturers are Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. G. Standring. Discussion is courted, and the Christian Evidence Society has promised to send representatives.

THESE lectures will all be free; that is, there will be no charge for admission. But there will be a few reserved seats for which tickets can be purchased. Some Freethinkers will no doubt take this method of contributing to the expenses of the enterprise.

ON Sunday afternoon, at 4 p.m., our good friend Mr. H. L. Braekstad lectures for the Sunday Lecture Society at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, on "Norway, its Scenery and its People." The lecture will be illustrated with oxy-hydrogen lantern views.

ON Saturday evening, Feb. 1, the Swindon Branch put themselves *en evidence* by holding a dinner at the Golden Lion Hotel. The tickets announced the dinner at another place, but the proprietor funked at the last moment; the repast proved, however, that nothing was lost by the enforced change. Mr. Carrien, the president of the Branch, was, through illness, unable to be present, but Mr. Richards was equal to the occasion. Good speeches were made by Mr. Dawe and Mr. Jones, and Mr. Forder, who went down from London, responded to the toast of the N. S. S. Excellent singing and music by Messrs. Weight, Spratt, Richards and Lawrence contributed to make the evening a most enjoyable one.

MR. FORDER impressed on the members and friends present the urgent necessity of attempting propagandist work in their district, promising the assistance of the Organisation Committee if needed. Most of the members

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are employed by the G. W. R Company, and it seems that there is an impression that it would be bad for any of them to attempt aggressive work. There are some, however, brave enough to attempt this, and although no hall can be hired for a Freethought lecture it is likely ere long that Swindon will be awakened from its long sleep.

MRS. BESANT has been elected president of the "Blavatsky Lodge" of the Theosophical Society. *Sic itur ad astra.*

PROF. ANDREW T. WHITE, of Cornell University, author of the *Warfare of Science*, shows up "The Myth of Lot's Wife" in the February number of the *Popular Science Monthly*.

The Freethinker's Magazine for February gives a cut representing "Christians burning Bruno at the Stake." The magazine is enlarged and is full of good readable matter and well deserving of support.

DR. E. ABBOTT, author of *Philochristus*, *The Kernel, and the Husk*, and other rationalistic works, is using the leisure gained by his enforced retirement from the City of London School in preparing a commentary on the epistles of St. Paul.

LESLIE STEPHEN, in his Memoir of Gibbon, in the last published volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says: "In accuracy, thoroughness, lucidity, and comprehensive grasp of a vast subject, the 'History' is unsurpassable. It is the one English history which may be regarded as definitive. The philosophy is, of course, that of the age of Voltaire, and implies a deficient insight into the great social forces. The style, though variously judged, has at least the cardinal merit of admirable clearness, and of pompous is always animated. Whatever its shortcomings, the book is artistically imposing as well as historically unimpeachable as a vast panorama of a great period. Gibbon's fortunate choice of a subject enables him to write the one book in which the clearness of his own age is combined with a thoroughness of research, which has made it a standard for his successors."

THE *Devon Evening Express* (Exeter) is rough on the Bishops who are begging for the poor curates. It prints a little cartoon, showing their lordships of Exeter, London, and Canterbury in the front, holding collection-boxes and tickets showing their own big salaries, and a lean curate in the background, with a sort of "Don't I wish I may get it" look on his emaciated countenance.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—We have received the following: J. C. (Blackburn), 10s.; John Stokes, 9s.; (Jarrow), H. Sanderson, 2s. 6d.; John Dickson, 2s. 6d.; W. Plumpton, 2s.; T. Price, 1s.; J. Sanderson, 2s.; H. Richardson, 2s. 6d.

SWEDISH PRISONERS' FUND.—H. J. M., 2s.; A. W. T., 2s.; J. K., 1s.; F. F., 2s. 6d.; J. Knapp, 1s.; W. Cabbell, 5s. 6d.; Hartlepool Branch N.S.S., 10s.; Manchester Branch N.S.S., £1 8s.; C. Roos, 1s. H. Pearse, 1s. Stalybridge Branch N.S.S. 5s.; H. Symes, 1s.—R. Forder, Secretary.

HALL OF SCIENCE CHILDREN'S PARTY.—W. Cabbell, 5s.; per Mrs. Fisher, 2s. 4d.; Per Mr. Powell, 11d.; Collected at Hall of Science, £1 12s. 3½d.; per Miss Vance, 2s. 6d.; per Mr. Larkin, 5s.—R. Forder, Secretary.

MRS. THORNTON SMITH had a large audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening, and her lecture gave great satisfaction.

ACCORDING to the biography of James McDonnell, the ate eminent journalist, he told an Aberdeen lady that he did not know a single journalist in London, except G. A. Sala, who believed in Christianity, or who ever mentioned lit but as an object of ridicule.

THE *Freethinker* ran out of print early last week, and we fear that some of our regular subscribers must have been disappointed, but they will be able to obtain copies out of the returns if they desire to complete a file. We generally print in excess of the sale, but it is not always possible to calculate exactly.

THE first series of *Letters to the Clergy*, including all that have appeared up to date, will be on sale next week in a little volume of 128 pages. The letter on Prayer has been much amplified, and Mr. Foote has written a Preface to the collection. The price is one shilling.

A NORTHAMPTON VETERAN.

Mr. Bradlaugh has lost one of his oldest and warmest supporters in Alderman Thomas Adams, who has just died at Northampton. We remember Mr. Adams of old when we were down at Northampton helping to fight Mr. Bradlaugh's election during his absence in America, and he dwells in our recollection as a genial gentleman, as well as a sturdy Radical and an earnest Freethinker. Those were the days that tried men's souls. Mr. Bradlaugh's seat is safe enough now, but he had to battle hard for it for ten years—before he engaged the House of Commons—and among the gallant band of reformers who stood around him at Northampton none was truer or more helpful than Thomas Adams. One by one the Old Guard goes. May the new soldiers of progress be as stedfast and courageous as those who fought around the standard when Balaclava Charges were everyday occurrences.

MR. VOYSEY AND THE GOSPELS.

MR. VOYSEY having been accused by writers in the Unitarian *Inquirer* of unfairness in blaming Unitarians for picking out of the Gospels only such passages as commend themselves, while he himself only picks from the Old Testament certain passages, he replies "I accept as good and true whatever I find in the Old Testament which commends itself to my reason, conscience and love. But I do not, therefore, claim any reverence for the Old Testament as a whole, nor do I deny that the parts of it which I reject belong to it likewise. Some Unitarians, however, not only accept as good and true whatever words, attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, commend themselves to their reason, conscience and love, but they go on to deny that all the rest which they reject was ever spoken by him at all." Mr. Voysey quotes the recent utterance of Dr. Marcus Dods: "The claim of Jesus to be Divine, if not true, was wicked and mad. They had but one alternative either to admit the claim, or to suppose him to be instead of the wisest, the foolishest, and instead of the best, the wickedest of men." Mr. Voysey vehemently protests against the imputation of wickedness, and says it is preposterous to say Christ, in claiming to be God, was wicked and mad too. Mr. Voysey's argument is plausible, but will he apply it to Mohammed's claim to inspiration?

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.

(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.

(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

A clergyman, going the rounds of his country parish in the south of Ireland, met a farmer who, though residing ing in a neighboring parish, was a regular attendant at his church. Said Pat, "Af ye please, yer riverence, would ye mind prayin' for a wee drap o' rain next Sunday, for sorra a thing'll grow in me little garden wid the present hate o' the weather?" "Sorry to hear that, Pat," replied the divine; "but you ought to ask your own parson, not me." "Ah, shure," was the reply, "that's just it; what's the good in axin' him to pray for rain wid them cocks o' hay a-standing on his lawn?"

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A MATTER OF ARITHMETIC.

It is one of the finest constituents of human nature that when a man is convinced of some important truth, or, even, of what he may erroneously believe to be an important truth, he desires to convince others of it; and it may be said that just in proportion to his earnestness in spreading his new conviction may his love of truth as a principle be measured.

Were it not for this quality, which may be considered an essential part of every man's character, although some have it much less than others, and some so very slightly that its existence betrays but few signs, there could be no advance; every new opinion would be jealously guarded within the mind of him who had conceived it—for fear of exciting prejudice—and humanity would swelter for ever and a day in a stagnant ocean of stale sentiment.

Whether the belief may conduce to happiness or otherwise is generally a matter of indifference to the one who believes it. What he wants is to convince others of that of which he is convinced himself. That the majority of the human race will be burnt in a lake of fire during all eternity, and poisoned with the fumes of brimstone at the same time; that agonising tortures are predestined for people before they are even born; that hell is paved with the skulls of unbaptised infants; that God and the Lamb and the elect will gloat with infinite joy over the excruciating sufferings of the damned, and similar cruel and nonsensical beliefs have been preached with as much gusto and energy as though they were good and pleasant and true.

When, on the other hand, the belief is one which is grounded on the same mode of reasoning which enables us to tell the hour at which the sun will rise or set, and is one which might be supposed to benefit one's fellow men, as, for instance, when a man is sufficiently enlightened to perceive clearly that the ideas of the childhood of his race are based on dreams, fancies, and illusions; that God, Holy Ghost, Jesus Christ, Heaven, Hell, and other theological terms are mere words representive of nothing but confused and contradictory notions, symbolising no external entities, and thus that most people are living under the influence of tremendous delusions, his enthusiasm to spread this belief ought to be in proportion to its philanthropic import.

If Freethinkers were in as much earnest in demolishing the cobwebs of priests as some of the old Christians were in spinning them the number of God's elect would speedily decrease.

Were every reader of this paper to give his weekly copy, after reading it himself, to some Christian, or, failing this—as the chance of receiving a sanctimonious "No, thank you" to the polite request of "Will you accept a paper?" does not tend in the direction of philosophical equanimity—to leave it in some public place for some meek and lowly disciple to pick up, it would be a strange thing indeed if in the course of six months his twenty-six copies had not secured at least one recruit. Thus even this comparatively small amount of enthusiasm would, at the lowest computation, double the circulation of the *Freethinker* every six months, Starting somewhere, say at two thousand, and doubling this number every six months for only six years, and nearly every man in the United Kingdom, or rather the civilised parts of it, would be a subscriber and consequently a converted Christian.

The means are simple by which a consummation so devoutly to be wished could be reached—only dropping a paper once a week—and the man who would not do this much for a belief he considers true and vitally important, must, to say the least, be possessed of but an infinitesimal amount of what was before described as one of the finest constituents of human nature.

J. E. Roose.

I F ?

An anxious inquirer sends the following question to the editor of the *Ironclad Age:* If there is a God—but there isn't—and this god had a son—but he hadn't—through the assistance of a virgin—but she couldn't—and this son—his own pa—was murdered by god—his other pa—because Eve—our first ma—took some apples and things—which was proper—and this god-kill-god business is my only chance to escape hell—this *is* hell, isn't it? And the blood of the lamb—Hi Yoop! big injun god! much blood; heap scalps!—is *all* redeeming and *all* atoning, am I not saved just the same whether I believe this stuff or not?

MORE PERSECUTION.

Dr. Monroe is unwearied in his defence of poor maligned ministers. Here is his latest:

"In Virginia one would think the ministers might have some chance, but they haven't. A malicious paragraph is going the rounds, which is inserted here so that indignation may have vent:

"'Rev. J. R. Sturgis, pastor of a church at Richmond, Va., was suspended for writing an improper letter to a married lady of that city.'

"An improper letter! But who says it was improper? Not the friends, but the enemies of Christ. And isn't a moral guide's sacred character something? Shouldn't it outweigh a ton of letters, half of them forgeries? And if a woman *is* married—does that divorce her from the bridegroom Christ? Does that imply that her soul needs no more saving? Left out of the promises in the good book it takes a great deal of hard work on the part of the clergy to save the women. And this work is performed under a fire of wicked suspicions. Still, though many fall, the holy messengers bravely prosecute the work. Verily such martyrdom merits its reward."

A DEATH BED CONVERSION.

The London Correspondent of the *Liverpool Post* tells this story concerning the Rev. H. White, the new chaplain of the House of Commons:—Many years ago he was a curate at the East-end, with respect to which epoch in his career he has a gruesome story to tell. One night, after he had gone to bed in his humble lodging, there came an imperative rapping at the street door. On inquiry he found a poorly-dressed woman, who besought him without a moment's delay to go and see her husband, who was dying. She had by chance heard Mr. White preach, and had induced her husband to accept the benefit of his ministration. Mr. White at once dressed, and accompanied his guide through the purlieus of what he recognised as the lowest quarter in his parish. Arrived at a house, he was, after some parley between the woman and the custodian of the door, admitted, and followed the wife into the sick room. Here he found a still young man lying on the bed, evidently close at the gates of death. It was a squalid room, but Mr. White noticed that the thin candles were set in massive silver candlesticks, whilst about the room were strewed many articles of portable property of a character strangely diverse from the ordinary poverty of the apartment. He spoke to the sick man some words of comfort, and finally promised to pray with him. As he spoke he observed a gleam in the sick man's eye, and following his glance, saw that it rested on the light gold watchchain that hung from the pocket of his waistcoat. Leaning over the man he prayed for him, the wife sobbing bitterly. Where "Amen" should have come in he heard the death rattle in the man's throat, and moved away. Then he discovered that the dead man's fingers were entwined in his watchchain, and as he quickly started back the watch came out and fell on the bed. The man was a noted burglar and pickpocket, and even in the throes of death had been unable to resist the temptation unconsciously put in his way.

The Rev. William Binns, in the *Inquirer*, welcomes Mrs. Besant as an "addition to the advocates of fundamental religious ideas." Mr. Binns also expresses an opinion as to the editor of this journal, but as it comes from a minister of religion it is hardly worth troubling about. We don't fish for clerical compliments, and are very glad to be without them.

Mr. Binns talks downright nonsense when he says "there is a bitter orthodoxy among Secularists." Every person who is not a lunatic must see the necessity of some understood principles in every voluntary society; and to insist on those principles, in the face of opposition from within or without, is simply to fulfil the object for which the society exists. It is idle to suppose that *all* opinions are possible in a single society. This is all we have asserted, and if this is "bitter orthodoxy" it is time to revise the dictionary.

The inhabitants of Peckham have been amused with a new entertainment. A procession of youths, apparently in nightgowns, parading the streets with banners and lamps, was in danger of being taken for a form of religious penance or a novel advertising dodge. And it was the latter; the surpliced choir being the touts to draw an audience to the mission services at the parish church.

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A CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST.

It may not be generally known that the Rev. John Jasper, the colored theologian of Virginia, is now in San Francisco; and I am not certain of it myself, but I met a man the other day who answers his description, and I think his name must be Jasper. He was discussing religion with Newton Parnell in front of the Sentry Box on Market Street. Said he:

"You gentlemen" (including myself) "are all go'n to hell and burn forever suah, an' doan you make no mistake."

Parnell said: "How do you know?"

"Bible says so."

"Do you believe it?"

Every word on it, sah! Bible's all the authority I want for faith or works."

"Do you accept its astronomy?"

"Stronomy, geometry, barometry—all on it. Bible's good nuff for me."

"You think Joshua knew more than Copernicus, eh?"

"Never heard of Coterminus. Some fool, I suppose. Used ter be er fool myself, but got over it."

"Are you sure you got over it?"

"Huh?"

"Do you think the Bible is authority in all branches of science—better authority than Darwin, for instance?"

"Darnin, Darrun—oh, Darwin—nevah heerd of him, sah. What fool thing does he say?"

"He holds that men are descended from the lower forms of animal life."

"Well, he must be a fool, wuss'n old Tom Paine. Live in San Francisker, does he?"

"No; he died several year ago."

"Well, that's the curusest think I ever heerd on, and I've heerd a good deal of curus preaching'. So they's some folks believes that, is they? Hi, yi, yah, yah—wow!"

The Rev. Mr. Jasper was so happy at Darwin's expense that we withdrew and left him enjoying himself. He expects to attend the meetings of the Freethought Society this winter and refute the sophistries of Infidelity. Meanwhile he will instruct a local colored congregation in the truths of religion and science.

G. MACDONALD *in "Freethought."*

AN INSTANCE OF DESIGN.

A child born in West Manchester, New Hampshire, the other day, looked (so the *Philadelphia Ledger* says) more like a frog than a human being. It had no neck, and the eyes, of which there were six, were so located as to look skyward. The arms and hands were formed precisely like those of a frog. It had a double spine, and died soon after birth. When Theists explain how monstrosities are born which are incapable of life, they will have solved one of their many difficulties.

THE DEATH PENALTY!

Humanitarians are questioning the efficacy of the punishment of death as the deterrent of crime, and they point to the fact that there has been a decrease of crime where the punishment has been remitted. Do they not believe that God is the author of the Bible, and that his laws are just? Here are a few of the crimes for which God adjudged the penalty to be death:—Eating leavened bread during passover, Exodus xii, 5; Kidnapping, xxi, 16; Witchcraft, xxii, 18; Idolatry, xxii, 20, Compounding holy ointment, xxii, 33; Working on the Sabbath, xxxi, 16; Eating the fat of sacrifices, Leviticus vii, 29; Eating any manner of blood, vii, 27; Eating a sacrifice of peace offering, xix, 8; Going after familiar spirits, xx, 6; Blasphemy, xxiv, 16.

CHRISTIANITY IN SOUTH AMERICA.

As one of the first cares of the Spanish sovereigns was to propagate the Catholic faith in their immense provinces, they established tribunals of the Inquisition successively in the cities of Mexico, Lima, and Cartagena. But in the latter part of the reign of Charles IV. this formidable tribunal was not much feared. Its influence was exercised chiefly to watch and keep out of the country all free literary productions, by them styled *philosophical* books. In the year 1826 a bookseller sent from New York to Cartagena various boxes of valuable Spanish books. Among them were some copies of Voltaire's famous *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. The boxes were opened, and by the influence of some priests the greater part of the books, among which was the dictionary. were refused admittance, and sent back to New York. I have this fact from the bookseller himself.—*Ducoudray Holstein's "Memoirs of Bolivar."*

ST. JAMES ON TRIAL.

It is claimed that all civil law is based upon the Bible. Every Christian minister makes that statement, and regards it as an argument in favor of retaining the Bible in the public schools and making it the supreme law of the land. We notice, however, that when civil law and so-called divine law come in conflict, the Bible is thrown out. A case in point is at hand. Some days since a man was arrested in Brooklyn, N.Y., charged with having caused the death of his child through neglect. He was a firm believer in the prayer cure, and had refused to administer to his sick child the medicines prescribed for her relief. The laws of New York make such neglect a criminal offence, and, when death results, attach the penalty of manslaughter. But when the accused was brought into court he pleaded the duty he owed to the higher law which he found in the Epistle of St. James, as follows: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him."

Now, what do the Christian judges intend to do about this case? The "divine" law prescribes one thing, and the civil law another. It is of course very easy to tell what ought to be done. The man should be set at liberty and informed that he is merely a victim of popular religious superstition. He should be instructed that the epistle of James was written by some fanatic who was governed by his imagination instead of his knowledge. All the judges, lawyers, and most of the ministers know that the prayer of faith will not heal anybody who is really sick. It may in some cases quiet the nerves of the one who does the praying, but it can have no permanent effect on another person. Common sense teaches all but religious people that the healing of sickness requires the administering of such material remedies as experience with similar cases has shown to be efficacious; and intelligent clergymen adopt this method until health is restored, when they again begin preaching the efficacy of prayer, which they have not sufficient faith in to give it a trial in their own cases. This incongruity is so conspicuous that everybody ought to be able to see it. Probably the fact that it is an every-day occurrence is the reason why it does not excite comment. People long habituated to humbugs accept them at last as truths until they reach the point of putting them in practice, when, unless fanaticism has supervened, as in the case of the Brooklyn man, they quietly ignore their faith and rely upon knowledge and experience.

The Brooklyn father who permitted his daughter to die for want of medical treatment has acted consistently with his belief; and for a Christian community to condemn him would be like a father administering liquor to a child and then punishing him for being intoxicated. In this case it is not the poor fanatic but the Christian religion that is on trial.—*Freethought.*

THOSE BOYS.

"Did I not give you a flogging the other day?" said a schoolmaster to a trembling boy. "Yes, sir," answered the boy. "Well, what do the Scriptures say upon the subject?" "I don't know, sir," said the boy; "except it is, 'It's more blessed to give than to receive'"

"You were a nice, quiet little boy in Sunday school this morning, Bobby," said the minister. "I was very much pleased." "Yes," replied Bobby, "pa said that if I'd behave myself in Sunday school I needn't go to church."

A Sunday School teacher told his infants to ask any questions they had in their minds, and a little one asked, "When is the circus coming?"

Teacher: "Now, children, I am going to tell you about the prophet Daniel, who, though cast into a den of lions——" New scholar: "Have you only just got onto that here?"

Old lady (to wicked little boys who are playing marbles on Sunday): "Little boys. what are you playing marbles on Sunday for?" Little boys: "We're playing for keeps."

Willie was on a visit to his aunt in the country. It was bedtime, and he had gone upstairs to the little room set apart for him. "Auntie," he called out, "where's the prayer-rug?" "The prayer-rug, Willie? Isn't the carpet good enough?" "Not by a jugful. The best people all use prayer-rugs. If you haven't got any, I'll just be doggoned if I'm going to say my prayers to-night, that's all!"

Sunday-School Superintendent: "I am pained to learn that two of the little boys of the school have absented themselves to-day, in order to go fishing. You wouldn't go, would you, Master Norton?" Master Norton: "No, sir." Sunday-school Superintendent: "Now, tell the rest of the scholars why you wouldn't go fishing Sunday." Master Norton; "'Cause it's too cold yet to catch anything."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Inspiration of the Bible: what is it?"

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 86 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Modern Moralists."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30 Dr. A. Vickery, "Over Population and its Remedies. Small families *versus* Strikes."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, J. B. Coppock, "The Age of the Earth."

Claremont Hall, 7, Sam Standring, "Jehovah, the God of the Jews."

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. L Keen, "Suffer Little Children," etc.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "An Hour with the Devil."

Old Southgate—Cromwell Hall, 7, Mr. Snow, "A Few Plain Words to Working Men."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "The Struggle for Existence."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Christ on the Labor Question."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Philosophy of Materialism."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 11, Mr. J. Hooper, "Remarkable Dreams of Holy Men:" 7, "Why Should an Atheist Fear to Die?"

Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 122 Ingram Street, 6.30, Mr. John Gentles, "The Moon Theory."

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, Mr. R. Lan, F.G.S., 3, "The Work that has been done by Glaciers and Icebergs in Former Ages of the World;" 6.30, "How the Rocks which contain Coal Were Formed."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, 8, Discussion Class, "The Duty of the Rich to the Poor," Mr. Beer to open; 7, Mr. Doeg, "A Reply to Dr. Sexton."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans, "Science in the Service of Man."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, Important meeting of Sunday Music League: Wednesday, 7.45, Mr. Penny will read a paper on the "Advantages Accruing from a Knowledge of the Elements of Chemistry."

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr J. Hyder, "The Case against Landlordism."

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, Mr. S. M. Peacock, "The Technical Instruction Act, 1889: Its Object and Scope."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 2, Woolwich; 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich: 30, Westminster. May 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18, Regent's Park.

MR. JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Feb. 16, Birmingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—Feb. 23, Huddersfield.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 8.] SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—You have conferred upon me a great honor and laid upon me a heavy duty. I thank you for the one and I will try to fulfil the other.

The Presidency of your Society is a post of which any man might be proud. You are banded together, not for the promotion of merely material interests, but for the spread of ideas. You aim at moulding opinion, which in the long run determines everything else. You strive to infuse into society those great, subtle, and far-reaching principles, which are the source of all durable progress. And as the attachment to leaders is always in proportion to the depth of the interests they espouse, you show a striking affection for those who serve your cause loyally; above all, for the one whom you appoint the chief director of your forces, who must undertake the weightiest labors and bear the worst brunt of danger.

Mr. Bradlaugh has been a mighty leader, and it is hard for any man to follow him. But I will do my best, and in turn I shall claim your indulgence. Do not expect too much from me. The heroic period of Freethought is well-nigh over. Wars are no longer decided by single-handed combat. Every one of us must do his share of the work, and we must be content to toil steadily like good husbandmen, who plough the ground, sow the seed, and finally reap the harvest.

Happily Mr. Bradlaugh has promised to advise me in all legal difficulties, and to give me at any time the benefit of his long and varied experience. For this I am very grateful, and it will give you an added sense of security.

Every leader of a movement has his ideas and tries to realise them. I shall endeavor to carry out the projects I have long cherished. Their character may be inferred from the work of the Organisation Committee, appointed at the last Conference, and of which I have been chairman. It is to organisation, chiefly, that we must now look for the success of our movement.

But I do not intend to be hasty. Innovations must be made unless a Society is to stagnate and decay, but they should be made gently. One foot should be planted firmly before the other is lifted. Eager spirits must have a fresh prospect, yet the moderate must not be alarmed, nor the very laggards frightened away. An army has its pioneers, its main body, its rear, and even its stragglers, all moving forward to the self-same goal.

I have no intention of being pig-headed. I do not believe I have any such disposition. I like firmness, but I dislike arbitrariness and despotic methods. My ear will be open to advice. Everyone who has an honest complaint to make, or a new idea to broach, will find me a ready listener. But I must be pardoned if I act upon my own judgment where I am solely responsible. My office, it will be remembered, is a constitutional one; I am limited by the rules of the Society and the decisions of its Executive; and it is only within a very definite limit that I have a special power.

Pardon me for not saying much at this moment. For many reasons I cannot present you with an elaborate programme. What I desire to see carried out will be proposed gradually; and at my age, and with my experience, I am too wary to map out a quantity of work that I may never be able to accomplish. Besides, I am but a temporary president as yet, being only elected until your annual Conference in May. Should you re-elect me, I shall then venture to indicate what, in my opinion, our Society should attempt in the immediate future.

There is one matter, however, which demands your prompt attention. You have generously responded to Mr. Bradlaugh's appeal, and cancelled the bond under which he paid five guineas per month into the General Fund. This will involve a serious diminution of your financial resources, and steps should be taken at once to repair the loss. At the next meeting of your Executive, a few days hence, I shall submit a proposal to that effect, with a practical scheme which I trust will not only sustain but increase the annual income of the Society.

And now, ladies and gentleman, I must conclude with a personal observation. I have served the Freethought party for more than twenty years, in various degrees, and I dare say with various success; and now, at the age of forty, I am rewarded with the highest mark of your esteem. I am past the heats and effervescences of youth, but not old enough to be useless. My life is wholly devoted to your cause. Whatever abilities I possess are consecrated to its service. As long as I may I shall work with pen and tongue, and on practical committees, for the welfare of your Society and the propagation of its principles. That is all I promise, and that I will try to fulfil. The rest must be left to time and destiny.

Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE.

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CAGLIOSTRO.—II.

BELIEVERS in alchemy, the transmutation of metals, the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life, etc., are by no means extinct, and at the end of last century they appear to have been pretty numerous. Cagliostro was an adept in the charlatan's art of changing his own brass into gold, and in his pretences to be able to confer wealth and long life to others found numerous dupes. Alchemistical processes were, however, tedious and costly. Advances were required from believers before the *magnum opus* could be completed. Art is long and time fleeting. When patrons got too impatient for results, Cagliostro, to avoid their reproaches, sought fresh clients in another country, sometimes passing for an Italian nobleman, at others for a Prussian officer of high rank. We hear of him at Naples in 1773 and afterwards at Barcelona, where Secchi, the surgeon, affirms he decorated the pillory of the city. Cagliostro had many strings to his bow. For ladies he had "Beautifying Water"; for men canthardic "Wine of Egypt," capable of restoring youthful vigor to the old. In this pretence he has admirably seconded by the fair Lorenza, who, only about twenty, declared she was sixty and had a son a veteran in the Dutch service.

It was a second visit to England that laid the foundation of Cagliostro's future greatness. An English *Life of the Count Cagliostro*, dedicated in 1787, when he was in the heyday of his fortunes, to Madame la Comtesse, and written in the interests of the charlatan, gives an account of his misfortunes in London. It appears that through one Madame Blavary he got associated with gamblers and blacklegs, who robbed him and made him glad to return to the Continent. In England, however, he acquired a manuscript on Egyptian Freemasonry said to be by one George Coston. Here were the elements of mummery, mystification and lofty pretence in which the soul of Balsamo delighted. He determined to be the head of a new sect, the founder of a fresh faith. From the Polish Jew who called himself the "Count St. Germain," (that *conte pour rire*, as Voltaire wittily called the pretender to immortality who, like Cagliostro, asserted he lived at the time of Jesus Christ); from J. F. Borri, Bombastes Paracelsus, and others he acquired a theosophic jargon, such a deal of skimble skamble stuff as can only be equalled in the book of Dzyan. Mr. W. E. A. Axon, the writer in the *Dublin University Magazine*, says "He had an abridgement of Egyptian masonry, ready for his disciples, as curt and as decisive as the creed of Mohammed. 'Live as you please, and only believe in me and in Egyptian Masonry.'" The initiates of this higher grade of masonry, which was said to be founded, not by Egyptians but by Enoch and Elias, were supposed to be on the path both of moral and physical regeneration. The former appears to have implied getting beyond human law and conventionally, while the latter power, as Carlyle inimitably puts it, was "not to be accomplished without a forty days course of medicine, purgation, sweating baths, fainting fits, soot, dust, phlebotomy, starvation, and desperation, more perhaps than it is all worth." In admitting a candidate to Egyptian Masonry this formula was used:—"In virtue of the power which I have received from the Grand Cophte [Cagliostro], the founder of our order, and by the particular grace of God, I hereby confer upon you the honor of being admitted into our lodge, in the names of Helios, Mené, Tetragammation."

The Egyptian Order was, indeed, a superior grade of Freemasonry in that it admitted ladies to the order. This department, under the presidency of Lorenza, the Grand Cophtess, was apparently the most popular. At Paris many ladies of high rank joined the "Isis" lodge. The fair neophytes were required to contribute each the sum of one hundred louis, to abstain from carnal intercourse, and to give "the blindest submission to the rules and codes of our ritual, such as they may be communicated to me by the Grand Mistress." The ceremonies, as described by Figuier from the *Essai sur les Illuminis* of the Marquis Du Luchet, were highly indecent. The ladies were by the example of the high priestess induced to disrobe until they were "as naked as truth itself."

Cagliostro seems to have taken a genuine delight in his business of charlatanry and to have fooled his dupes to the top of their bent. He amassed a deal of money, which he spent lavishly, and his renown spread through every country in Europe. In Germany, he for a time duped the mystical Countess Elise von der Recke by his pretended evocation of spirits, for which he had been counted among the originators of modern spiritism, but that fair saint came to see through him and has left her testimony to his roguery. In Russia, the supposed restoring of a nobleman's infant to health, brought him wealth and fortune, but the combined result of an amour between Lorenza and Prince Potemkin, prime minster and favorite of the Empress Catherine, and the discovery that the nobleman's child had been apparently changed, caused them to depart hastily with immense spoil towards the German frontier. "Scarcely is he gone," says Carlyle, "till the Prussian Ambassador appears with a complaint that he has falsely assumed the Prussian uniform at Rome; the Spanish Ambassador, with a still graver complaint, that he has forged bills at Cadiz. However, he is safe over the marches; let them complain their fill."

In Poland Cagliostro had the fortune to meet a prince who wished to obtain command of a devil. Cagliostro puffed him up for a long while with expectations of gratifying this laudable ambition, and actually procured presents from him to the amount of several thousand crowns. Being exposed by Count Moczinski, Cagliostro came westward and at Strassburg made great noise with his wondrous cures and bounty to the poor. Among his disciples Prince Cardinal de Rohan believed with a robust faith that he could make both gold and diamonds. The cardinal's credulity led to his own ruin and that of Cagliostro. Both seemed to have been deftly duped by the Countess La Motte in the famous matter of the Diamond Necklace, that farcical tragi-comedy so admirably described by Carlyle. Cagliostro and his fair Countess were both landed in the Bastille, and even when acquitted of having stolen the necklace, which Countess La Motte insinuated had been obtained for the chemical experiments of Cagliostro, were ordered summarily out of France (May 31, 1786). It was not long before the rascal's whirling fortunes culminated in a rapid descent. Induced by his wife to visit Rome, he attempted there to found a lodge of Egyptian masonry, was betrayed by one of his associates, arrested by an officer (Dec. 2, 1879), and lodged in the Castle of St. Angelo. Here, if we may believe the officers of the Inquisition, he and his wife both confessed. He was reconciled to the Church under the promise of being saved from the capital forfeit. Madame Blavatsky tells a curious story how a mysterious stranger called at the Vatican, sent not his name but a *word* to the Pope and was instantly admitted. As soon as he departed, the sentence on Cagliostro was commuted from death to imprisonment. As the lady gives no authority for this tale, it only suggests that the publisher knew his business who offered her a handsome sum to write romances.

Cagliostro died in the prison of St. Leo, Aug. 26, 1795. Madame Blavatsky seeks to throw doubt upon this, and hints that he may still be living. If the common argument that all men are mortal fails in the case of such a consummate adept as Cagliostro, there is another argument that should have force with

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Theosophists. Death is necessary for re-incarnation. As good Buddhist women expect to become men in another life, so the great magician may, in these latter days, have changed his sex. But for the career of Cagliostro should we have had the new Theosophy?

J. M. WHEELER.

WHY I LEFT THE CHURCH.

BY THE EX-REV. H. O. PENTECOST.

From the "Truthseeker" Annual.

(Continued from last week.)

I am not now discussing whether Jesus or the church is right. I merely say that my first grievance against the church at a time when I was a firm believer in the divinity of Jesus, was that while she worships him she does not obey him, she does not try to obey him; she openly and scandalously opposes his teaching and manner of life as those of what we now call a "crank." Thus, while I was in the church, I saw what a shameless humbug she is as an organised institution. I saw that everything that Jesus said to and against the loathsome hypocrites of his day—the scribes and Pharisees—is applicable, in the last detail, to those persons—popes, archbishops, bishops, monseigneurs, ministers, vestrymen, elders, deacons, trustees—who manage the machinery of the church to-day. I saw that all the priests and ministers as a class (among whom there are noble exceptions, in their way) are time-servers, place-hunters and politicians. I saw that all gatherings of the church for legislative purposes—all councils and conventions—are exactly like similar civil gatherings; doctrines being formulated as are planks in a political platform, on the cowardly compromise plan, and men being elected or appointed to office on the same principles that govern in the trickiest political primaries or conventions.

I do not go into the question of motives here. I only report the facts. I do not say what these church dignitaries *mean* to do. I only say what they *do*. I do not say they *mean* to be hypocrites, I only say they *are* hypocrites. They pretend to love and to at least try to obey Jesus, but they do neither.

All this became clear in my mind while I was still a firm believer in the divinity of Jesus and the inspiration of the Bible, and the effect was to drive me to certain logical conclusions, which banged me at first against the solid wall of supernaturalism with all its hardness and horror, and then flung me, by a great and fortunate rebound, out into the boundless plains of Rationalism, where, at present, I enjoy the peculiar satisfaction of knowing that I am ignorant of a lot of things that I used to think I knew.

What I mean is, that when I became convinced that the church as an organisation is wrong, I determined to find the right road if I could. I started with the premise that the Bible is the word of God, and therefore must be true from end to end. It is not a book from which we may pick and choose. Historically, for example, if one event it relates is true they all must be. The withered fig-tree, the demon-dazed pigs, the arrested sun—all these and more must be swallowed as the great fish swallowed Jonah, and not be spewed forth, as Jonah was, because they do not comport with facts as things now go. I still think this is a correct premise. If the Bible, as the creeds say, is the word of God and "the only infallible guide of faith and practice," it must be true, and it must mean what it says from end to end. Any other conclusion is logically absurd.

Well, I determined to test the truthfulness of the book, not as a doubter, but as a believer. I picked out certain promises concerning the healing of physical infirmities, and as Gideon laid his fleece before Jehovah, I went upon my knees before the God in whom I believed and held up those promises before him for days and weeks fully expecting them to be honored. The promises are unequivocal and unqualified, and I was intensely in earnest. It is something for many of the readers of this *Annual* to laugh about, but those weeks and months when I put the Bible to the test became weeks and months of mental agony to me, during which sleep fled from my eyes and flesh shrunk from my bones.

When nothing happened, as of course nothing did, the doubt that may have been the unconscious motive of my testing work (as one becomes more attentive to his sweetheart when he unconsciously knows that he is beginning to love her less) began to grow and fret me. I then began to read. I read Robertson Smith, the *Age of Reason*, all of Colonel Ingersoll's published writings that I could find, Volney's *Ruins*, and a lot of works of that sort. But I wanted to get at the root of the matter. I read James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great Religions*, *The Bible for Learners*, and a number of works of the Dutch school, some of them many times, and a lot of other books along that line that I need not mention particularly, and some of which I have at this moment forgotten. But I wanted to go clear down to the bottom. I read Clodd's *Childhood of the World*, *Childhood of Religion*, *Birth and Growth of Myth*. I went into the whole subject of man's early thinking, reading a class of books of which Dorman's *Origin of Primitive Superstitions* and Tylor's *Early History of Mankind* and *Primitive Culture* are splendid examples. It need not be said, I hope, that I read Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and their interpreters. I dug down to the roots of things through five or six years of such mental pains and anguish as I hope to spare my children. To pull out a religion from a man who has been a thorough believer is incalculably more wrenching and tearing than the pulling of his teeth.

The result of all this reading, studying and thinking was that the whole process of religion planting, growing and training was laid bare before me, and I saw, as in the fair sunlight, that man has made all his religions just as he has made everything else that he has.

Of course it was a long time before I could bring myself to admit that there is not the slightest evidence of the existence of a God or of the likelihood of a future life—that there is no evidence of the existence of life or "spirit" (whatever that may be) except in apparently integral conjunction with matter, but having determined to go to the bottom of the subject when I once started, I could not honestly stop until I stood upon the outer edge of matter, and was obliged to declare that I could see neither God nor soul beyond.

This failure to find God and the way to a future life scared me for a time. But while I was agitated upon the religious question I also became interested to discover the reason why some men are political rulers and others are ruled; why I am compelled to give up my money to the politicians whether I wish to or not; why policemen prevent me from doing many things that I might do without injuring anybody else; why some persons who never do any work are fabulously rich and those who work all the time when they are not asleep are horribly poor. In studying this question of the political enslavement of the minority by the majority and the industrial enslavement of the majority by the minority, I discovered how neither of these things could be done except by the use of the belief in God and a future life. I then saw that whether there is any God or not, and whether there is any future life or not, it is a very unfortunate thing for the world that anybody *believes* there is.

I do not know whether it would be good for us to have a God or not, but I think not. I do not know whether it would be good for us to live after death or not, but I am inclined to think not. But I do know that kings, emperors, czars, presidents, popes and priests could not sit upon their tyrannical and unjust thrones another year if all the people would stop believing in God and a future life. Those two beliefs for the benumbing of the intellect, and a skilful use of clubs, guns, prisons and gallowses for the subduing of the body, form the groundwork upon which every tyranny over the mind and oppressive robbery of the poor are established.

Every ruler on earth to-day, from the cruel Czar to the pale Presbyterian in the White House, occupies his position because the people have been humbugged into the belief that it is the will of God that he should be where he is. And the great mass of poor people are kept poor because petticoated liars and white-necktied

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deceivers have succeeded in making them believe that it is God's will that they should be poor, and that if they will quietly submit to being robbed on earth they will, by and bye, enjoy equal privileges with the robbers in heaven—both saved by grace. A prominent Newark, N.J., clergyman said not long ago in his pulpit to a congregation of rich and well-to-do persons that it would never do to lose faith in immortality, because that belief is necessary to keep the poor quiet and contented. He told the truth. The idea of God and the belief in a future life are two doctrines that stand squarely across the road of progress, and the human race will never be truly civilised until they are eradicated from the mind. We are not here to worship a hypothetical God, but to study the facts of the universe. We are not here to pray for help, but to help ourselves. We are not here to hope for another life, but to use this one for our highest happiness, which will be found in promoting the happiness of others.

This is the outline of the story of my escape from orthodoxy, told in this personal. face-to-face fashion, because the editor of the *Annual* thought it would be most acceptable in that form. It has been a very interesting and exciting journey for me—as from the depths of a mine full of pinchbeck into sunlight, pure air, green fields and all that makes life worth living.

I am sometimes asked the question if I am as happy now as when I was in the church. Yes; incalculably happier. Why should I not be? I am FREE! My mind works now. My morals are better, because springing from higher motives. Happier? Yes. But not happy. No thinking person who cares for his fellows can be happy while a political ruler or religious guide remains on earth. Government by force and superstition are incompatible with happiness. Poverty and happiness cannot exist in the same world. No one ought to be happy while there is a policeman or a priest, a prison, a poorhouse, or a church on earth.

ACID DROPS.

Canon Talbot—the gentleman who declined to discus with Mr. Foote or any other leading Freethinker—has been treating the Tyneside folk to a number of amazing lectures; and after reading reports in the local press we can quite appreciate his aversion to a public debate. One of his lectures was on "The Bible and Science," and Canon Talbot made it evident that he sits upon the fence with a leg on each side. He does not deny that the "letter" of Genesis is queer in the light of modern science, but he says that the "spirit" of Genesis is in harmony with all our discoveries. On the oher hand, it would be foolish to expect the writers of the Bible to be abreast with the scientific knowledge of to-day. Precisely so! But is it not just as foolish to expect them to be abreast with the morality of to-day?

Canon Talbot's position is this. God taught the Jews morality but he couldn't teach them science. Our position is that God taught them neither the one nor the other.

"A Churchman" writes to the *Newcastle Chronicle* that Canon Talbot is really giving up the inspiration of the Bible. "I remember," says the writer, "that, in a letter sent to the press, he stated that if the Secularists would invite him to lecture to them, they would find there was very little difference between them. Truly he is right, for if his lecture means anything, it means conceding every point of sceptical attack."

"A Churchman" is answered by a "beneficed English clergyman of twenty-four years' standing." He allows that the Bible abounds with mistakes, but for all that we have in it "a heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel." Well, the earthen vessel is pretty obvious. The "heavenly treasure" is more obscure. Perhaps the "advanced clergy" will be good enough to tell us where the clay ends and the treasure begins; or, better still, smelt down the lot, and give us the treasure for weighing and testing.

Sarah Bernhardt's impersonation of Joan of Arc has led to a revival of the controversies that surround that famous name. M. Ernest Lesigne, a French Positivist, has written a book entitled *Fin d'une Legende*, end of a legend, with a view of proving that Joan of Arc was but a very insignificant factor in the expulsion of the English from France. M. Lesigne must be a very sanguine man if he fancies legends will evaporate simply because shown not to have sufficient evidence. Their very life consists in appealing to sentiment instead of to reason. His book, like Dr. Milner's *End of Controversy*, is likely to prove the beginning of a new controversy.

Devout Hindus of Madras have had a shock to their faith. The High Priest of the Temple of Tripati has been convicted of stealing certain treasure committed to his holy keeping. The true theory of religion is everywhere the same (1) The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. (2) The Lord has given the dominion of the earth to his saints. (3) We are the saints.

After Sunday's meeting at the Hall of Science a brief report of the proceedings was left by Mr. Wheeler at the offices of the five principal daily papers—the *Times*, *Daily News*, *Standard*, *Chronicle*, and *Telegraph*. But his trouble was nearly wasted. Only one of the papers inserted the paragraph.

Freethinkers may see from this what to expect. They are to be treated, as of old, with a conspiracy of silence. Mr. Bradlaugh himself is only to be recognised as a politician, and even so important an event as his resignation of the presidency of the National Secular Society is quietly ignored.

Never mind. The Freethought party has made its way despite the boycotting of the press, and it will continue to do so. Ideas operate under the surface of life, with which alone the press is concerned. Our lectures have their effect whether they are reported or not, and the writings of our various penmen produce abiding results in the minds of thousands.

The *New York Herald* reports ghostly pranks at Ottawa, Canada, far better attested than any of the pranks of the Holy Ghost in olden times. The ghost pulled off the bedclothes and indulged in many other tricks. Milk pans were emptied, butter was taken from the crocks, filth was strewn on the floor, and, no matter in what inaccessible places these articles were placed, the tricky spirit was able to get at them and exhibit his malevolence. Finally two boys and a girl testified to having seen a beautiful old man dressed in shining garments, who had addressed endearing words to the little ones, and then bidding them good-bye, had mounted into the air leaving behind him what the children described as a "line of blaze," and so vanished, *à la* Jesus Christ.

Muscular Christianity also flourishes in America, judging by the following telegram:—The pastor of a church in the vicinity of Sparta, North Carolina, made from the pulpit some remarks condemning the manner in which one of the church members treated his wife. The clergyman's comments evoked great uproar, which led to a furious fight, in which two persons were killed and several more were injured.

A "Pentecost band" of faith-healers in Illinois are in trouble, the citizens living in the vicinity where they hold forth having become provoked by their boisterous manner of holding meetings, which continue up to two o'clock in the mornings. Warrants were issued for the arrest of some twenty, including the Rev. Vivian A. Dake, the originator and founder of the Pentecost band; the Rev. Thomas Nelson, another high priest; the Rev. I. A Ullness, the Rev. Charles Bryant, the Rev. Frederick Osborn and a number of the young women who travel with them. Over fifty witnesses have been summoned on the side of the prosecution. Evidently the Salvation Army can take more licence here than abroad.

The Rev. Walter Walsh, who has been lecturing to the Newcastle Freethinkers, is possessed of considerable coolness. In his last lecture on God he inquired, "Who asked them to worship the God of the Hebrews?" We reply, nine-tenths of all the Christian teachers in the world.

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And they are logical. If the God of the Old Testament is a mistake, the God of the New Testament may also fall into the same category. In fact, the God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament, somewhat improved, and also somewhat worse, with age and emigration.

Mr. Walsh has advanced beyond the God of the Old Testament. Good. But Freethinkers have advanced beyond the God of the New Testament. That is a point that does not appear to have dawned on Mr. Walsh's imagination; so that, in a certain sense, his lectures have been a waste of time and energy.

General Gordon, though an admirable man in many ways, seems to have been quite soft on the subject of religion. Among his many curious beliefs was one that an island of the Seychelles must be the site of the Garden of Eden. Mr. H. W. Estridge, late Receiver-General, British Bechuanaland, writes: "I was at Seychelles, in the Colonial Service, when General Gordon came there from Mauritius. I saw him very often. He dined with us, and on one occasion (as I have stated in my small book, *Six Years in Seychelles*, published 1885), he said he thought 'Parslin must have been the Garden of Eden.' When I suggested that if so the coco de mer could not have been the apple (the husk being some four inches thick before one arrives at the shell of the nut), as Eve could not have bitten it, he remarked 'I never thought of that.'"

What bunkum bishops will talk when they know it is not likely they will be contradicted. Here is the Bishop of Salford declaring: "The Church had from its earliest days always been against slavery; it had stood up against kings and princes, and opened out a better life for the poorest classes by education and other means. It had protected the oppressed and taught the rich to love their neighbors, to do to others as they would be done by. As early as Saxon days, when the poor formed guilds to protect themselves from the oppressions of the lords in the country, the Church aided them, and so when the craft guilds, which began in England in the eleventh century were first formed they received such countenance from the Church that, in great part by its aid, they covered all England in the fifteenth." The Bishop reads history upside down. But this is always the policy of the Church; for long ages it has opposed every improvement; then when the improvement is effected and a new generation has arisen, it turns round and calmly declares, "We did it."

The *Daily Chronicle* points out that the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has got into a fix over his story of "The Atheist Shoemaker." The reverend gentleman is beginning to experience the truth of the text, "Be sure your sins will find you out." But of course his policy is silence, for anything he could say would only make a bad matter worse. Mr. Foote's pamphlet is being widely circulated, and we trust that the remaining copies will be placed in the hands of persons who have heard of Mr. Hughes's little story.

The *Chronicle* says that many of Mr. Hughes's Wesleyan brethren "are much annoyed at the obstinacy of the rev. gentleman in declining to publish all particulars about this reputed conversion, which, if authenticated, would, they say, be a source of strength to the mission," and "some among them will probably demand that the proofs which are alleged to be in his possession should be produced."

The *Echo* says "there is nothing improbable in the conversion of a Secularist to Christianity," but at the same time it regards Mr. Hughes's refusal to give the name of his convert as "a mystery." "Unless he does so," the *Echo* says, "the whole story will be regarded as fabulous."

"*Apropos* of the Rev. H. P. Hughes's prayer for £500," says our correspondent "D. W.", who encloses his card, "I beg to make him the following offer. Let him and all his congregation, if they think fit, offer up a prayer to the Lord that I may present £100 to their mission—which I am in a position to do—within the next twelve months; and should the Lord answer it, the reverend gentleman will have gained £100, proved the efficacy of prayer, and *really* converted an Atheist."

The Rev. T. L. Davies, curate at Merthyr, is a very zealous Christian. In company with a sister of mercy, without being asked for, and in spite of being told by the master and the nurse that it was not convenient for them to visit, he made his way through the infirmary and administered the sacrament to a man who, according to the master's report, was not seriously ill. The curate probably believed he was doing something to save a soul from perdition by his intrusion, but the Board of Guardians took a different view of the matter and ordered that the rector's attention should be strongly drawn to his curate's conduct, and that in future sisters of mercy should not be admitted unless at the express wish of a patient.

The Poles and Lithuanians at Plymouth, America, have been illustrating the beauty of religion in rival faction fights. Members of the Polish Church went to the cemetery and dug up the bodies of the Lithuanians, opened the coffins, and threw the bodies over the fence. Armed Lithuanians appeared and the Poles fled. The dissension at bottom is understood to be all about religion.

"Send him to God," shouted Stanley, as he ordered the hanging of "a traitor." The man went, but nobody knows whether he has arrived at the destination. Apparently the great explorer looks upon the Deity as a sort of midden.—"N.B. Rubbish shot here." Yet Stanley would call us "Blasphemer!"

God's tender mercies are over all his works. Last year the snakes killed 1,165 persons in India, and 65 were killed by wild animals.

God *v.* Humanity again. At an inquest held upon an infant aged two years, who died at Birmingham, it transpired that the mother took it to the Medical Mission in Floodgate Street. Here they had to wait and hear the Bible and Divine Service and sing psalms before they got their medicine. The medical evidence showed the child died from bronchitis, accelerated probably through exposure to the cold air. God must be very exacting for praise if he cannot dispense with it in such cases as this. How would it do if the Medical Mission held its service of praise for those who were restored after taking the medicine? Probably the attendance would be smaller, but the devotion more genuine.

We have been sent a card of St. Anthony's Altar Society, which shows how the priests work the oracle. Subscribers to the Society are to have "The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass" offered twice a month for their spiritual and temporal welfare, no one to enjoy this benefit unless his or her subscription has been paid regularly.

The Mormon party has been routed in the recent Utah elections. While the voting register was being made up the Liberals objected to the votes of those who had passed through the Mormon Endowment House. It was alleged that in the ceremony of initiation they swear to avenge the blood of Joseph Smith, to recognise the authority of the Mormon priesthood as superior to that of the United States, and never to divulge the secrets of the Endowment House on pain of having their throats cut, their tongues cut out, and their hearts torn from their bodies. A reputable witness was produced who swore that in 1862 he had actually seen a Mormon so treated; the corpse, after being disembowled, having been thrown to the wolves.

The Rev. John Hunter has been preaching at Glasgow on Intolerance. He had a good deal to say on the subject, and we give him credit for denouncing all kinds of persecution. But his illustrations were rather ancient. Servetus was butchered some centuries ago. Far more recent was the prosecution of poor old Ferguson for selling the *Freethinker* in Glasgow. Nor did Mr. Hunter advert to Mr. Bradlaugh's ill-treatment or Mr. Foote's imprisonment. Still, we hope his sermon will do good, and we like the ring of his closing remark that the only real and damnable heresy is wrong-doing. That is what Colonel Ingersoll tried to impress on the New Jersey jury, but they gave a verdict of Guilty against Mr. Reynolds, and the judge fined him twenty-five dollars for "blasphemy."

Mr. Hunter spoke out very freely on the Christian press.

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"Where," he asked, says the *Christian World*, "do you find more unfairness, meanness, and bitterness than in the pages of the religious newspapers and magazines?" Rather warm, eh?

Here in the same paper which reports Mr. Hunter's sermon (the *Christian World*) is the Rev. J. I. Jones, who argues that Christians should have no intercourse with Unitarians on the ground of the injunction of St. John, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Mr. Jones is quite consistent, and endeavors to act up to the teachings of the book. Fortunately there are Christians who have got beyond its level, and are better than their creed.

The *Northern Advance*, an organ of the Nonconformist Church, discusses the question "Are the Churches Losing their Seriousness?" It calls attention to a church announcement that Mr. D., "the Manchester humorist," and "a troupe of minstrels" will appear, along with the parochial choir and a famous woman preacher. There is no doubt the parochial choir and the famous woman preacher would take a back seat while the funny man or the minstrels were on. The churches *are* losing their seriousness. The Devil is in a decline, and hell is cooling fast. Without these gruesome elements Christianity becomes a farce. Brimstone gives place to treacle.

The Vicar of Paul, Cornwall, the Rev. R. W. Aitken, lecturing on the Forward Movement, said the principles which would serve the rising generation were: First and greatest, the acknowledgment of the Fatherhood of God; second, the brotherhood of man, a brotherhood not based on French ideas or "liberty, equality, fraternity," but on the recognition by every man of his obligation to do his duty in the state of life to which he was called. That is, the Forward Movement consists in giving a new label to the old and tarnished goods, the brotherhood of man implying the Archbishop in Lambeth Palace with £15,000 a year and Dick outside in the gutter wondering how he can get bread for his children.

There are ever so many millions of fools in this world, and their stupidities are infinite. But is there, or was there, ever a greater stupidity than giving an ordinary custom-house officer the right of deciding what literature a country shall import? Over in Canada the *Age of Reason* has been seized at Toronto and Montreal as "immoral and obscene." The importer of one lot entered a suit against the collector of the port of Montreal, but lost on a technicality. Then the Montreal Pioneer Freethought Club decided to test the question. A number of copies were ordered from the United States, but the censorship was relaxed, and the copies were entered at the custom house, and duty paid on them, without a word of comment from the officials.

Some time ago Ingersoll's works were seized by the custom house as "immoral and obscene," although the Colonel is one of the purest writers and speakers on this planet. What a roaring farce, to be sure! If the Canadians stand this they will stand anything.

Ely and Peterborough are both blessed with bishops, and we read in the *Lynn News* that the first-named city has to follow the example of the latter in passing bye-laws to suppress "the filthy language in the streets."

Truth says that the "Bishop of Peterborough is one of the few prelates with a grain of sense in his head." That isn't saying much. But it is all true. Bishop Magee knows what's what. Hence his dexterous article on the Sermon on the Mount, which is dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Impossible Creed*.

What a foolish people we are! Fancy paying thousands a year to a lot of Bishops, most of whom are devoid of "a single grain of sense"! We must be bigger fools than the Bishops, for they have sense enough to make us pay them handsomely.

The Young Men's Christian Association is in a bad way at Portsmouth. A meeting of members has been held for the purpose of disposing of its effects, and there was recrimination enough to show what a happy family they are. When another meeting of the same kind is held, the Association should hire a steamer, and take care that no reporters are on board.

Talmage wanted to buy Calvary. But he was unable to strike the bargain. Part of it is used as a Mohammedan burial ground, and all the gold in America would not persuade the Moslems to sell their dead.

"There was a moderate attendance." And no wonder. When Mr. George Harwood, M.A., discourses to the Bolton Young Men's Christian Association on Christianity and Science, and stands up for the Flood, the Adam and Eve story, and all the rest of the Bible outfit, it is surprising that the room wasn't empty. Even the chairman must have had iron nerves to stand it at this time of day.

The *Consett Guardian* twitted the Ox Hill Branch of the N. S. S. with holding its annual meeting in a public-house, and not publishing the names of its elected officers. "A Secularist" replies that Christian bigotry allowed the Branch no other place of meeting, that Christians steal any money left to build Freethought halls, and that many members of the N. S. S. have to remain "passive" because they would lose their bread if their employers knew their opinions. We dare say the *Guardian* wishes it had let the subject alone.

"Six days shalt thou labor and do all that thou hast to do," says the commandment, but Christians go on lying seven days in the week. Here is a tract before us about "converted infidels," issued from Drummond's Tract Depot, and apparently circulated by a Wesleyan chapel in Leeds. It informs us that the London infidels have "one hall and three lecturers," and the rest of the tract is on a par with this for accuracy.

"Lord, how the world is given to lying!" said Jack Falstaff. Yet he lived before the age of tracts and West-end missions.

The *Vegetarian* is a curious mixture of vegetables and Christianity. The vegetables we understand. They are wholesome and necessary. But what has Christianity to do with dietetic reform? Jesus Christ was neither a vegetarian nor a teetotaller, and no doubt the Galilean trawlers would have smoked but for the want of pipes and tobacco. Jehovah himself, the head of the firm, was quite carnivorous. He accepted Abel's mutton, and turned up his nose at Cain's turnips. Yet Mr. Hills, the editor of the *Vegetarian*, fills the paper with Christian gush, and refuses to insert anything by Freethinkers, although Dr. Allinson is well known to be a pronounced sceptic, and Mr. F. Smallman, a member of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S., has done as much practical work for vegetarianism as any man in England.

The most curious part of the business is that the *Vegetarian* professes the principles of universal brotherhood, independent of race and creed. But somehow a Christian doesn't understand working with other people unless he bosses the show.

OBITUARY.

On Saturday, Feb. 15th., the remains of Mr. William Russell Ord, of South Shields, were interred at Preston Cemetery, near North Shields, in the presence of a large number of Freethinkers. The Secular service was delivered by Captain W. B. Duncan, Vice-president of the South Shields Branch. Mr. Ord, who was for some time President of the North Shields Branch of the N. S. S., was accidentally killed while following his employment as a boat-builder at the Wallsend Slipway.—R. CHAPMAN.

Died, on the 12th. inst., Mary, the wife of John Tomkins (N. S. S.) of Nottingham Road, Wandsworth Common. aged 54. The interment took place at the Necropolis, Woking, with Secular Service composed and read by Mr. J. H. Ellis. (N. S. S.)

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Feb 23, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 7, "The Future of Freethought."

March 2, Manchester; 7, Chatham; 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 19, Southwark Radical Club; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

L. L. COCKS.—Thanks for your congratulations. It was too late for us to attend or send a representative to the Rev. H. Bevan's lecture on Freethought.

SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—You appeal to our faith in the unknown and we have little of that article in stock. What you say about "sudden death" has some force with respect to the dead person, but you forget the shock to his relatives; a shock that sometimes ruins a promising life. You may find some benefit to the race from a colliery accident. We cannot.

J. S.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

L. MACFORM (Bombay).—Father Lambert's reply to Ingersoll was analysed by Mr. Ball some three years ago in the *Freethinker*. Ingersoll doesn't think Lambert worth answering. The subject of Christianity and Slavery will be fully dealt with in a future chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*. The "heathen" testimony to the darkness at the Crucifixion is an admitted forgery. You are misinformed as to the miracles of Christ in the Talmud. See the *Jewish Life of Christ*.

J. HAMPSON.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. H. ADAMS, 23 Burton-Street, Leicester, asks us to "pause." We did, for twelve months, in Holloway Gaol. We thought our position out carefully, and our correspondent is wasting his time—and still worse, ours. He says he was trying to get people to come to church, and one of them gave him a copy of the *Freethinker*. We are glad to hear it, and we hope our correspondent will show it about as a sample of infidel wickedness. We can give a good commission on new subscribers.

A. J. FIELD.—Delighted to hear from you as "one of Mr. Foote's converted Christians." Such letters as yours cheer us in the midst of work and worry.

C. C. CATTELL, Snow Hill, Birmingham, offers to send his volume of collected Essays and Lectures (240 pp.) post free to any reader of the *Freethinker* on receipt of seven stamps.

IGNORAMUS.—Thanks for the parcel of Positivist literature. Mr. Truelove, 256 High Holborn, may be able to tell you of some print bearing Bentham's motto, "Maximise morals and minimise religion." There are some good works on morality by evolutionists. Would they meet your wish? If so, we will give you a list. Sorry to hear you are a permanent invalid, but glad that you are able to find some relief in good reading.

LOUISA SAMSON.—The matter is under consideration, and we will keep your letter beside us. We appreciate the congratulations of an intelligent woman.

G. NAEWIGER.—Delighted to hear of your success in Hull.

J. D. LEGGETT.—Never fear. We don't intend to leave Mr. Hughes in peace.

J. E. A.—There was a "high hill" for the Devil to take Jesus up, but no mountain in the vicinity. Of course the whole Roman empire wasn't visible from the top of the highest mountain, and had they gone a million miles high they could not have seen more than half of a globe at once.

H. READE.—See "Acid Drops." Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* is published in 2 vols. at 12s. It should be in the Manchester Free Library.

H. T. BAILEY.—Cuttings should arrive by Tuesday morning to be of use for the number in preparation. We hope your propaganda will be successful.

C. DOEG.—We quite approve of what you are doing. You would be foolish to run off from your own Sunday evening meetings, to furnish Mr. Wise with an audience.

J. B.—Mrs. Gaskell was a Unitarian, George Eliot a Positivist Charlotte Bronte Broad Evangelical, Mrs. Humphrey Ward a Theist, Miss Olive Schreiner and Mrs. E. Lynn Linton Agnostics.

H. PALMER.—Sceptic comes from a Greek word signifying to view or look carefully. Blind scepticism is therefore a contradiction in terms

H. NORRMEN (Helsingfors).—Many thanks. We are rejoiced to hear there are a party of Freethinkers who read our writings as far north as Finland.

C. W.—Thanks for cuttings and congratulations. George Eliot's verdict on Byron is extreme, but it has a certain amount of truth.

S. R. S.—The tract ought to be placed among the chief curiosities of the British Museum. If Joseph and Moses "accepted Christ" they were in advance of his offer. But both were Jews and the Jews have always been keen in business.

SAM STANDRING.—Your good, cheerful, letter is much appreciated. It may be, however, as you say, that the bigots may attack us more fiercely now that Mr. Bradlaugh's powerful leadership is gone; but there are no immediate signs of an outbreak, and if it comes the Freethought party will fight as one man for the common cause.

D. W.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Der Arme Tuefel—Secular Thought—Liberator—Truthseeker—Market Rasen Mail—Bulletin des Sommaires—Methyr Express—Western Mail—Boston Sunday Herald—Northern Advance—Western American—Polytechnic Journal—La Verità—The Vegetarian—Ironclad Age—Reading Observer.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS evening (Feb. 23) Mr. Foote will deliver a lecture of special importance on "The Future of Freethought." What he has to say will be very carefully prepared, and will be a kind of manifesto to the party which has just elected him President. All who are interested in the future of the National Secular Society should attend.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S great personality is appreciated by the Freethinkers of Australia. Mr. Symes appeals to him to remain among his "old and tried friends" to the last; to continue as President even if others do all the work, and he only looks on. Ah, Joseph, you let your heart speak instead of your head. You ought to know that Mr. Bradlaugh is not the man to fill an ornamental office. But you will be glad to know that he does remain—as a Life Member. This gives him a right to step forward whenever he chooses, and it keeps him—to use your words—OUR OWN BRADLAUGH, though not exactly in the old sense.

"NOWADAYS," says the *Speaker*, "Mr. Bradlaugh stands almost alone as a successful amateur lawgiver." This refers to Mr. Bradlaugh's way of piloting his Bills through the House of Commons.

MR. SYMES pays a just tribute of admiration to Mrs. Besant for her splendid speech against Parson Hoskyns and in defence of the Malthusian principles which she so nobly maintained.

VIKTOR LENNSTRAND sends us a bright letter from his Swedish prison. He says that English sympathy is helping him and his friends in their struggle. The quashing of two prosecutions, already referred to in our columns, has caused a profound sensation, the case having been fully reported in the principal daily papers. Two distinguished members of the Council of State have openly rebuked the bigotry from which Mr. Lennstrand is suffering. Captain Otto Thomson, despite his years, is working with a youthful energy. Two intelligent young men, Messrs Berghell and Mentzer, have joined the Society. The former is on a lecturing tour in the provinces, and establishing Branches in various towns. Mr. Lennstrand says he shall work with redoubled vigor when he is a free man again. Meanwhile he sends greetings to the Freethinkers of

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England. "We will show us," he says in his imperfect, touching English, "worthy of their warm sympathies." We are sure they will.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—D. W., 10s.; Dr. T. R. Allinson, £1 1s.

NORWICH is a cathedral city, but the Town Council is enlightened enough to open the Free Library on Sundays. The experiment is so far successful. The rooms are well occupied, and the visitors behave like ladies and gentlemen.

WE stated last week that our invitation of capital for our publishing business is still open, though we do not care to give it the prominence in our columns which it occupied some weeks ago. During the present month we have repaid £100 to an investor in Devonshire, and we have to repay him another £100 shortly. We have also repaid £50 to a London investor this week, besides some smaller amounts to other investors. Our publishing business cannot be conducted as efficiently as it should be without more capital. We pay five per cent on all deposits, and they are withdrawable on six months' notice. Any sums, from £5 upwards, will be acceptable.

MR. FOOTE'S letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury will be concluded in our next. The final portion is crowded out this week.

THE *Blackburn Times* gives a long and excellent report of Mr. Foote's lecture on Atheism in reply to the Rev. J. Ogmore Davies. It is so good that we are sorry we have not space to reproduce it.

A MEETING of Freethinkers from Leeds, Farsley, Hipperholme, Bradford, and other places was held last Sunday at Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford, to consider the advisability of trying to resuscitate the Freethought party in the West Riding of Yorkshire. It was decided to convene (by circular) a meeting for March 2nd, which will be held at above address, and Aurelis B. Wakefield, The Green, Hipperholme, will be pleased to hear from anyone interested in the movement.

ABOUT a year ago we inserted two appeals to the Hull Freethinkers to meet at Mr. Naewiger's house and form a Branch of the N. S. S. Some of our readers took the hint, and a Branch was formed there and then. A large hall was engaged and fortnightly meetings have been held ever since, the place being sometimes very inconveniently crowded. The Branch now numbers forty-five financial members *all paid up;* it has a fair balance in hand and no debts. At the outset the croakers foretold a failure, but Hull has shown what earnest Freethinkers can do if they will but try. There are fifty towns in England that ought to be encouraged by the example of Hull to start Branches immediately.

THE Reading Branch is making good progress. Mr. Forder lectures for it to-day (Feb. 23) at the Assembly Room, Friar Street. His subjects are—morning, "The Exodus from Egypt"; evening, "The Gospel History."

THE Camberwell Branch had a very successful Childrens' Party on Feb. 12. All the donors are thanked for their contributions. They are too numerous to catalogue.

IN most parts Secularists find a difficulty in obtaining competent opposition. The Portsmouth Branch of the N. S. S. insert in the local *Evening News* an advertisement, a challenge to debate the fundamental principles of Christianity with any minister of any denomination. Good for Portsmouth.

FREETHOUGHT is evidently spreading among the troops at Dum Dum, Calcutta, for the little magazine run by the Methodist chaplain is stuffed with answers to "infidelity." Ingersoll is crushed, and will no doubt retire into obscurity for the rest of his days. Yes, the Rev. J. A. Macdonald is a great man. But why does he appropriate wholesale from H. L. Hastings?

THE Rev. D. Amos, of the Unitarian Free Church, Reading, has been lecturing against the inspiration of the Bible. According to the report he acquitted himself manfully, and demanded that the Bible should be treate as a human production. His remarks were greeted wit loud applause. One of his critics, Major Liebenrood said that Mr. Amos's lecture was only a repetition of Mr. Foote's. There was some truth in this, of course, for every lecture on the inspiration of the Bible must of necessity traverse the same ground. For the rest, the observation was only the Mayor's way of being offensive.

"INFIDELITY" is attracting attention on all sides. During the past week four lectures on its modern phases have been delivered at Gresham College by the Rev. H. E. J. Bevan, Gresham Professor of Divinity and vicar of St. Andrew's, Stoke Newington. The first lecture was on "Freethought."

AT the Second Annual Convention of the Californian State Liberal (*i.e.* Freethought) Union Mr. S. P. Putnam was re-elected President. He is supported by an executive council of ten, and no less than ninety vice-presidents. There must be a large number of Freethinkers of importance in the state, or is it that in American organisations vice-presidents are as plentiful as colonels?

A SYMPOSIUM on the subject "Is there an Affirmative, Positive, Constructive, side to Freethought" is commenced in the *Truthseeker* for Feb. 8 by a letter from Col. Ingersoll, which we shall reprint in our next issue. Mr. Westbrook, the president of the American Secular Union, Captain Robert C. Adams, the president of the Canadian Secular Union, and others, contribute their various opinions on the affirmations of Freethought.

THE TESTIMONY OF A GREAT POET.

Charles Marie Leconte de Lisle, of the French Academy, is unquestionably at the head of French poetry. His Freethought, which is strikingly exhibited in his poem on Cain, is pronounced in a popular brief prose *Histoire du Christianisme*, which he published in 1871. At the end of that work he says, "Christianity, and by this term must be understood all the Christian communions from Roman Catholicism to the smallest Protestant sects or schismatics, has never exercised other than a deplorable influence on intelligence and on morals. It condemns thought, it annihilates reason, it has perpetually denied and combatted all the truths successively acquired by science. It is unintelligible in its dogmas, arbitrary, variable, indifferent in its morality. Humanity has lost her faith in it, and it no longer inspires other respect than that accorded to old things which have been long used. It is an object of art, powerfully conceived, venerable by its antiquity, whose place is marked in the religious museum of history."

THEOLOGICAL ITEM.

Reverend Eli Soote, a colored parson, has considerable trouble in collecting his salary from the delinquent members of his flock. Jim Crow, in particular, shows a great deal of delicacy in paying his pew rent. Not long since Soote met Jim and tackled him on the subject.

"See heah, Jim, you hasn,t paid up fur two munfs. Doesn't yer know dat dose who serbs at de altar mus' lib by de altar?"

"Dat's so, my berlubbed pasture, but dar am ernudder text in der Bible what am in conflic wid dat ar."

"Whar did yer find 'em?"

"I sarched the Scripters an' found 'em. I'se one ob de sheep ob yo' flock, ain't I?"

"You is, Mr. Crow, but I feels you am one ob de black sheep."

"Kinder strikes me yer ain't no strawberry blonde yerse'f but ain't de commandment gibben ter de shepherds and pastures ob de flock, 'Feed my sheep!' an' heah yer comes to me—one ob de sheep—an wants ter be fed, you ole blackened sepulchum. Ef yer means ter bide by de Bible, why doan yer lead dis heah sheep inter er iceter saloon an' set up er dozen on de half shell? De good book say 'feed de sheep;' but you do nuffin' but shear 'em. Whar did yer read 'shear my sheep?' Go home, ole man, an' sarch de Scripters, 'stead ob nosin' erbout fer money whut I'se earned by de swet ob my brow."

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MR. BRADLAUGH RESIGNS.

ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT.

We doubt if in all the churches in London combined there was anything like the enthusiasm and warm feeling which prevailed at the Hall of Science last Sunday. The meeting was called for 11.15, and long before that time the hall was filled with an expectant audience, many having come early to obtain a good inspection of the Indian presents, which were on view in the minor hall, among which we specially noticed a handsome gold casket containing an address from the Freethinkers of Bombay.

The proceedings commenced punctually by Mr. Forder reading Mr. Bradlaugh's letter of Nov. 5 desiring the meeting, and the resolution of the Executive Council that it should be called.

Mr. Bradlaugh, who on rising, as upon entering the hall, was received with rounds of applause, could for some moments scarcely speak from emotion and appeared as though he would actually break down. Old men, many of whom had come from various parts of the Kingdom, were also observed to be overcome by their feelings during the proceedings and furtively wipe away the welling tears. Mr. Bradlaugh, who spoke throughout with the deepest feeling, said: With a very slight break I have led this movement for over thirty years—a fairly long period in any life. I have been President of this Society almost since it has existed, and I am very sorry to resign. Unfortunately, while my work has never been easy, it grew much harder during my parliamentary struggle and the litigation which that struggle involved. I have felt the last three or four years that the pressure on me was becoming so great that a breakdown might be at any time possible. Last October it came, and the wonder is I am here to tender my resignation at all. I was brought then face to face with the fact that I could no longer do the whole of my work, and I am now advised that the resumption of my old work would mean another illness which might be fatal. Some kind friends have suggested I might continue to hold the office nominally. But I could not do that. I must be a real President or none. The fault found with me has been that I have been too real in times that are gone. I think I am entitled to say we are stronger now than we were when you first put me in the presidential chair. I don't want to leave you. (Cheers.) I could not take any other office; but if you like to make me a life member I should be grateful to you to do it. (Cheers.) I have another request. I have never held any paid office in this Society, and I have never refused aid to any branch of the Society, which I thought fairly justified in demanding help. There has not been a day of my life in which five or six people have not brought their trouble to me, and I have done my best for them. In 1879 a sum of £1050 was given by a Mr. Thomson, which he wished invested in the Freethought Publishing Company for which five guineas per month was to be paid to the National Secular Society. A sum of £630 has already been paid, and I want to ask you to release me from the responsibility of the remainder. (Cheers). I think I am entitled to ask this. I would not ask this if I could lecture. I do not know at present how I am going to live. I used to think my tongue would always bring my living, but I know now it may also bring death. I hold a number of shares in various Freethought building companies in Great Britain, some of them of value, some probably worth nothing. I am willing to transfer the whole of them to the Executive. They are all paid up except two or three shares. I think I have given away £3000 during my time. I am not putting this as any credit to myself, only to show I am not making a request unduly. I ask you to accept my resignation. I should like to be your President still, but I could not do the work, and I could not hold the office as a sham. Some may say why not wait until the annual Conference. I always like to go to the Conference with a budget of work. I could not do this, so thought it best to resign now. I do not say we part friends for we are not parting at all. (Much applause.) The movement is to me what it has ever been, and I see some old faces in this hall of those who have known what it has been to me for over forty years. I hope I will always remain your trusted counseller. (Applause.) I lay down the wand of office, which I hope I have held untarnished; I give back the trust you gave me. (Prolonged applause.)

Mr. Smith (Kingston-on-Thames) wished to know if the original gift had gone.

Mr. Bradlaugh: There was no gift beyond the five guineas per month to the N. S. S.

Mr. Brumage (Portsmouth): Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure you will pardon me if I speak rather low, for, like my friend Mr. Bradlaugh, I have been suffering from illness for the last three months, and this is my first outing since my recovery. I am happy to say I have known Mr. Bradlaugh from my boyhood, and have watched his career from then till now when he occupies a position we are all proud of. You will excuse my making any further remarks. I will conclude by proposing the following resolution: "That this meeting of the members of the National Secular Society accepts Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation with the profoundest regret; it thanks him for his many years of unwearied and gratuitous service; it records its admiration of the ability and courage with which he had led the practical forces of English Freethought; and it hopes that he may long live as an honored and distinguished figure in the public life of our country and empire." (Much applause.)

Mr. H. Gee (Woolwich) said he had been a follower of Mr. Bradlaugh over twenty years, and he seconded the resolution, not with pleasure, but as the inevitable.

The resolution was put to the meeting and was carried unanimously.

Mr. Foote moved that Mr. Bradlaugh continue in the chair for the rest of the meeting. Carried.

Mr. Bradlaugh: Now with regard to my request that you cancel the bond and make me a life member.

Mr. Newcomb (Liverpool) said that city would be proud of the honor of proposing Mr. Bradlaugh as a life member.

Mr. Moon (Southampton), who described his city as the Liverpool of the south, seconded the resolution.

A member wished to propose that Mr. Bradlaugh be made a life member of the council, but Mr. Bradlaugh said he would not like to be a member without being able to attend. The original motion was carried with applause.

Mr. Soddy (Camberwell): With regard to the payment of five guineas per month, I am sure Mr. Bradlaugh would not have asked us to release him from payment if he had not some good reason for doing so. The Freethought Publishing Company we have gathered is not in a very flourishing condition. After thirty years work the least we can do is to release him. No doubt his illness has been a great strain on his resources. He moved that this meeting of the National Secular Society release Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant from paying the £5 5s. per month, and thank them for their services in the past.

Mr. Forder said he did not second the resolution in his capacity as secretary, the only paid officer in the Society, but as delegate of several Branches. He read a letter from the Hull Branch warmly eulogising Mr. Bradlaugh. He had also important letters from various places, including Sweden. On behalf of these societies he seconded the resolution that the bond be cancelled.

Mr. Bradlaugh: Would any one like to ask any question?

Mr. Deane asked if it was necessary to cancel the bond.

Mr. Bradlaugh said he would prefer it that way. The responsibility is a moral one, because your Society has possibly no right to exist at all. He wished them to cancel his moral liability and what ought to be his legal liability if the law was just. The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

Mr. Bradlaugh: The next business is the election of a new President, and upon that I have a motion to make. I have considered very gravely what would be for the best interests of the movement, and I trust I will have your unanimous support. Whoever takes this office it will put upon him or her great labors. I'll take off the new President's hands all the legal questions, but there are often questions of conscience, domestic difficulties, cases in which people lay their hearts bare, and which require the greatest thought. The duty of the President in a movement like ours requires constant watchfulness; it often requires as much courage to do nothing as to do much. Sometimes you may land poor people in a struggle they are unequal for. The meeting that morning was proof that he had done his best. He now begged to propose that Mr. George William Foote —(cheers)— be the President until the next annual Conference. We have no power to elect him for longer.

Mr. Fisher (Battersea) seconded the resolution.

Mr. A. B. Moss: I have much pleasure in supporting the resolution. Having known Mr. Foote a considerable number of years, and the assiduity with which he has taken in hand the Freethought propaganda, and knowing also his business ability, I think he will be the most suitable one we could select. We know he has the interests of Freethoug[illegible]

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at heart, that he has suffered for his convictions and showed heroism in the hour of danger. In view of his tact and ability, he is the best man for the office.

Mr. CARTER (West Ham) said some prophets of evil are saying that when Mr. Bradlaugh leaves, the Society will fall to pieces.

Mr. BRADLAUGH asked if the speaker had an amendment.

Mr. CARTER answered "Yes," and proposed that Mr. J. M. Robertson be elected President. He had heard members say they would decline to be led by Mr. Foote. (No, no.)

Mr. BRADLAUGH: If you have any personal reason against Mr. Foote, it would be well to say it.

Mr. CARTER disclaimed other than a personal interest in the welfare of the Society. Unfortunately there are some who regard Mr. Foote's method of advocacy as an awful example of retrograde metamorphosis.

Mr. L. KEEN (Wood Green) urged that no one could find a better man to take the place of our late President than Mr. Foote.

Mr. STUART: The very fact of our late President recommending Mr. Foote shows he is the best man we could have. It is impossible to please all. Many in the past had held aloof because they would not be led by Mr. Bradlaugh. There might be one or two who disapproved of Mr. Foote's style of propaganda, but they were few and far between.

Mr. NEWCOMB (delegate for Liverpool) stated how recently Mr. Foote had gone to that city in answer to the attempt of the police to stop their meetings. That in itself was a sufficient recommendation.

The resolution was then put and carried unanimously amidst loud applause.

Mr. BRADLAUGH (turning to Mr. Foote): I tender the only emblem of office we have. This hammer, presented to us by the widow of James Watson, was used in the old Rotunda, in days when such freedom as we now enjoy was impossible. Carlile has often used it. I give it you joyfully, Foote, and trust you will hand it on to your successor.

Mr. FOOTE (who was received with prolonged applause): Fellow members of the National Secular Society, the office, temporary as it, till the next Conference, which you have entrusted to me I reckon as a high distinction, and I value it all the more because Mr. Bradlaugh, despite some past differences of opinion, has had the magnanimity to propose me as his temporary successor. It is quite impossible for any man to please everybody. Mr. Bradlaugh knows he has never succeeded in doing that. Any person with positive opinions is likely to rouse some antipathy, but this I did not expect from any member of the West Ham Branch. No one could know this morning who would be elected, and I confess I did not come with a cut and dried speech in my pocket. What I have to say to the party they will soon know. For the present I want to say just this. I am in a position to ask and to claim your indulgence. (Applause.) Mr. Bradlaugh, as you all know, is a man in a million. Anyone who comes immediately after him is judged by a severe standard. No one can tell precisely what he himself is going to do, but one knows what one has done. I have been connected with the Secular party for over twenty years, and during all that time Mr. Bradlaugh has seemed to be a fixture of the Society. As he has said, we do not really part, and that makes my task the easier. Mr. Bradlaugh knows my feet have not frequently trod the road to St. John's Wood, but if I have to take counsel with him, which he offers to give, it is likely that St. John's Wood will see me more frequently. I hardly know how, taking the presidency of an illegal society, one could feel comfortable or even sleep easy in bed at night unless one had the advice of the best lawyer in England. (Applause.) Mr. Bradlaugh has been a brilliant leader. He has not only led the Freethought party, but occupied a high position in the public mind. We shall have to find some compensation for the loss of his brilliance. I confess I see no alternative but in the perfecting of the organisation of our Society. We feel his loss and must feel the necessity of each doing his utmost to make up for it. There are thousands of Freethinkers in this country outside the Freethought societies. (Hear, hear.) Hundreds who do but little, and a few who do nearly all. If we can make the apathetic more active; if we can induce more Freethinkers to join us, then great as is Mr. Bradlaugh's loss, by forcing us to do more and to work to the best of our ability, we shall find *some* compensation. When we meet again at the next Conference no one knows what may happen. I occupy this office till then. If it should be my good fortune to be re-elected as President of this Society—which I consider the most important in the country, because its purpose is to promote and sustain those principles which lie at the root of all political and social reform—(applause)—I trust that when I lay down the office, whatever others may think, I myself may feel, in the sanctuary of my own heart, that I have tried to hold it with something of the courage, sincerity, and enduring enthusiasm of my great predecessor. Mr. Bradlaugh occupies a lofty position in the public mind to which I dare not aspire, but I look up to where he is, and I say to him, I recognise your example and I will try to follow it. (Loud applause.)

Mr. BRADLAUGH, in closing the meeting, said it was no light burden that was laid on the President of the Society. He thought he discerned several growing causes of difficulty. There was tne anti-Jewish agitation which, unless he was mistaken, would spring up in this country after the publication of the report of the Sweating Commission. There was the lower strata of the Salvation Army who could scarcely be expected to accord a quiet hearing to opponents of their faith, and there was the great danger to Europe in the endeavor of the Church of Rome to secure the suffrages of the democracy. He could not believe the skunk had changed its smell. (Applause.) He asked them to unite against the great danger. He had taught that the struggle in the future in England is not so much with the Church of England, not so much with the Dissenters as with the Church of Rome. Any man standing in Mr. Foote's position had a right to indulgence. With the responsibility of the position there would be a sense of duty higher and graver than when fighting for one's own hand and with one's own arm. [Then turning to Mr. Foote, he said]: I hope yet to meet you and thank you for what you have done, not for my sake, but for the history of the movement of which we are common soldiers. I believe you will do the best that man can do. (Applause.)

The meeting then dispersed, many crowding again to see the presents from India. Some London and more country friends adjourned to the Manchester Hotel and partook of an excellent luncheon.

A DOUBLE?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As your "Sub." is a gentleman known for accuracy, and as one would fain hope that he is not emulating the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, would he be good enough to state in your columns the precise date on which Madame Blavatsky appeared in the British Museum, glittering with gold and gems? Mr. Wheeler could not have invented the story of her presence there, merely for the sake of pointing a sneer? Yet Madame Blavatsky has been for several weeks more than fifty miles away from London, and for many weeks before she left she had been confined to the house by her doctor's orders, and was so feeble that she could only walk across her room with difficulty. Her friends did not know that her remarkable powers extended to being in two places in the body at the same time, and they are naturally eager for the evidence which will doubtless be furnished by a man of such unimpeachable veracity as Mr. Wheeler. It would be lamentable if his story should be untrue, and so doubts should be thrown on his other equally well-founded assertions about the same lady. ANNIE BESANT.

[My belief that I saw Mdme. Blavatsky at the British Museum on Feb. 5th and 6th, was founded upon a fancied resemblance between a photograph of the lady, which I saw at 63 Fleet Street, and a lady whom I saw on those dates with copies of *Lucifer* and an American work on *Reincarnation*. I was mistaken. I unreservedly withdraw my statement, and tender my sincere apology to Mdme. Blavatsky for the error, and for having thus aspersed her occult knowledge. I have read in *Isis Unveiled* (vol. i., p. 360—I like to be accurate, if possible) that a medium "may be entranced in his cabinet, while his astral body (double) or *doppelganger* is walking about the room moved by another intelligence." But as a Theosophist who knows her assures me that Mdme. Blavatsky is unable to go to the Museum, I must express my regret for having made the statement, and conclude that I saw another lady, though who that lady is I should much like to discover. I have been mistaken as to ladies before this, but fail to see that a mistake as to identity has any connection with what I have quoted from published works on Mdme. Blavatsky or with my criticism upon her writings. The logic seems to me lamentable, but Theosophy may perhaps explain it. It is right to add that I am informed Mdme. Blavatsky does not wear gold and gems, but dresses "in rags." Such was the expression of my informant.—J. M. W.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote "The Future of Freethought."

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, G. Bernard Shaw, "Socialism and Secularism."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 11.15, "Modern Moralists"; 7.30, Orientalist, "Obsequies on Theosophy."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, Mr. Gouke, "God is,"

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "The Struggle for Existence—Darwinism."

Claremont Hall, 7, J. M. Robertson, "The truth about Jews and Judaism."

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. S Standring "Who wants to go to Heaven?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant "Blind and Open-eyed Scepticism."

Old Southgate Cromwell Hall, 7, Mr. Cooke, "The Unemployed and Low Wages: a Remedy."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "History of Priestcraft."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Jesus and the Vineyard Laborers."

Woolwich—"Essex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. T. Garner, "Modern Irreligion, for Good or Evil."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 11, Mr. J. W. Mahony, at 11, "Social Utopias:" 7, "Are our Sundays Failures?"

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, Mr. E. S. Jones (Fellow of Liverpool University), at 3, "Evolution and the Origin of Life"; at 6.30, "Mind and Body."

Heckmondwike—Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a business Meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, at 6.30, Mr. Anyan, "Marriage: a Law of Heaven and Earth."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, Mr. J. Clarke, at 11, "The Advance of Secularism"; at 3, "Inspiration of the Bible"; at 7, "Miracles."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. W. K. Hall, "Monarchy: its Influence on the People."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, Important meeting of Sunday Music League; at 7.30, monthly business meeting of members. Wednesday, 8.45, Mr. Kelf, "Our Indian Empire."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, Mr. W. Clarke, M.A., at 11, "The Industrial Development towards Socialism"; at 7, "A Practical Labor Programme."

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. Thomas Slater, 3, "What is Agnosticism?"; 7, "The Future Outlook;" Tea at 5.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, Usual weekly meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 2, Woolwich; 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park. June 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Street, Stratford, London, E.—Feb. 23, Woolwich. March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich: 30, Westminster. May 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18, Regent's Park.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Feb. 16, Birmingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—Feb. 23, Huddersfield.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham—March 9, Hyde Park. April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 9.] SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE CONVERTED ATHEIST.

"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" — ROMANS III., 7.

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is one of the "artful dodger" species. Challenged by Mr. Bradlaugh, challenged by Mr. Foote, and challenged by Mr. Forder, he held his tongue and let the pious fraud do its dirty work. His story of the Converted Atheist Shoemaker was reprinted from the *Methodist Times* without a word of explanation or defence. He had not the honesty or decency to state that the truth of the story had been questioned by the leaders of the Atheist party. His policy was, tell a lie and stick to it, and when proof is demanded stand upon your dignity, put on an air of injured innocence, and decline to say a word. So the prisoner in the dock of the Old Bailey maintains a sullen silence, but it does not prevent the trial from going on. The jury returns its verdict and the judge pronounces the sentence.

Mr. Hughes's thick skin has however been pierced, and he has been stung into speech. He could afford to laugh at "the infidels," for his story was intended for simple minded Methodists, who would never trouble themselves about its exposure. But it was quite another matter when an influential newspaper like the *Daily Chronicle* suggested that Mr. Hughes should lay his cards upon the table, and broadly hinted that some of his clerical colleagues were as anxious for evidence as any Atheist in London. Mr. Hughes saw that it was time to speak. Dead silence would no longer pay, and besides it looked too utterly farcical. Accordingly he devoted a couple of paragraphs to the subject in the *Methodist Times*. The first paragraph deals with "the motive and animus" of the writer in the *Chronicle*, as though it had anything to do with the case, or as though a matter of public interest and importance could be treated as a mere matter of personality. The second paragraph runs as follows:—

"But we are at a loss to understand what right either Mr. Bradlaugh or the Secretary of the National Secular Society has to demand the name of 'The Atheist Shoemaker,' which is suppressed for the reason given in the preface to the book The narrative makes no attack whatever, either on Mr. Bradlaugh or on the National Secular Society. The Secretary of that Society says no professional Atheist lecturer in London has died during the last ten years in the way described in 'The Atheist Shoemaker.' Mr. Price Hughes never said that 'The Atheist Shoemaker' was a professional lecturer of the National Secular Society. He simply said that he had frequently spoken in advocacy of Atheism in public halls and in the open air, and that he had spoken with great eloquence and effect."

First of all, let it be observed that Mr. Hughes does not say a word about *our* challenge. No, he takes the easiest course. We dissected his story point by point, and showed its utter absurdity, as well as its self-contradictions. But about all this he is mum. Foolish man! Does he suppose our pamphlet is as good as non-existent because he does not recognise it? Will he fare any better than the proverbial ostrich? Our pamphlet is circulating by the thousand. And it will continue to circulate. Yes, and it will make Mr. Hughes, in the opinion of many honorable men and women, stand as a convicted liar.

A wretched lie is implied in Mr. Hughes's explanation. It is true he did not say the converted Atheist was a professional lecturer of the National Secular Society. But who asserted that he did? What he said was that the young man was a lecturer at the Hall of Science. Upon that point he has been directly challenged. He has been furnished with a list of the lecturers there during the past ten years, and requested to name one of them who was a working shoemaker, who was converted last winter, and died last spring at the age of thirty. All this he conceals from the readers of the *Methodist Times*, and instead of answering the question at issue he replies to another which has never been raised.

Mr. Hughes forgets that his story is in print. It is not like the Bible in Luther's simile, a wax nose which can be twisted into any shape. It is all very well to assert "I simply said this" or "I simply said that." We possess, in black on white, what Mr. Hughes did say, and we can read it for ourselves. Nor will the trick succeed of whittling down Clerkenwell Green and the Hall of Science into "public halls" and "the open air." The language of the story was precise, and upon it Mr. Hughes must be judged. Of course the precision was a mistake, as we told him; he overreached himself in making his story realistic, and thus delivered himself into the hands of the enemy.

The questioning of Mr. Bradlaugh's right, or the right of the Secretary of the National Secular Society, to ask for the real name of the converted Atheist, is a piece of shocking indecency. Mr. Bradlaugh's name was artfully dragged into the story to spice it up for the Methodist readers. That at least is our opinion. But whatever the reason, is there any man outside Bedlam with a spark of honor who would deny Mr. Bradlaugh's right to ask for further details of a story in which his name was frequently introduced? Nor is it easy to see how the right of the National Secular Society can be challenged. There is no other Society, at any rate in London, under whose auspices the converted Atheist could have lectured. Whether one of its "professional lecturers" or not, he must have stood upon its platform. Certainly he must have done so at the Hall of Science. What humbug it is, then, to affirm that the N. S. S. is not concerned in Mr. Hughes's story.

Equally idle is the statement that "the narrative makes no attack whatever, either on Mr. Bradlaugh or on the National Secular Society." Again we ask, who said it did? The object of the narrative was not to attack Secularists, but to show them a rancid sympathy which they are far from desiring; and, secondly, to show the superior converting power of the West End Mission and the Methodist Sisterhood.

Here, for the present, we take our leave of Mr. Hughes, his fabulous story, and his shuffling vindication. He is only an amateur as yet in the business

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of forgery, but he will progress with age and experience, and he may some day be able to lie like truth. Meanwhile his first effort is in print against him, and so is our exposure. Both may be a warning to future tyros in fraud, and induce them to practise their art carefully before inviting a public inspection; for the age grows more and more exacting, and will not tolerate such simple frauds as those which imposed on the credulity of the primitive Christians.

G. W. FOOTE.

ROME IN ENGLAND.

Mr. Bradlaugh in his valedictory address to the members of the National Secular Society thought well to allude to three perils to the Freethought movement which he believes loom in the near future, an anti-Jewish agitation, the Salvation Army, and the spread of the Romish Church and its appeal to the democracy. Of these dangers there can be little question that the last, if the least pressing, is the most formidable. We are neither of those who are constantly scared by the spread of Popery nor of those who pooh pooh its power. We hold, with Mr. Bradlaugh, that the enemy which we oppose has its real citadel at Rome. Catholicism is the one consistent antagonist to Freethought. Between the two there can be neither treaty nor truce. The various forms of Protestantism are so many efforts at compromise. Though built on the right of private judgment, each sect has had in imitation of Rome to set up its creed as a restraint upon the exercise of this right. And the creeds of Protestantism, even when not identical with those of Catholicism, are scarcely less opposed to reason. There was profound wisdom in the reply of Bishop Talleyrand to a Protestant who asked him how Catholics could believe in such an evident contradiction of their senses as is implied in the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Oh," said the Bishop, "the thing is quite simple; we first teach them the doctrine of the Trinity." Protestantism sets out with premises which lead to conclusions embodied in Catholicism. An infallible Bible needs an infallible interpreter. Three hundred and fifty years of Protestantism has only shown that no harmonious teaching can be drawn from its fetish book. If God authenticated his church with miracles once, why should he not do so now? Salvation through faith is no more reasonable than priestly forgiveness of sins.

Catholicism has great power in its consistency. Priests there find their instinct for sacerdotal sway embodied. Laymen content to rest on authority are relieved of the burden of thought, the anxious duty of truth seeking. Rome has vast resources, and the movement of thought which drives many outside of the Protestant Churches, sends others to seek shelter in the great Mother Church from which the Protestant Churches have sprung. As the belief in hell declines, many are prepared to accept the doctrine of Purgatory. Since dogmas no longer rouse devotion, the churches perforce must have recourse to peacock Ritualism, parodying the rites of Rome, if only to attract their audiences. The Ritualist party is fast becoming the strongest party in the Church of England. Its ultimate and consistent end is Romanism, though those who are upon a path do not always discern where it is leading them. The many disciples of Dr. Pusey who have gone on this track give sufficient warning. Since the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln for Ritualism, a dozen Anglican clergymen have been received into the Church of Rome, and although none of these are such important proselytes as Newman, Manning, Dalgairns, Ward, and Faber, whose perversion to Rome aroused such attention between forty and fifty years ago, it is an open secret that if the verdict goes against Bishop King the seceders from the Church of England would be more numerous and important than they have been since that period. Should political events precipitate Disestablishment it is likely that Rome would receive nearly a tenth of the English clergy.

Since 1850 the Romish Church in England has increased vastly. Its bishops have increased from 8 to 17, its priests and churches have multiplied threefold, while religious houses have increased from 17 to nearly 600, and Roman Catholic school children from 24,000 to nearly 300,000. Its proselytes have mostly been drawn from the wealthy classes. To this end the efforts of the Jesuits have been directed. In this respect there is a great contrast with Freethought. Our proselytes are mostly drawn from the poor, and though we may boast the elite of the working classes, we have few indeed who could endow our halls, even if the law permitted them to do so, and none who could place the sums of money for the support of Freethought which the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Norfolk devote to the Church.

But it is not only among the wealthy that its efforts are directed. In every large town and district in England the Roman Catholics are now establishing societies of men and women called Ransomers, White Cross Ransomers and Red Cross Ransomers, whose main object is to bring back England to "the faith of our fathers." In view of a significant fact like this it surely behoves Freethinkers to close up their ranks and be prepared to fight superstition not simply as free lances, but in strong organisation. These Ransomers are being trained to operate upon the weak points of Protestantism, and already we see in the provincial press that they have trained pens in their service.

It is not only on proselytism that Roman Catholics rely to revive "the faith of our fathers." If they did we might be well content, since we can show at least as good a set off as our enemies. But the Church relies on two other weapons, immigration and increase of population. It is undeniable that the bulk of the increase of the Catholic population can be traced to Irish and continental immigrants. We cannot count the influence of our foreign friends on the greater freedom of Sunday observances as any sufficient set off to this. The other factor, if more subtle, is still more important. While Freethinkers are everywhere voluntarily restraining their numbers, and thereby slowly improving their social position, the Catholic Church through the means of the Confessional is inculcating on its votaries "to increase and multiply." A few generations of this would result in a vast numerical difference even were the parties equal at the outset. As it is Mr. St. George Mivart has confessed that the Church can rely on this alone for victory. But as the Church becomes more numerous by this means it is bound to become more democratic. At any rate it must be so to the extent of claiming every political privilege for its supporters, and seeing they have their full shares of public offices. Indeed by their discipline of obedience, and voting together, they will, as the experience of America shows, be able to do far more than this, and secure to their institutions large sums of money as the condition of securing the support of a united party. The recent elections in Protestant Germany, where the Ultramontane party have come out far ahead of all their divided opponents, show what a political force the Catholic Church still remains. It warns England to be on her guard and Freethinkers to prepare themselves for the coming fight. They are grossly mistaken who fancy the days of struggle are over.

J. M. Wheeler.

An Irish girl, looking at a large picture of the "Cherubs," asked her mistress, "And what is that?" "These, Mary, are the Cherubs from the foot of the Throne in the Madonna St. Sistine." "There now!" says Mary, "And here was Bridget declarin' they wuz hens—but I sez they wuz bats."

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THE BRAIN AND THE BIBLE.

THOUSANDS of very estimable people in this country, who one might reasonably suppose were possessed of good brains, fail to use them on some of the most vital questions of the day. Ask their opinion on business matters and they will give you very intelligent answers; question them on politics, or inquire their views on the great social problems that engage the thought of reformers and philanthropists, and if they cannot give a decided answer they will acknowledge that these matters deserve the most serious consideration; but ask their opinion on the Bible and the view of modern thought in relation to it, and they will answer that they believe the Bible because they have been taught to do so; that it is "a good old book, and will stand when all infidel objections to it have passed into the limbo of forgetfulness." This shows how little they know of the subject, for if they would only inquire even superficially into the matter they would find that infidel objections have played such havoc with the Bible that it has effected a complete change in the aspect of its teachings. The clergy themselves recognise this fact so far that they do not now regard the Bible as an inspired record of God's views in the same sense as they did a few years ago. Many of them claim that it is inspired only in the same sense as every grand literary production is inspired. They acknowledge, indeed, that much of it is unscientific; much unhistoric; much mythical; and that some of it is incompatible with what we now regard as a high standard of morality. But while they make all these admissions when they are talking to persons who know something about the subject, they are less candid to their congregations. Indeed, they are careful above all things to cling tenaciously to the story of the Fall; for they perceive—and in this they are more logical than the late Dr. Colenso—that if this, the foundation of the Christian religion, be removed, the whole edifice must tumble about them like a house of cards.

Man, therefore, they maintain, fell in the Garden of Eden some six thousand years ago—fell spiritually, if in no other sense. After the Fall man became sinful by nature. As Dr. Parker once put it, "At the Fall man not only went down physically but intellectually. Since then he has been incapable of himself, not only of doing a good deed, but of thinking a good thought." No doubt the conceited pastor of the City Temple excludes himself from this sweeping charge, and would feel insulted if some member of his congregation told him that he had a wicked thought in his mind while he was delivering his last sermon.

If, however, the story of the Fall of Man was the only biblical statement that was opposed to reason, the clergy would long ago have set up another theory to account for the original introduction of sin into the world. The Bible, fortunately for humanity, is full of incredibly absurd statements; and any attempt to reconcile them with the "common sense" of the intelligent portion of the community must end in ignominious failure.

If the first chapter of Genesis is correct, God made a lot of men and women at the start, and Adam and Eve may not have been included among them. On the other hand, if the second chapter is right, Adam and Eve were our first parents, and the human race was propagated by an incestuous mode horrible to contemplate. And when Cain went into the Land of Nod—that's where the Lord sleeps—and got married he must have wedded his sister or his mother, for no other persons of the feminine gender were in existence, unless perhaps a few fine specimens of anthropoid apes, such as the chimpanzee and the ourang outang. Is it not insulting to people with brains to ask them to believe such biblical stories? A highly intelligent ape would grin at the mention of such fables.

Then, who that knows anything of history believes in a universal flood?—a flood that never touched China, and quite overlooked America and Australia. Some of the clergy suggest a local flood. But if it were only a local flood what was the use of Noah's Ark? Why should all the animals come into the ark "just to get out of the rain" if it only rained over a very limited area? If Jahveh wanted to save Noah and his family, why didn't he tell them to emigrate? Too much water would not then have provoked Noah to drunkenness, and his children might have been spared a disgusting sight.

Then we have the story of the Tower of Babel; how the people to frustrate the purpose of an omniscient and omnipotent God thought to make a side entrance to heaven while Jahveh's back was turned; and how Jahveh came down and confused their tongues—so that the man who spoke Hebrew last night woke up and spoke French. I daresay the language that would be used under such circumstances would be very confusing. But who believes in such a story? Nobody with brains. I have no hesitation in saying that any man who believes such a monstrous story must be classed among the majority of persons so forcibly referred to by Carlyle when he declared emphatically that Great Britain contained thirty millions of people, mostly fools.

Balaam and his intelligent moke, Samson and his poetical jawbone, Jonah's lodging in a whale's interior—such stories as these may be thrown in as make-weight, and thus constitute a fair load for the Christian to carry about with him, and in respect to which he might exclaim "I believe" when he is asked to unburden himself in regard to his "Great Faith."

Yet thousands of estimable people say they believe this nonsense. I dare not say they are knaves, though I often am candid enough to declare that they are not the wisest among their fellows. But if they are foolish in their belief now, there is no reason why they should remain so. How can we bring them to their senses? Many of them would not listen to a Freethought lecture. Yet it is our duty to save them from intellectual suicide. How can it be done? There are many ways of doing it. Let me suggest a few. Plenty of these unreasoning Christians belong to Young Men's Institutes. Freethinkers should join and give them a mild dose of Freethought in their speeches in the discussion class. That will open the ball. These Christians, too, come to business by tram in the morning. Freethinkers should give them the Freethought aspect of every question that comes on the *tapis*.

Many Christians are total abstainers; Freethinkers should show them by chapter and verse that the Bible is in favor of strong drink. Many Christians are interested in politics; Freethinkers should point out that Mr. Bradlaugh is just to the Irish people and will vote for Home Rule, notwithstanding the fact that the Irish members tried to keep him out of his seat; that Mr. John Morley—another Freethinker—does not ask whether a man is a Catholic or a Protestant before he consents to remove a grievance. Get the Christians to discuss with you, the Bible question is sure to come up before long. And depend upon it if it does come up brains will get the best of it in the end.

Men cannot believe what they like. Absurdities cannot always pass as profound truths. Common sense will count for something, and in the long run the dignity of people with brains will not allow them to say they believe that which the wisest of mankind now regard in the light either of ancient ignorance or arrant nonsense.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"Here's the devil to pay," said the printer when his office boy presented himself on Saturday.

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ACID DROPS.

"From Bradlaugh to Foote," says the *Rock*, "is from worse to worst, for even in Secularism there are deeper depths." We tender the *Rock* our sincere condolence and hope it will soon recover.

There is a wag in the *Star* composing room. In last Saturday's issue a Sunday lecture was announced by the "*Rev.* G. W. Foote." As a first offence it is overlooked, but a repetition would justify an action for libel.

Slaves are generally fond of their chains. This may account for Margaret Lee's effusion on Divorce in the *North American Review*. Apparently she understands the subject as much as the proverbial cow understands musketry. Her remedy for the low morality of society is simple—"Let divorce be abolished." But—too lady-like alas!—she exclaims in the very next breath, "Let sceptics have their own system. A civil contract, elastic as necessary, could be drawn by each State. This would satisfy couples who do not care to face poverty, sickness, or trouble together."

The last sentence puts the lady out of court. How Ingersoll must smile at the notion that sceptical husbands and wives want a divorce law to enable them to part company when baby has the measles, or money is scarce, or either of them falls ill! Ingersoll's home is known to be one of the happiest and noblest in America. He would tell the lady, with a beaming face, that people who love each other are more likely to quarrel in prosperity than in adversity, and that two human beings who have shared the same sorrow are faster friends than two who have only shared the same pleasure. He might even ask her to take the trouble to read what he had written—not with her eyes only, but with her mind. He might also ask her to explain her proposal. Is the State to have two marriage laws, one for Christians and one for Freethinkers? Is any arrangement to be made for Christian husbands and wives who become converted to Freethought? And if so, what is to prevent Christians who want to be divorced from registering themselves as Freethinkers? It appears to us that the lady's scheme is as impracticable as her knowledge of human nature is superficial.

By the way, it would be interesting to ascertain the proportion of Freethinkers among divorced couples. Our impression is that the overwhelming majority are Christians. Anyhow we don't know a single Freethinker in England who has been divorced. We know one Freethinker, at any rate, whose wife turned Roman Catholic, and left him and her children to gallivant about the world in search of her own poor, miserable salvation. But he is too much of a man to wash his family linen in public, and would probably bear his burden to the end rather than be freed on any other terms than those of justice and delicacy.

It is amusing to see the theological warp in Christian minds on this subject. Only the other day we read a withering rebuke of "the sin" of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes. They offended against "religion" in their domestic arrangements, and hence all these tears. But the pious rebukers of "sin" never think of inquiring into the *morality* of the case. If they did they would find, we believe, that Lewes might have legally freed himself from his first wife if he had not been too magnanimous to drag her into a public pillory. This little fact lets all the gas out of the bubble that is so successfully floated in orthodox meetings. Lewes obeyed a higher law than his traducers are able to appreciate.

It is curious that the *Vegetarian* should be so given to pious goody-goody utterances. Nothing is more certain than that bloody sacrifices were the prominent features of the Old Testament, and that "Rise Peter, kill and eat" is the doctrine of the New. Orthodox Christianity is founded on salvation through blood. Yet the organ of dietetic reform laments the blindness of the Freethinker and continually talks of vegetarianism as an ordinance of God—the God who has made nature a vast system of prey, one animal living on another's life blood.

Out in Kansas a new sect called the Samaritans has started near the Blue river, founded by one Silas Wilcox. Ostensibly devoted to the welfare of the sick, they are found to be devoted to horrible practices. Wilcox openly advocates the drinking of blood as cure for all diseases, giving as his authority the fact that the Bible teaches that "the blood is the life."

At the home of John Wrinkle were found two emaciated children. On the bed lay Wrinkle, who was apparently in the last stages of consumption. When questioned about drinking the blood of the children he strenuously denied having done so. The children also denied it. Their bloodless appearance, however, excited the suspicion of the officer, and he compelled them to show their arms. Their limbs were in a terrible condition, being covered with scars around the inside of the elbow joint, showing plainly the effects of the bleeding. When confronted with this evidence of the truth of the accusation, Wrinkle acknowledged that he had availed himself of the opportunity, and asserted that the children had willingly given their blood to restore him to health. Another instance of the folly of founding practice on the word of God.

A pious baker, at The Hague, absolutely refuses to fill up the Census for himself and his family. He refers as his reason for refusal to the narrative in 2 Sam. xxiv., which relates how the Lord sent a pestilence because David numbered the children of Israel. He declares that the Russian influenza epidemic is similarly sent by the Lord as a punishment for taking the Census.

Father J. Murphy supports the right of priests to mix in politics, and says that to deny it "is to hand over the government of the world—which is God's—to Satan and his satellites." The priest always stands in his own eyes for God himself, and his adversaries appear as devils.

The Rev. John Campbell, of Buccleuch Parish Church, has brought down an avalanche on his head. He preached a teetotal sermon and pretended that the Bible, from beginning to end, taught abstinence from strong drink. Thereupon two gentlemen wrote to the Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch*, giving chapter and verse, and completely smashing the reverend gentleman's position. We have not seen Mr. Campbell's answer, and we never expect to.

That erratic politician, Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., preached a temperance sermon last Sunday in the Congregational Church at Anerley. He called for a new party, pledged against the drink traffic, whose leader should be neither Gladstone nor Salisbury, but Jesus Christ. Well now, that *is* good. Fancy the teetotal party led by the gentleman who turned seventy-five gallons of water into wine to keep the spree going at a nuptial feast! After that Lord Churchill might lead the Liberal party, Mr. Labouchere preside over the Primrose League, and Mr. Bradlaugh fill the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

Mr. Foote's visit to Reading has stirred up the place like an earthquake. The orthodox party has had Mr. Barber there several times displaying his wonderful ignorance. One of his discourses was on the Bible and Science, and Max Müller was cited against Darwin as to the origin of man. Now, if Mr. Barber will *read* Max Müller instead of using the stock quotations of the Christian Evidence Society, he will find that the great philologist is a far less strenuous opponent of Darwinism than he used to be. He might also reflect, or some of his audience might, that Darwin is a supreme authority in matters of biology and Max Müller none at all. There never was a more ludicrous idea than that of advancing a mere scholar, however eminent, as an authority on the question of the origin of the human race.

Mr. Barber showed his imbecile misconception of Darwinism by asking for a monkey that could produce a man now. Such nonsense is really beneath contempt. Monkeys do not produce men, but sometimes men produce something very little superior to monkeys.

Quite ignorant of the writings of Churchmen like Canon Cheyne and Dr. Driver, the worthy Barber told his ignorant audience, who received the statement with applause, that

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"the Bible was written by a number of men ranging over a period of 2,000 years." Taking the Old Testament *and* the New, this is just a thousand years too much. Mr. Barber is either very ignorant of ordinary Biblical criticism or he requires a little elementary instruction in arithmetic.

After Barber's tribute to the holiness of the Bible it was amusing to see the treatment of a sceptic who mounted the platform and wanted the lecturer's candid opinion on the fifth chapter of Numbers. Directly he began to read this specimen of "holiness" the Christians made an uproar, and he had to leave the platform exclaiming, "You're afraid of your holy book."

Mr. Amos, the Unitarian minister, has been opposing Barber and lecturing himself against the inspiration of the Bible. No wonder, therefore, that the Reading Branch is gathering fresh strength every week.

There has been talk of a public debate at Reading. Mr. Foote has told the Branch that he is ready to discuss with any representative Christian in the town. Surely there is some minister able and willing to champion his faith in debate.

Norristown is, we believe, the place where the ex-Rev. C. B. Reynolds was tried for blasphemy. They appear to draw the color line pretty fine there. An entertainer, who is assisted by a choir of thirty girls, was engaged to give a concert in the Mount Zion Colored Church. Only ten of the girls put in an appearance, the others declining to appear before a colored audience.

Talmage went to Albany to preach upon the Ten Plagues of New York, upon which the *Sun* observed that he forgot that in his absence there were only nine.

The old joke that Christianity bore traces of its having been originated by fishermen, from the interdiction of meat during Lent, will lose its force this year, since the Pope gives indulgence to non-fasters on account of the influenza. This shows that secular prudence overrides ordinances even at Rome.

Mr. John Williams, a Welsh preacher at Ynysddu, evidently holds with Paul that God does not care for oxen and such animals. It was proved against him that he worked his horse while covered with sores on its back and shoulders, and with sand cracks in its feet. He was let off with a fine of £5, and at the same time we read of a man sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labor for stealing two oranges.

We have yet to find the crime or offence which cannot find its support in Scripture. Read the following from Birmingham, Alabama:—Rev. John B. Reese, of Girard, in this State, has fled from the country to escape the wrath excited by the story of his daughter Ella, who avers that she was assaulted by her father some years ago and has since been forced to submit to his unnatural conduct. He had quoted Scripture to ease her conscience, but her condition has rendered further concealment impossible. Reese is the father of two married daughters and his wife is still living.

The Rev. Peter Thomas McCallum seems to be a clergyman out of a job. From "The Hermitage," Barnes, he sends a proposal to the Richmond Board of Guardians, offering to act as chaplain to the workhouse without salary, if he is paid fourpence per head for every addition to the present number regularly attending the chapel. He proposes to attract them by a full choral service. He says: "This I could make easy, as one of my sons plays the oboe and the other the fife, while my daughters are proficient in the 'cello, the cornet, and the double bass. I can also do a little on the trombone, and I would willingly undertake the conductorship. I do not doubt that in a very little time, with bright and cheerful services, I could bring the whole of the inmates to chapel regularly." The rev. gentleman can evidently tootle his own trumpet as well as do a little on the trombone, and his offer was declined with thanks.

The Rev. Marmaduke Cheyne Richardson, curate of St. James's, Plumstead, figured the other day in the Woolwich County Court. He engaged furnished apartments in Blandon Terrace, with the use of linen and plate, at thirty shillings a week. But he failed to pay the rent, and also damaged the furniture by putting his feet on the couch and chairs. The trial of the case lasted two or three hours, and resulted in a verdict for the landlady. Next time she takes a clerical lodger she will probably want the rent in advance.

Margaret Hearn wanted to go to heaven, so she climbed up the Endell Street fire-escape and refused to descend her Jacob's ladder. Eventually she was taken before the Bow Street magistrate, who remanded her for the needless purpose of inquiring as to her sanity.

William Webb, of Orpington, Kent, is described as "of good position and associated with the Church." But he came up to London, and his conduct with a boy in St. James's Park brought him before magistrate Bridge, who would not take less than two bail of £500 each.

Ripon Congregational Church broke out in flames through some defect in the heating apparatus, and narrowly escaped total destruction. From the number of cases of fire on the Lord's premises we should recommend the insurance companies to charge heavy premiums.

Converting Jews is a costly process. A hairdresser in a very long road in South London lost his assistant. The young man was converted by the Jew Conversion Society, which paid him £15 down, and he used the money to go abroad with. Since then the master has got into low water. He also wants to go abroad, and talks of securing another £15 for himself.

From what Jesus Christ said we judge that the sparrows are the peculiar favorites of heaven. It is estimated that they do about £5,000,000 worth of damage to the crops in England.

Archdeacon Farrar and his friends have carried their point, and the Church of England is to ape the monastic system of Rome. It is enough to make some of the old "Reformers" turn in their graves. Able-bodied young fellows are to form Brotherhoods and take "dispensable vows" of chastity and poverty. But it appears that the "poverty" is not to be inconsistent with a secure maintenance. As for the "chastity," we shall see what we do see. Some of the clergy look as chaste as he-goats, while others look as cold and sheepish as Joseph. Perhaps it would be as well to establish the reality of the vow by making the Protestant "brothers" undergo the medical examination to which the candidates for the Romish priesthood are submitted, in order to prove that although they *are* to be chaste they *might be* otherwise. Better still, perhaps, the chastity of the "brothers" might be secured by infibulation.

The Brothers of the Cross exist in Paris to establish "the reign of God on earth." The *Daily Telegraph* says that "nobody knows whether they are pious lunatics or practical persons who want to make money by running an original kind of religion." Probably they are a mixture of both.

Is it true that thirty members of the West Southwark Liberal and Radical Club were chaperoned over Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop, who wound up by leading them in the Lord's Prayer? If so, we can only wonder that some of them did not see the farce of Dr. Benson's praying "Give us this day our daily bread" in a palace whose occupant is blessed with fifteen thousand a year. Why didn't they ask him for a subscription for the George Harrison fund?

Edison says, according to a writer in *Harper*, that the existence of a personal God can almost be proved from chemistry. Such a remark is more wonderful than the telephone. Perhaps the day is coming when theologians will be furnished with chemical apparatus, and lectures in divinity will be illustrated with hydro-oxygen light.

How true is Ingersoll's remark that with respect to the existence of God the idiot and the philosopher are on the same level. It is all a matter of imagination. There is plenty of conjecture and no knowledge. Let a man be

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trained to believe in God and he will see him everywhere; just as the horse, who was provided with green spectacles, ate shavings for grass.

Barnum's farewell to the British public is characteristic. The genial (and prosperous) old showman alludes to the time when he will have "joined the great, and as I believe, happy majority." This implies that Barnum has cast away the good old doctrine of hell and damnation, and accepted a heaven where everybody will be happy for ever and ever. But the boss of the greatest show on earth does not tell us why the happiness we are destined to enjoy in another life is not a little more evenly distributed in the present. Nor does he tell us how he himself could be happy in a world where there are no shows—and no gate-money.

A member of the *Pall Mall Gazette* staff has spent seven months in the United States as a working journalist. One of the "three great ideas" he was impressed with is this, that "the Pope has far more power in the States than in any Catholic country in the old World. The papers are afraid to print a word to which the priests take exception, and any Catholic who goes to hear Dr. M. Glynn lecture is excommunicated." This confirms what we read in the Freethought papers that reach us from the States. The Catholic Church is a growing danger to the Republic, and the day seems approaching when Catholicism and Liberalism will engage in a life-and-death struggle.

Two years ago the mystical Mrs. Dr. Anna Kingsford departed from her "earth-life" and went, as the saying is, God knows where. Last Saturday was the anniversary of her exit, and Steinway Hall was occupied by a number of persons who met to celebrate the event. It was a motley assemblage of clergymen, Theosophists, Parsees, society ladies, and politicians in search of "soul-rest." The high-priest of the occasion was Mr. George Chainey, a gentleman who was once a Unitarian, then a Freethought lecturer, then a Spiritualist, and now as mad as a hatter. America and Australia have had enough of him, and we understand he is at present seeking the means to go to Palestine and keep an appointment with the Holy Ghost, who is to make him the medium of a new revelation.

We wish Mr. Chainey no harm. He is not a dangerous lunatic, and a Freethinker might say to him, as Uncle Toby said to the fly, "Surely the world is wide enough for thee and me." But we regret to hear that he is being recommended as a lecturer to the N. S. S. Branches. Of course the Branches will do as they please. There is no authority over their choice of lecturers. But a great many Freethinkers will object to our platform being turned into a refuge for cranks, and protest that we do not "seek for truth" so minutely as to search for it in asylums.

Mr. G. Naewiger, of the Hull Branch, writes to a local paper about the tactics of the Salvation Army. He was out for a stroll with his wife and they went into the Army "barracks" in Cambridge Street. At the end of twenty minutes they found they had had enough, and wanted to retire. But a stalwart gentleman of the "chucker out" species planted his back against the door and told them they could not leave till eight o'clock. A policeman was appealed to, but this legal luminary appeared to think the British people had no right of egress from a public meeting. At length, however, the Secularist presented the doorkeeper in the house of the Lord with his card, and intimated his intention of getting out; and as he looked as if he meant business the door was reluctantly opened.

The cheek of these Salvation gentry is amazing. They appear to think the world was made for them. Were they in a majority their "General" would be the autocrat of England. The reign of the saints would begin in earnest, and everybody with a spark of independence would be glad to emigrate; though the treatment of Mr. Naewiger renders their being able to do so somewhat doubtful.

General Booth forbids his followers to go to theatre, to play cards or billiards, or even to dance. The only game he allows is walking backward in the street for the men, and jerking tambourines for the women.

There is a good story about that walking backward. An Army procession was passing down a certain street, led by a captain who faced his awkward squad and gave the public an *a posteriori* view of his elegant person. Seeing a rough fellow looking on, and smoking a short pipe, the captain shouted, "Why don't you drop that pipe, man? Don't you think, if the Lord meant you to smoke, he would have made your mouth a funnel?" "Well," said the smoker, "you needn't talk. Don't you think, if the Lord meant you to walk backward, he'd have turned your feet the other way about?"

Presbyterianism is the vilest, and most logical, creed ever devised. No wonder that the denunciations of men like Ingersoll and Pentecost are making the votaries of this ghastly faith ashamed. A movement in favor of "Revision" is sweeping over the States. The New York Presbytery appointed a committee to report on the question, and the result is a recommendation to omit the doctrines of Reprobation, the Damnation of Infants, and the Damnation of the Heathen. Should the recommendation be generally adopted Presbyterianism will have nearly all the damnation taken out of it, and be like a toothless old man-eating tiger.

Canon Talbot's lectures at Newcastle have, apparently been delivered in connection with the University Extension Scheme. This is a fact that should be remembered, since it shows the sectarian character of institutions that should be for the benefit of citizens of all schools of thought.

The Newcastle *Chronicle* devotes a leader to Canon Talbot, lauding him to the skies. "So far as we have observed," it remarks, "there has been no successful assault of his position." Now, for our part, we scarcely know whether to call this impudence or hypocrisy. Canon Talbot is ready to fence with amateur swordsmen, but he positively declines to cross weapons with any leader of scepticism. His victory, therefore, is remarkably cheap, and the *Chronicle* sings a pean over a laughable triumph.

The *Newcastle Leader* devotes an article to the subject of "Workmen and Church Going." It appears that the Wesleyan Convention held in that city complained that the working classes do not attend the gospel-shops, and the remedy they proposed was short prayers and sermons and lively music. The *Leader* thinks the evil lies deeper than this. It points out that churches are to a large extent social institutions. The middle classes go there to see and talk to each other, to display their dresses, and to form those little acquaintances that lead to marriage. But the working man is very little interested in these things, and as the Church doesn't appeal to him he leaves the gospel-shop severely alone. The *Leader* seems to propose the preaching of morality instead of doctrine; that is, the preaching of Secularism under the disguise of Christianity.

Messrs. Kegan, Paul, and Co. have published a book by a Mr. Gough entitled *The Bible True from the Beginning*. Mr Gough takes a funny way of proving its truth. Like Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, who finds a cipher in Shakespeare's plays showing Shakespeare was not the author, Mr. Gough finds "grade words" in the Bible showing it has an allegorical interpretation, so that the Bible as it stands is not literally true at all, but only Mr. Gough's interpretation. Before he discovered the "grade words" people were deriving hopelessly false notions of the Bible by supposing it to contain literal history.

SARAH BERNARDT AND THE VIRGIN MARY.

Sarah Bernhardt doesn't see why a Passion play should not be produced in Paris as well as at Oberammergau. She considers the character of the Virgin Mary eminently dramatic and suited to her own genius, and proposes to impersonate the B. V. M. in a play specially written by M. Haraucourt. M. Garnier, who accompanied Madame Bernhardt to America, will undertake the trying rôle of the Virgin's eldest son.

Madame Bernhardt is a public favorite in France, and will probably have her own way, but the religious papers view the prospect with horror and alarm. The Passion play may be very reverential, but who knows how soon it may lead to a burlesque. Jupiter, Apollo, and other heathen gods have often been brought upon the English stage, and there are plenty who think the Christian deities quite as well suited to the purposes of farce or travesty.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 2, Secular Hall, Rusholme Boad, All Saints, Manchester, at 11, 3, and 6.30.

Friday, March 7, Gladstone Hall, Military Road, Chatham, at 8, "What has Christianity done?"

March 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 19, Southwark Radical Club; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s.. 5d. Three Months. 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A SOLDIER.—We do not know of any newsagent at York who sells the *Freethinker*. Should this meet the eye of any reader who knows of one, we shall be obliged if he will kindly send us the address.

G. NAEWIGER (Hull) acknowledges receipt of parcels of literature from Hull, Berlin, London and Glasgow.—Answer to question, No.

Freethinker Circulation Fund.—E. Day, 1s.; J. T., 2s. 6d.

W. M. B.—If you reject the Bible as an inspired book we have much in common. Pleased to learn that, although a Unitarian, you find the *Freethinker* so interesting and useful.

E. D.—Glad to hear you thought the first of the course of free lectures at the Hall of Science a "magnificent success' We believe the course will entail very little cost to the Federation. There was a good collection the first night, although the box arrangements were so inadequate.

T. WILLETT.—Thanks See "Acid Drops."

W. LAPPAGE.—Mr. Foote acknowledges with thanks the "hearty congratulations' of the Camberwell Branch on his election to the Presidency.

PERSONNE.—Yes, we have since seen that it was not quite so bad as we thought.

E. HOLLAND.—Sorry to hear the agents are so bigoted. Your newsagent should have insisted on being supplied. Your order and cheque are passed to Mr. Forder.

T. THURLOW.—We are never offended by honest frankness. The West Ham Branch is of course not implicated by what Mr. Carter said, but he certainly spoke as though his sentiments were shared by some members; and, if that be a fact, those members should have protested when Mr. Foote was invited to give a benefit lecture We are glad to learn that Mr. Carter only spoke for himself; and, in any case, we should not forget that your Branch includes some of the best workers in our party. Your worthy president, for instance, would be an honor to any cause.

D. GOW.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. KNIGHT.—Mr Foote will do his best, and that is all that any man can promise. See "Acid Drops."

J. KEAST.—We fear you estimate our services and ability too highly. Mr. Foote is coming to Bristol with Mr. Forder to establish a *bonâ-fide* working Branch

SCRUTATOR.—Thanks for the paper. We dare say there are printer's errors now and then in the *Freethinker*, but we cannot afford to pay a special proof-reader. The wonder is that the work is done so well

T. WILLIAMS.—Write to F. Morris, 21 Stacey Road, Cardiff.

W. H. T.—Get our *Bible Contradictions* (4d.), and you will find plenty.

C. FRAKE.—We are not surprised. The clergy hate discussion, and for an excellent reason. You will have to send the Guide Notices weekly, as we cannot keep monthly lists.

H. ROWDEN.—1879, p. 86, line 20 from bottom, should be 1789. Thanks for pointing out the error.

E. S. JONES.—We would rather be spared. Mr. Wise has yet to learn the common amenities of civilised correspondence.

OLDHAM.—The *Freethinker* can be bought at 172 Manchester Street.

A. CLAY.—We are much obliged. See "Sugar Plums."

D. BAKER.—Very glad to have the approval and support of a veteran like yourself There *is* much to be said about the future, and the Conference in May will be vastly important.

SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—You seem to be arguing in a circle. However, we are pleased to hear you are circulating our exposure of the Price Hughes story.

G. CROOKSON. newsagent, Hoyland Common, Barnsley, says "I have got several new subscribers to the *Freethinker* since I exhibited the placard." This correspondent inquires about the man Lee, who could not be hung because the apparatus would not act. The man was reprieved, but he is still in prison. The story of his being released, in consequence of the death-bed confession of the real murderer, is a recent fiction. The Home Office contradicted the newspaper yarns about a year ago.

W. SIMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. PINDER.—Glad to hear you are now going to join the N. S S. Apply to Mr. Forder, secretary, at 28 Stonecutter Street, E. C. The subscription is 4s. per year, or 1s. per quarter Freethought does not seem in a lively way at Leicester. Why not see Mr. Forder on Sunday evening?

A B WAKEFIELD.—See "Sugar Plums." The Farsley project fell through. Glad to see you are moving.

W. T. LEEKEY.—You are mistaken. Mr Broadhurst M. P. is a very good Christian. We remember his look of horror when we sat next him on the St. James's Hall platform and he suddenly learnt who was his right-hand neighbor.

C. DOEG.—The Liverpool friends should mix their congratulations with pity. The Presidency is anything but a bed of roses.

MILTON HALL.—The reverse is nearer the truth. Mrs. Besant has not attended an N. S. S. executive meeting for many months.

JAMES HOOPER.—If more life can be infused into the party there will be more work for the lecturers.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker — Liberator — Der Arme Teufel — Secular Thought — Liberator—Truthseeker—Market Rasen Mail Bulletin des Sommaires — Open Court — Liberty — Overland Ceylon Observer — Leeds Daily News — Freethought — Evening Standard—The Brooklyn World—Hull Daily News—Freidenker—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Menschenthum —Philadelphia Inquirer—Standard—Blackburn Times—The Christian—The Catholic Educator—Newcastle Daily Leader —Dundee People's Journal—Daily Graphic—Shields Daily Gazette—Weekly Dispatch—Swindon Advertiser—Western Mail—La Raison—Echo—Edinburgh Evening News—Islington Gazette—Ironclad Age—Reading Observer.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE course of Thursday evening free lectures at the London Hall of Science, under the auspices of the Secular Federation, began with *éclat* on Feb. 20. There was a splendid audience when Mr. R. O. Smith took the chair, and the people came streaming in while he was speaking. Mr. Foote, who was in good form, lectured on "Freethought and God." After the lecture there was an hour's discussion, carried on, on the Christian side, by the Rev. C. L. Engstrom, the secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.

THE second lecture on "Freethought and the Bible" will be delivered by Mr. J. M. Robertson, and Mr. Foote will take the chair. This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of many of our London readers before the lecture takes place. May we beg of them to bring their orthodox friends if at all possible? Those are the folk we want to reach. Mr. Robertson is able and scholarly; his lecture is sure to be interesting and instructive; and he is well able to hold his own in discussion.

MR. G. STANDRING delivers the third lecture on "The Church and the People" next Thursday evening (March 6). He will also be opposed by a representative of the Christian Evidence Society, and will probably take a good deal of confuting. The last lecture will be by Mr. Foote on March 13, the subject being "Freethought and Christ."

SHOULD this experiment prove as successful as it promises, the London Secular Federation will organise courses of week-night free lectures, with discussion, in other parts of the metropolis. Freethinkers who can give financial assistance should send donations to the hon.

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treasurer, R. O. Smith, 142 Old Street, E.C., or direct to ourselves. Every penny received will be acknowledged—and accounted for. The lecturers, by the way, are giving their services gratuitously, so that the expenses—at least for the present—are confined to rent, printing, and advertising.

AT Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday, the following resolution was carried and ordered to be signed by the chairman, Mr. Daniel Baker:—"That this meeting of members and friends of the N. S. S., while deploring the necessity for Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation, desires to record its satisfaction at the election of Mr. G. W. Foote, and promises the new President as true and loyal a following as was accorded to his predecessor."

THERE was a large audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, Mr. F. Millar being the lecturer. After the lecture the following resolution was proposed by Mr. W. Lappage, seconded by Mr. Hartman, and carried unanimously:—"That this meeting congratulates Mr. Foote on his becoming the President of the National Secular Society, and heartily approves his advocacy of Freethought and the persistent manner in which he opposes the dogmas of the Christian Church."

AS the editor of this journal has his duties increased by his election as President of the N. S. S., we venture to appeal to our readers for assistance in the shape of promoting our circulation. A great deal can be done by getting newsagents to sell and if possible display the *Freethinker*. Here is a case in point. One of our Oldham friends induced a newsagent to put the *Freethinker* in his window, and told him, if he ordered half a dozen copies, that the unsold copies should be paid for. The result was that *every copy was sold* between Thursday night and Saturday morning.

MANY of our readers, who would pay twopence for the *Freethinker* sooner than lose it, might help us by taking an extra weekly copy and circulating it amongst their acquaintances. Were a thousand readers to do this (as they might) the editor would be in receipt of journeyman's wages for his work on the paper, whereas it is all a labor of love at present.

WE have just issued Ingersoll's new article "Why am I an Agnostic?" in pamphlet form. It should have a good circulation.

THE Manchester Secular Hall, we are glad to hear, is to be refurnished with more comfortable seats. In order to raise the wherewithal a bazaar will be held on the last two days in March. Mr. Hemingway, the hon. secretary, 25 Higher Chatham Street, will be glad to receive any articles for sale on that occasion. Those who prefer it can send money instead. Five-pound notes will be acceptable, and shillings will not be refused.

WE see from the *Blackburn Times* that Mr. Foote's lecture on Atheism is still a topic of discussion. The last number of that journal contains a short letter by G. Watts, and a long letter by W. E. Coller, on the subject. Mr. Coller "invites Mr. Foote" to explain this, that, and the other difficulty. Mr. Foote replies that his lecture was an answer to the Rev. J. O. Davies. If that gentleman makes a public rejoinder Mr. Foote will take the trouble to pen a reply. But he is far too busy to discuss in all the local papers of England with all the persons who forget to avail themselves of the opportunity of discussion which is always afforded at the close of his lectures.

FOR years the Derby Branch has been looking out for premises. At length it is able to procure a hall suitable for lectures. But the place requires furnishing, and it has been decided to form a Furnishing Company, with 200 shares at 5s. each, bearing 5 per cent. interest, the Company to have the privilege of buying from the shareholders willing to sell at any time in favor of the Branch. All who wish to aid in this good work should communicate with Mr. H. McGuinness, hon. sec., 20 Newland Street, Derby.

THE Portsmouth Branch is to have a set debate to-day (March 2) on Vegetarianism. Both disputants are members, both have been secretary, and both president. Mr. Hore is an ardent vegetarian, and Mr. Lush has been one but is now of the opposite persuasion. Both gentlemen are good speakers and the debate should be interesting.

AN effort is being made to revive the Freethought organisation and propaganda in the West Riding of Yorkshire. A Conference is to be held to-day (March 2) at Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford, at 3 p.m. prompt. The conveners are H. Smith (Farsley), John Grange (Farsley), W. Kay (Bradford), and J. G. Fisher (Leeds). Mr. A. B. Wakefield is acting as secretary *pro tem.* It is to be hoped that the Conference will be well attended and animated by a practical spirit.

THE annual report of the Glasgow Branch is not too cheerful. The balance-sheet is all right, but some of the members are cool in the cause. The worst is that the hall has been "inadvertently" let over their heads by the agent, and the Branch will have to find fresh quarters in May. We hope the crisis will unite the members and put them all on their mettle.

MR. W. CLARK lectured at Liverpool on Sunday and gave great satisfaction. The secretary reports him as an acquisition to our platform.

THE Church papers have been vehemently urging that Her Majesty should put her veto on the Victorian Divorce Bill, which accepts as grounds of divorce for either man or woman desertion for three years; habitual drunkenness with cruelty, or with neglect of household duties in the case of the wife; and sentence for crime or violent assaults. Lord Knutsford has, however, wisely advised the Queen to let the colonies have home rule in this matter.

MR. LESLIE M. JOHNSON, a member of the North Shields School Board, and also a member of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S., contributes an excellent letter to the *Shields Daily Gazette* in reply to the Rev. J. Morris on the subject of Canon Talbot's lectures. Such letters in the local press are a great aid to our movement.

MR. FREDERICK HARRISON lectured at Newton Hall on Sunday afternoon, his subject being some great books of History. Referring to Carlyle's *magnum opus*, he said that Frederick was, of course, the greatest man of his century. *We* add that Frederick the Great was a Freethinker.

THE secretary of the Chatham Secular Society has posted four dozen copies of Mr. Foote's exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's conversion story to 19 Church of England clergymen, 14 Nonconformist ministers, 17 laymen, and 2 local papers.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, 5s.; T. Holstead, 1s.; J. Doughty, 1s.; J. Scarrott, 10s.; F. E. (Reading), 5s.—R. Forder, Secretary.

"DEMOS," says Grant Allen, "is breaking away fast from the old teachers and the old faiths, and is listening to new guides who directly or indirectly will lead him to places little dreamt of in Dr. Joseph Parker's smug City Temple philosophy."

"A SOLDIER" of the Duke of Wellington's Own, now stationed at York, tells us that many of his comrades, who have recently returned from India, are very sceptical and generally use the religious tracts given to them for pipe lights. One of the men says his eyes were first opened in India. At the first Church Parade he attended there a collection was made for "the starving poor of London," and the thought struck him that it was a gigantic system of humbug to collect money in England to convert the Hindoos, and then to collect money in India for "the starving poor of London."

DR. G. W. BROWN'S *Oriental Researches*, in which he gives many facts showing the origin of Jewish and Christian legends, has now reached a second edition.

WE notice in *El Liberal* that Senor Odon de Buen, the

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representative of Barcelona at the International Conference of Freethinkers at Paris, was one of the leading speakers at an important Republican assembly. Senor O. de Buen is professor of natural history at the University of Barcelona, and a Darwinian as well as Republican and Freethinker.

"SIXTY Years of an Agitator's Life" is the title which Mr. G. J. Holyoake has given to his interesting autobiographical reminiscences which are now appearing in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Mr. Holyoake warns his readers that among his acquaintances have been sixty persons who have been imprisoned, hung, or beheaded.

BABU KALIPRASANNA KAVYABISHARAD, who some years ago edited *The Anti-Christian* at Calcutta, has now started a monthly Freethought journal entitled *The Cosmopolitan*. We wish the new venture all success. It is published by the editor at the Secular Press, Bhowanipore.

THE Annual Congress of the Belgian Freethought Societies will be held on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (April 6 and 7) at Joliment. M. Emile Feron, the able president of the *Libre Pensée*, of Brussels has had to resign from over-work, and our sympathetic friend Leon Furnemont has been elected in his place.

CELESTINE EDWARDS, the black preacher, held forth at Shoreditch Town Hall on Tuesday evening. His nominal subject was the Tactics of Atheism. His actual subject was anything and everything. He showed his white teeth over a feeble little joke about Mr. Foote being now the head of the movement; but the audience, which was a large one, could not muster a laugh to keep him company. Mr. Sam Standring, who opposed, remarked that Mr. Bradlaugh knew Mr. Foote would keep the Freethought flag unfurled, and so long as he did so the party would fight around him. This was greeted with prolonged cheering, which rather disconcerted the colored gentleman. Mr. Standring pinned him neatly also over the Hall of Science free lectures, and Edwards' reply fell flat on the meeting.

MR. C. J. HUNT, one of our energetic open-air lecturers, has been made responsible for the debts of the defunct Bruno Club. In order to help him out of the difficulty his friends are organising a concert in the Dauntless Hall, Lisson Grove. It will take place next Tuesday evening, and the tickets (1s. each) can be obtained of Mr. Forder. Persons who cannot go may buy tickets and help Mr. Hunt in this emergency.

MR. FOOTE'S letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury is again crowded out. The conclusion will take precedence of other articles in our next.

INGERSOLL ON FREETHOUGHT.

[A symposium on the subject of the affirmative side of Freethought is now appearing in the New York *Truthseeker*. It opens with the following contribution from Colonel Ingersoll.]

"Is there an affirmative, positive, constructive side to Freethought?"

The object of the Freethinker is to ascertain the truth—the conditions of well-being—to the end that this life will be made of value. This is the affirmative, positive, and constructive side.

Without liberty there is no such thing as real happiness. There may be the contentment of the slave—of one who is glad that he has passed the day without a beating—one who is happy because he has had enough to eat—but the highest possible idea of happiness exists only with freedom.

All religious systems enslave the mind. Certain things are demanded—certain things must be believed—certain things must be done—and the man who becomes the subject or servant of this superstition must give up all idea of individuality or hope of intellectual growth and progress.

The religionist informs us that there is somewhere in the universe an orthodox God, who is endeavoring to govern the world, and who for this purpose resorts to famine and flood—to earthquake and pestilence—and who, as a last resort, gets up a revival of religion. That is called "affirmative and positive."

The man of sense knows that no such God exists, and thereupon he affirms that the orthodox doctrine is infinitely absurd. This is called a "negation." But to my mind it is an affirmation, and is a part of the positive side of Freethought.

A man who compels this Deity to abdicate his throne renders a vast and splendid service to the human race.

As long as men believe in tyranny in heaven they will practice tyranny on earth. Most people are exceedingly imitative, and nothing is so gratifying to the average orthodox man as to be like his God.

These same Christians tell us that nearly everybody is to be punished forever, while a few fortunate Christians who were elected and selected billions of ages before the world was created, are to be happy. This they call "the tidings of great joy." The Freethinker denounces this doctrine as infamous beyond the power of words to express. He says, and says clearly, that a God who would create a human being knowing that that being was to be eternally miserable, must of necessity be an infinite fiend.

The free man, into whose brain the serpent of superstition has not crept, knows that the dogma of eternal pain is an infinite falsehood. He also knows—if the dogma be true—that every decent human being should hate, with every drop of his blood, the creator of the universe. He also knows—if he knows anything—that no decent human being could be happy in heaven with a majority of the human race in hell. He knows that a mother could not enjoy the society of Christ with her children in perdition; and if she could, he knows that such a mother is simply a wild beast. The free man knows that the angelic hosts, under such circumstances, could not enjoy themselves, unless they had the hearts of boa constrictors.

It will thus be seen that there is an affirmative, a positive a constructive side to Freethought. What is the positive side

First. A denial of all orthodox falsehoods—an exposure o all superstitions. This is simply clearing the gronnd, to the end that seeds of value may be planted. It is necessary, first, to fell the trees, to destroy the poisonous vines, to drive out the wild beasts. Then comes another phase—another kind of work. The Freethinker knows that the universe is natural—that there is no room, even in infinite space, for the miraculous, for the impossible. The Freethinker knows, or feels that he knows, that there is no sovereign of the universe who, like some petty king or tyrant, delights in showing his authority. He feels that all in the universe are conditioned beings, and that only those are happy who live in accordance with the conditions of happiness, and that this fact or truth or philosophy embraces all men and all gods—if there be gods.

The positive side is this: That every good action has good consequences—that it bears good fruit forever—and that every bad action has evil consequences, and bears bad fruit. The Freethinker also asserts that every man must bear the consequences of his actions—that he must reap what he sows, and that he cannot be justified by the goodness of another, or damned for the wickedness of another.

There is still another side, and that is this: The Free thinker knows that all the priests and cardinals and popes know nothing of the supernatural—they know nothing about gods or angels or heavens or hells—nothing about inspired books or Holy Ghosts, or incarnations or atonements. He knows that all this is superstition pure and simple. He knows also that these people—from pope to priest, from bishop to parson, do not the slightest good in this world—that they live upon the labor of others—that they earn nothing themselves—that they contribute nothing towards the happiness, or the well-being, or the wealth, of mankind. He knows that they trade and traffic in ignorance and fear, that they make merchandise of hope and grief—and he also knows that in every religion the priest insists on five things: First: There is a God; Second: He has made known his will; Third: He has selected me to explain this message; Fourth: We will now take up a collection; and Fifth: Those who fail to subscribe will certainly be damned.

The positive side of Freethought is to find out the truth—the facts of nature—to the end that we may take advantage of those truths, of those facts, for the purpose of feeding and clothing and educating mankind.

In the first place, we wish to find that which will lengthen human life—that which will prevent or kill disease—that which will do away with pain—that which will preserve or give us health.

We also want to go in partnership with these forces of nature,

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to the end that we may be well fed and clothed—that we may have good houses that protect us from heat and cold. And beyond this—beyond these simple necessities—there are still wants and aspirations, and Freethought will give us the highest possible in art—the most wonderful and thrilling in music—the greatest paintings, the most marvellous sculpture—in other words, Freethought will develope the brain to its utmost capacity. Freethought is the mother of art and science, of morality and happiness.

It is charged by the worshippers of the Jewish myth, that we destroy, that we do not build.

What have we destroyed? We have destroyed the idea that a monster created and governs this world—the declaration that a God of infinite mercy and compassion upheld slavery and polygamy, and commanded the destruction of men, women, and babes. We have destroyed the idea that this monster created a few of his children for eternal joy, and the vast majority for everlasting pain. We have destroyed the infinite absurdity that salvation depends upon belief, that investigation is dangerous, and that the torch of reason lights only the way to hell. We have taken a grinning devil from every grave, and the curse from death—and in the place of these dogmas, of these infamies, we have put that which is natural and that which commends itself to the heart and brain.

Instead of loving God, we love each other. Instead of the religion of the sky—the religion of this world—the religion of the family—the love of husband for wife, of wife for husband—the love of all for children. So that now the real religion is: Let us live for each other; let us live for this world, without regard for the past and without fear for the future. Let us use our faculties and our powers for the benefit of ourselves and others, knowing that if there be another world, the same philosophy that gives us joy here will make us happy here.

Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that we can do something to please or displease an infinite being. If our thoughts and actions can lessen or increase the happiness of God, then to that extent God is the slave and victim of man.

The energies of the world have been wasted in the service of a phantom; millions of priests have lived on the industry of others, and no effort has been spared to prevent the intellectual freedom of mankind.

We know, if we know anything, that supernatural religion has no foundation except falsehood and mistake. To expose these falsehoods—to correct these mistakes—to build the fabric of civilisation on the foundation of demonstrated truth—is the task of the Freethinker. To destroy guideboards that point in the wrong direction—to correct charts that lure to reef and wreck—to drive the fiend of fear from the mind—to protect the cradle from the serpent of superstition, and dispel the darkness of ignorance with the sun of science, is the task of the Freethinker.

What constructive work has been done by the Church? Christianity gave us a flat world a few thousand years old—a heaven above it where Jehovah dwells, and a hell below it where most people will dwell. Christianity took the ground that a certain belief was necessary to salvation, and that this belief was far better and of more importance than the practice of all the virtues. It became the enemy of investigation—the bitter and relentless foe of reason and the liberty of thought. It committed every crime and practised every cruelty in the propagation of its creed. It drew the sword against the freedom of the world. It established schools and universities for the preservation of ignorance. It claimed to have within its keeping the source and standard of all truth. If the Church had succeeded the sciences could not have existed.

Freethought has given us all that we have of value. It has been the great constructive force. It is the only discoverer, and every science is its child.

DR. HUTCHINSON STIRLING, the Scotch Hegelian, holds, and we think rightly, that Darwinism is fatal to natural theology. Giving one of the Gifford lectures at the Edinburgh University he observed that to the design argument Darwin's theory was fatal, and Darwin himself was not only aware of that, but in express terms acknowledged it. The result of his theory was that if natural selection were true, design was false, and that if that were right there was an end of all natural theology. Dr. Stirling is, of course, a Theist and an anti-Darwinian, but he sees that those only bamboozle themselves who seek to reconcile evolution with natural theology.

JOB.

An authentic account of the origin of his tribulations; from an old Celestial betting-book now in the Museum of Religions.

One evening King Jahveh contentedly sat
Enjoying his "wine from the wood,"
When there came to his portal a smart rat-tat-tat,
Jumping up he exclaimed "who the dickens is that
Who thus boldly dares to intrude?"

But Jeames soon assuaged his Majesty's ire
By announcing an elderly gent—
Hook-nosed, long-eared, dressed in sable attire—
God knew him, 'twas Satan the champion liar,
Whom to hell for his glory he'd sent.

"From whence comest thou," said he with a smile,
As he motioned his guest to a seat;
"From going to and fro in the earth to beguile
Those fools you've created, and many a mile
I have walked up and down on the beat."

Then he drank to his host in a cup of champagne.
And sat himself down for the night,
And through pledging each other again and again
I think from what followed it seems pretty plain
That they both got infernally tight.

For they soon commenced bragging of what they had done
And what they were able to do;
Said the Devil, "the Jews are all mine, every one—
Aye, the whole human race—there's none under the sun
What cares a brass farthing for *you*."

Cried Jahveh, "I'm King of the earth and the skies,—
In fact, I am monarch of space
And all it contains; I'm exceedingly wise!
Yet within mine own house the vile father of lies
Dares cheek me like this to my face."

"Hold hard," said the Devil, "your anger restrain—
Your temper seems out of repair—
From such exhibitions the *wise* should refrain,
Come fill up the tankards, let's liquor again
I think we can soon put this square.

"I've considered old Job, your particular pet,
And I find him choke-full of your grace,
But, although he's withstood all my cunning as yet,
If you'll let me get at him, a gallon I'll bet
That I'll make him curse you to your face."

"Done" said King Jahveh, "go do what you will,
Only spare the old gentleman's life;
The blood of his children you truly may spill,
His flocks and his herds you are welcome to kill,
And—do what you like with his wife."

Thus did Satan the sinful, and Jahveh the just,
Their little transaction record,
And he whom the sequel might interest, must
Read the life of the man who put implicit trust
In the demon nick-named the "Good Lord."

T. CLARK.

THE EDDICATED PARSON.

It was Elder Buzzell who called on a worthy deacon to open a meeting with prayer, and was surprised when the good man began his petition with: "O, thou great, insignificent God."

"Omnipotent, brother; you mean omnipotent God," whispered the horrified pastor.

"Huh!" ejaculated the surprised supplicant; "what's that you say?"

The preacher repeated the correction, whereupon the deacon continued his prayer to a great length and concluded as follows:

"Finally, Lord, bless our eddicated parson. Stuff him with religion as well as with words; break him of the habit of fault-findin', and, if possible, at the 'leventh hour gather him with the saints in thy kingdom."

OBITUARY.—The last dying request of Robert Wardle, of West Hartlepool, was that the Secularist burial service might be read at his funeral Although not a member of the Secularist Society his wish was acceded to by Mr. James McNamee, who read the burial service composed by Austin Holyoake. A good report appears in the *Northern Daily Mail*, which gives some portions of the address.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 86 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. John B. Coppock, "The Age of the Earth."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, G. Bernard Shaw, "Socialism v. Secularism."

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 8.15, Mr. Charles Bentley, "The Earth's place in the Universe." Admisson free.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Deluges, Biblical and Real."

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. S. Standring, "God's Paradox: Jesus."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mr. Geo. Chainey, "Episodes in a Life of Religious Adventure."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Theism and Atheism."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Why I became a Freethinker."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "God's Comical Ways."

Old Southgate—Cromwell Hall, 7, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Has Man a Soul?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, various speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "A Freethinker's Bible."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, at 7, orchestral and miscellaneous entertainment.

Derby Branch, 20 Newland Street; at 6.30, an important meeting of members.

Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 122 Ingram Street; at 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Central Africa." With lantern illustrations.

Heckmondwike—at Mr. J. Parker's, Oxford Street, at 6.15, a musical evening.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, at 11, committee meeting; at 3, "Emotionalism, a Factor in the World's Progress;" at 7, Mr. D. S. Collins (a Christian), "Has Christianity been Tried?"

Portsmouth Branch, Wellington Hall, Southsea; at 7, debate on Vegetarianism between Messrs. Hore and Lush.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street; at 7, special musical evening, instrumental and vocal, recitations. March 5, at 8, members and friends' dance.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, Mr. Waddington, "The Second Advent of Christ, Critically Examined in the Light of Reason and Science."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 2, Woolwich; 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park. June 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

Tolman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkwell Green.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—March 2, Grimsby; 9, Nottingham. April 13, Nottingham.

E. Stanley Jones, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—March 16, Liverpool.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—March 9, Hyde Park. April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool—March 9, Liverpool. April 6, Liverpool.

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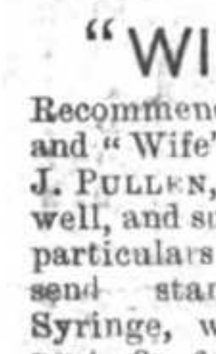

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 10.] SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE.

CONSIDERED as a human institution, Christianity is doubtless a remarkable phenomenon, and much may be said as to its being suited to mankind in a certain stage of its culture. But as a divine revelation—which is what it claims to be—it must be pronounced a failure. After eighteen hundred years it is not even known to a majority of the human race, and multitudes know it only to reject it. The number of the inhabitants of countries nominally Christian are not one quarter of the world's inhabitants.

Some nations have doubled their population in twenty-five years. Supposing Christianity to have progressed but half as fast as this, starting with the 5,000 men mentioned in the veracious Acts of Apostles, iv., 4 (about A.D. 34), at the rate of doubling its numbers in fifty years (surely not much to expect from a divinely-inspired faith!) there should be in the world now six hundred and eighty-seven billions, one hundred and thirty-five thousand, seven hundred and three millions, and forty thousand (687,135,703,040,000), or about 450,000 times more Christians than there are human beings of all creeds or no creed put together. That is, by this slow process there would have been two million times more Christians than there are at present. Even if they had doubled their numbers once a century they would now have numbered 1,975,680,000; far more than all the people in the world.

Christ is reported to have said he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. From that day to this his own people, the chosen race, those best able to judge of his merits as the promised Messiah, have rejected him. His own brethren did not believe on him (John vii., 5). The Jews, despite enormous sums lavished in vain efforts at their conversion, continue to reject Christianity. They know it and despise it.

The same may be said of educated Mohammedans. Canon Isaac Taylor, in his *Leaves from an Egyptian Note-book*, states that more persons were converted from Christianity to Islam in Cairo than from Islam to Christianity. Mohammedanism to this day holds the sacred places of Christendom, and Turkish soldiers have to keep the peace between the rival Christian sects, who dispute each other's claims to show the holy sepulchre.

Mohammedanism not only ousted Christianity from its sacred places; it still, in Africa, has greater success than the rival faith. Hear the testimony of Mr. Joseph Thomson, the African traveller, given in this month's *Contemporary Review*:

> "As compared with the progress of Mohammedanism in Africa, Christianity in these lands has been practically at a standstill. Wherever Mohammedan seed has been sown, there it has taken root, and there it has remained to flourish with a vigorous grip of the soil which nothing can destroy. The same cannot be said of Christian seed: it has ever been as a delicate exotic, difficult to plant, more difficult to rear, and ever requiring outside support and watering."

It is the same in India. Christianity is only embraced by the outcastes and aboriginal hill tribes, anxious for rice and easier living. By the educated, whether Brahmans or Mohammedans, it is rejected. Missionaries have gone there, it is said, since the days of St. Thomas, and certainly since the time of St. Francis Xavier; but that vast country, though under the sway of Christian England, remains "heathen."

But it is when we look at the results of Christianity—always, be it borne in mind, considered as a divine and supernaturally-instituted religion—that its failure is most patent. The nominal adherence given to Christianity in "Christian" nations is altogether deceptive. Emerson asks "In Christendom where is the Christian?" Echo answers, Where?

The condition of the masses in every Christian country affords proof palpable that Christianity, instead of being a divinely elevating power, has rather, by centreing thought upon another world, hindered the improvement of this. Seeing how barbarous and degraded are the inhabitants of Abyssinia, where Christianity has existed since the days of Constantine, it is evident that whatever progress has been made is due to other elements than those found in religion.

The Bishop of Peterborough has lately admitted that the conduct of the State cannot be regulated by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Standing armies in Christian countries of over six millions of men are a striking comment on the gospel of non-resistance. Nor is there any more attempt to carry out Christianity into individual lives. Society is based on principles directly antagonistic to those which lie at the root of Christianity. Its adherents only give it a lip homage, while their hearts are far away, concerned with the things of this world. The real gospel of the age is Secularism, and the fact is an evidence of the failure of Christianity.

J. M. WHEELER.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

ON "CHRIST AND HUMANITY."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[CONTINUED.]

LET us now see what are your remedies for the poverty of large masses of the people. Beyond vague talk about co-operation, which is not the product of Church influences; and profit-sharing, which sprang up in the sceptical soil of France; I cannot find that your Grace has anything to propose. You do, indeed, allude to the population question, but you shirk its thorny points. You denounce the "infamous suggestions" of the Malthusian reformers, and assert that "early marriages are one great source of misery.' You also add that "any marriage is too early of which the offspring cannot be reasonably expected to be nurtured and brought up decently," although "marriage at marriageable age is not too

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early if there is reasonable prospect of children's maintenance in the condition of their parents."

For a curious commentary on the first half of this teaching I would refer your Grace to Mr. Arnold White's *Problems of a Great City*, where you may find a graphic account of a famous red church in the East of London, built and endowed by a wealthy lady, in order that poor young couples might be married gratuitously. The place is a direct encouragement to scandalous improvidence. Young people out of work are known to take the opportunity of getting married, and the levity of behavior and the freedom of conversation would often shock the "heathen" whom your missionaries are engaged in converting. I am not aware that you have ever sought to suppress this centre of social debauchery, and I am sure it is a fair specimen of Christian influence on the problems of sex and population.

The second half of your teaching is worthy of an Archbishop. You profess a great sympathy with the poor, but you put upon them the whole burden of your recipe. Population is to be restricted by the cessation of early marriages; those who cannot support whatever offspring Nature may send are not to marry at all; while those who have the means may marry as early as they please. And this is your social gospel for the poor! My lord, it is foredoomed to futility. You might as well shout against the northern blast, or push back the ocean with your feet. Nature has associated the chief and most durable pleasures of life with the rational gratification of the sexual instincts. The love of man and woman, and the love of both for their children, is at once the perennial source of pure joy and the pivot of civilisation. Yet from this paradise—not of idle enjoyment, but of labor and love—you would exclude all the men and women who cannot see their way to support an unlimited offspring. While the well-to-do know the comforts of a home, its blessings and its discipline, these poor brothers and sisters are to toil and wait until the bloom of life has fled, and the vital springs are impaired, and the glad strength that would have laughed at obstacles and adversities is gone, and the very apples of Paradise taste like Dead Sea fruit.

Such a gospel is a mockery. It is the old story repeated. Unto him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. I have said it is worthy of an Archbishop, and I add that it could only be preached by courtiers to flunkeys or the hirelings of tyrants to slaves.

An unsophisticated poor Christian, fresh from reading the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, might suggest to your Grace that the divine solution of the problem of poverty is to share and share alike. Indeed, you are acute enough to anticipate the suggestion. Referring to the advice of Christ to the young lawyer—"sell that thou hast and give it to the poor"—you doubt whether it is "a rule of wide obligation." But, on the other hand, you declare that "such sacrifice falls within the scope of Christian ethics and in certain cases is a positive duty." *Certain* cases! Not your case, my lord; nor any other bishop's case; nor the case of any assignable rich man on earth; but only, perhaps, the case of some rich man in the moon. Thus you hedge and trim, so as to save the credit of Christ and your own £15,000 a year.

Following the teaching of their *Master*, the primitive Christians had all things in common, and if you followed *them* you would share your princely income with bricklayers and crossing-sweepers. This would never do. Consequently the practice of the Apostles, like the teaching of Jesus, must be explained away. You assert that "the public fund formed by a surrender of fortunes at Jerusalem was no instance of Communism." Begging your pardon, it was. There was never a clearer case of Communism in human history. It is indisputable that the primitive Christians, like the Essenes, were a body of Communists. You pretend that their Collectivism was "an extraordinary effort to meet the sudden emergency." My lord, it is easy to assert. If you assert one thing, I have the right to assert another. Where is the *proof*? I defy you to produce it. The Communistic experiment at Jerusalem came to grief in the natural way. It was opposed to human nature. Bickerings and jealousies arose, and eventually the institution of private property re-asserted itself. Yet the spirit of that early Communism survived in the writings of the Fathers, who again and again denounce the possessors of wealth as recreants to the primitive faith. And whenever a sincere Christian, like Law the author of the *Serious Call*, deals with the subject, he is constrained to admit that the Christianity of the New Testament involves the holding of all things in common.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

SACRED TEXTS AND SECULAR COMMENTS.

I am come to send fire on the earth—Luke xii., 49.

Our God is a consuming fire.—Heb. xii., 29.

"Another church was destroyed last Sunday through overheated flues."—Morning Paper.

And thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.—Exod. xxxiii., 23.

"The Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."—Herbert Spencer "First Principles" § 14.

The heavens declare the glory of God.—Psalm xix., 1.

"The heavens declare the glory of Kepler."—Auguste Comte.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.—Prov. i. 7.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Superstition." Lucianus.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.—Psalm xiv., 1.

"Children and fools speak the truth.'—Popular Proverb.

Follow me and let the dead bury their dead.—Matt. viii., 22.

"To insult the dead is cruel and unjust."—Homer's Odyssey xxii., l. 450.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.—1 John i., 7.

"By oneself the evil is done, by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is l-ft undone, by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself, no one can purify another."—Buddha Dhammapada cxii., v. 165.

Think not I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace but a sword.—Matt. x., 34.

"Curs'd is the man and void of law and right
Unworthy property, unworthy light,
Unfit for public rule, or private care;
That wretch, that monster who delights in war."
Homer's Iliad, bk. ix., l. 87. Pope.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow.—Matt. vi., 34.

"If a man will take no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand."—Confucius, Lun-Yu, bk. xv., c. 11.

It must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.—Matt. xviii., 7.

"Hath a man erred unwillingly. He meets with pardon instead of punishment. Justice requires that instead of reproaching and reviling such a man, we should condole with him." Demosthenes, "On the Crown."

Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, "Nay," but rather division.—Luke xii., 51.

"More blood has been shed on account of the Christian Religion than from any other cause."—Voltaire.

The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God. 2 Thess i. 7, 8.

"Can heavenly minds such high resentment show,
Or exercise their spite in human woe?"—
Virgil, Æneid I., l. 17.

He that believeth not shall be damned.—Matt. xvi., 16.

"No one who hath done good goeth to an evil place.—Krishna, Bhagvat-Gita, chap. vi.

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple.—Luke xiv., 26.

"There are no duties comparable to these we owe to our parents. Our parents are very divine."—Buddha, Singala-Vada Sutta.

He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved.—Matt. xvi., 16.

"Away with those who preach to us the washing off of sin,
Thine own self is the stream for thee to make ablutions in.
In self-restraint it rises pure—flows clear in tide of truth,
By widening banks of wisdom, in waves of peace and ruth.
Bathe there thou son of Pandu, with reverence and rite,
For never yet was water wet could wash the spirit white.
—Hitopadesa ch. iv. § 91. (Sir E. Arnold's translation.)

LEGRANGE.

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FREETHOUGHT IN YORKSHIRE.

The following were the delegates who attended at Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford, last Sunday afternoon, to consider "the most efficient manner of propagating Freethought" in the West Riding of Yorkshire: Stanningly—Messrs. Benjamin Briggs, Joseph Guy and Thomas Taylor; Huddersfield—Wm. Cliffe and John George Dobson; Leeds—J. Greevz-Fisher, H. W. Riley and H. Hardcastle; Bramley—J. Parkinson; Bradford—H. Brooksbank, James White, W. J. Fawcett and J. W. Gott; Hipperholme—A. B. Wakefield; Farsley—H. Smith and John Grange; Halifax—J. W. Crowther and another person. In addition to the foregoing there were friends to the number of about a score, making a gathering in all to the number of nearly forty.

The meeting having elected Mr. H. Smith chairman, he submitted, in a few well-chosen words, the following two resolutions as preliminary matter to the business for which the conference had specifically been assembled:—(1) Moved by H. Brooksbank, Bradford; seconded by J. W. Crowther, Halifax: "That this meeting of Secular representatives and friends in Conference assembled desire to convey to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh their best thanks for his past services as President of the National Secular Society, begs to congratulate him on his restoration to health, and hopes he will long live to use his unusual ability and influence in the cause of freedom." (2) Moved by J. Greevz-Fisher, Leeds, seconded by A. B. Wakefield, Hipperholme: "That this meeting of Secular representatives and friends in Conference assembled begs to tender Mr. George William Foote its most hearty and sincere congratulations on his elevation to the position of President of the National Secular Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and trusts, as in the past, so in the future, it (the cause of Freethought) will receive from him his unswerving adherence and devotion." Both resolutions were passed *nem. dis.*

Passing to the question, What would be the best method of effectively propagating Freethought? the decision arrived at was that an executive council of thirteen, with treasurer and secretary, be elected, with power to add to their number, to consider and report what appeared to them the most practical course to pursue. The advisability or otherwise of holding a Freethought demonstration some Sunday during the summer months on Shipley Glen was also left for the executive to consider. The idea of issuing a "monthly record" did not receive much recognition, it being regarded more as a matter of individual enterprise than the work of a collective body.

The above is a summary of the proceedings transacted, which was followed by a good plain tea, of which between thirty and forty partook, and the proceedings of the first meeting of the West Riding (Yorkshire) Freethought Propaganda Association were brought to a close.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LANCASHIRE SECULAR FEDERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Dear Sir,—On February 13 I sent to every Secular Society in Lancashire a circular, inviting co-operation with Liverpool in an attempt to found the above organisation. Although we have not received replies from every society (the committees of some meeting once only each month), we feel satisfied that we can make a start. Several societies promise hearty assistance, and, though the labor of effecting a start will be great, we shall push on as fast as possible. I would earnestly invite Freethinkers in St. Helens, Warrington, Clitheroe, Leigh, Bury, Preston, Southport and Stockport to make an endeavour to give a helping hand. If societies cannot be immediately formed there, it is almost certain that, by means of correspondence in the *Freethinker*, a number of friends of Secular progress could be introduced to each other, and if halls can be secured in those towns I shall be glad to render every assistance in bringing down from London a special lecturer now and then. Freethinkers in the above-mentioned towns will please understand that it is not necessary to get halls for Sunday—any other day will do; indeed, week nights would sometimes be preferable. I hope some earnest friends will respond at once.

H. Smith, Hon. Sec. *pro tem.* L. S. F.

3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Liverpool.

AN ATHEIST'S PRAYER.

Translated for "Liberty" by B. R. Tucker.

Who then are you? Speak out at last. The hour is come.
You can not always keep your tongue within your head.
Appealed to you have all men, wept and wailed have some,
Why have you nothing said?

Why stay you in the sky, huge bronze of livid hue,
With mocking smile on lips that all speech else avoid?
Impenetrable face and phantom form, are you
Of brain and heart devoid?

Why do you nothing say? Why do we see described
No wrinkle, stubborn spectre, on your brow austere?
Why that stupid air and aspect circumscribed?
Are you too deaf to hear?

If you speak not, then try at least to understand.
Despise me, if you will, but let me see, I pray,
Your face relax to show that I may lift a hand
And you know what I say.

To transform into faith the doubt that me o'erpowers
You need but put a yes into those eyes I spy.
You need but make a sign; my hate no longer towers;
It at your feet will die.

O Mystery proud, wrapped in your dismal veils,
He whom men call father should be one indeed.
If you are my creator, in the shades and vales
How can you see me bleed?

How can you see me humbly kneeling on the stone,
My arms stretched toward you, drowned my voice in accents wild,
And yet no tear beneath your eyelid trickling down?
Am I, then, not your child?

Alms give, in pity's name! So poor am I and weak!
I am not wicked. Good be thou, and look at me.
My poor love-laden heart has naught that it can seek
But to exhale to thee.

But no! I still see on your face that stupid smile,
My cries, my tears, my insults bear no fruit, I fear.
No, you do not speak; you have no thoughts the while;
You have no ears to hear.

Then, after all, do you exist? When I sound space,
Within the infinite depths your shape I never miss.
Is what I see, perchance, the reflex of my face,
Mirrored in that abyss?

Is it my soul that lends a soul unto the world?
Were my heart's dream no more an object of my thought,
Would you in vain, like image on the wild waves whirled
When sun goes down be sought?

Yes, yes, your haughty silence now is solved for aye.
But I too long have suffered; revenge is now my share.
These lips henceforth shall be of blasphemy the way,
Never again of prayer.

O God, thou floating fog above a field of lies!
O God, thou vain mirage of wishes here below!
Thy glory and thy pride but from our dreams arise,
Without us, thou must go.

From the French of Jean Richepin.

AN IRRELIGIOUS INSTRUMENT.

A negro boy having secured a thermometer, took it home to astonish his father.

"What you got dar?" the old man asked.

"Got er 'mometer."

"What's dat?"

"W'y, it's one o' deze yere things whut yer tells how col' ur hot it is wid."

"Tells how col' ur hot it is?"

"Yes, sah?"

"Look yere, is you sich er fool dat yer kain't tell how col' or hot it is? Is yer dun los' dat 'bility whut you 'herited from yo' mudder and daddy—mos'ly yo' daddy?"

"W'y, o' co'se I ken tell how col' it is, but dis yere gins yer de figgers—how many 'grees it is."

"Whut's 'grees got to do wid it? W'en it's col' it's col', and dat's all dar is erbout it. Men gittin' mighty brash dose days er gittin' up mersheens ter fool wid de Lawd's erfairs. Reckon after w'le da'll git sunthin' ter figger out how much 'ligion er man's got. Put dat blame 'mometer dar 'hind de fire."

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ACID DROPS.

Surely the Archbishop of Canterbury is a subtle humorist. Last Sunday evening he preached at the old "Vic." to a crowded audience—or should we say congregation?—of the poor people of South London. His grace wore his full robes to gratify their love of a bit of show, and addressed them familiarly as "dear people." But the cream of the joke was his text—"Give us this day our daily bread." His Grace forgot to dwell on the fact that he had £7,500 a year for bread, and another £7,500 for butter—every penny of which is wrung from the industry of the poor. Instead of this, he maundered and drivelled about the good God sending bread to his dear working men by giving them the means of working for it; although, almost in the same breath, he admitted that thousands of men were able and willing to work, but unable to find it. What wretched mockery! It is just like saying that God looks after their eating by giving them jaws to eat with. Some of them get very little bread between their teeth, but then, look at their splendid jaws! You can't expect the Lord to give a man every blessing at once. By and bye, when the poor man's jaws are tired of biting nothing, he will go to the blessed land of compensation, where those who have hungered shall be filled; and then—ah yes, then!—he will champ the manna of paradise free, gratis, for nothing, *ad libitum*, while bishops and archbishops preach to him for nothing a year, paid quarterly in advance.

After the Archbishop of Canterbury the bishopric of Durham is the best living in the Church. Ten thousand a year, a fine palace, and enough livings to dispose of to content all one's cousins to the third and fourth generations is a higher prize than any held out to a Cabinet Minister. No wonder there has been some speculation why the good berth has not been filled up. Rumor has it that Lord Salisbury wants to appoint Canon Liddon, but the Queen objects to more Ritualistic bishops and wants to put in a man of her own.

The great Mr. Conybeare, with five more Cornish members out of the total seven, is sponsor for a Bill prohibiting the sale of liquor in Cornwall on Sundays. But why Sundays? Why not Mondays or Saturdays? Some day or other a Bill may be brought in for the suppression of humbug, but Mr. Conybeare will never back that.

An attempt is being made to raise £30,000 to superannuate the poor, hard-working, and meritorious clergy of the diocese of Manchester. But why on earth should the "teachers" of the people require to be relieved of the ordinary duty of providing against old age or disablement. There are many good Provident Societies, and the clergy should put by for a rainy day like other people.

This superannuation fund was preached up at a special meeting in the Manchester Town Hall. The Mayor presided, with Canons to right of him and Canons to left of him, and there was a large attendance of the clergy—to see what the laymen were going to do for them. One reason for public charity, in the Mayor's opinion, was this—the clergy were very often blessed with large families! Yes, and they *beget* those large families; and then, having deliberately brought into the world more children than they can maintain, they make their imprudence a plea for charity. And these are the "teachers" of the people. Then God help the people.

Talking about clerical families, here is a paragraph from the *Christian World*—"Rev. James McNeil, of Drumbo, a minister much beloved and esteemed, has died at the early age of forty-nine, leaving a widow and a young family of eleven children." *Eleven* children, and all *young!* And now the Rev. Jas. McNeil is gone to glory, leaving his eleven young children to pull through their troubles with all the assistance that Jahveh sends them.

More division among the Theosophists. A new affair has been started in London, the Christo-Theosophical Society, its object being to show that Christian truth is in harmony with reason and intuition. This society has a big task before it.

The *Christian World* points out the danger to religious liberty in Mr. John Morley's proposal to endow all sectarian schools out of the public taxes. This is merely the endowment of religion in disguise, and is hardly worthy of "Honest John." Fortunately the Liberals are not in a position to carry out the proposal. Let us hope that by the time they are they will dismiss it with scorn.

Mr. John Morley is curiously slack about doing anything in the House of Commons to redress the wrongs of Freethinkers, among whom, we presume, he is still to be reckoned. He bears with remarkable equanimity the fact that they are, as a body, outside the pale of the law. But, on the other hand, he is distressed because Roman Catholics are deprived of the privilege of ever becoming Lord Chancellor of England or Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; and he has backed a Bill whose object is to remedy this dreadful wrong. We hope the Bill will be passed, but we also hope that Mr. Morley will some day or other show a little practical sympathy with those who are treated as outlaws because they happen to share his religious convictions.

The Protestant Alliance is up in arms against this Bill as "mischievous and menacing." What an illustration of Christian fraternity! Mutual hatred is the most striking characteristic of the many sects of the true religion.

The Hospital is a very decent little paper, but its number for Feb. 8 gives currency to the old mistake as to the Christian origin of hospitals. The writer ought to know that there are *no* injunctions to erect hospitals in the New Testament, and that the only directions in regard to the sick are that they should be anointed with oil and prayed over. He ought, moreover, to know that in the eleventh century B.C. there was in Egypt a College of Physicians in receipt of public pay; that the Egyptian and many of the Greek temples, notably those of Æsculapius, were virtually hospitals; and that in India, Asoka, in the third century B.C., established hospitals both for men and animals in various parts of his dominions.

So far from the world being indebted to Christianity for hospitals, they were not found among Christians until the fourth century. The writer of the article, "The Christian Origin of Hospitals" in *The Hospital*, says: "The first complete establishment for the reception of the sick was built by Basil the Great, in Cappadocia (Asia Minor), soon after he became archbishop of that see (A.D. 370)." Yet before this the Emperor Julian (died A.D. 363), who gave up Christianity for Paganism, had, as the writer ungraciously admits, established hospitals. With true Christian niggardliness of appreciation of good deeds done by those not of the faith, he says: "It was doubtless as much with the desire of excelling the clergy in their own work as of benefiting his subjects, that Julian decreed the establishment in various places of hospitals for the reception of the sick, and hospices for the entertainment of travellers." Julian certainly did excel the clergy, since their authorised method of restoring the sick, as we have said, consisted in sacred oil and holy prayers.

A scoundrel at Plymouth went to the Salvation Army Barracks, set light to a copy of the *War Cry*, flung it into the meeting, shouted "Fire!" and decamped. The fiery organ of Blood and Fire ignited a female Salvationist's best gingham, and a terrible scene ensued. No one being anxious to go to the "beautiful land, wonderful land, wonderful land, ab-o-o-ove," the Salvationists bolted for the door. Women were knocked down and trampled on, dresses were torn, and bonnets crumpled up like brown paper. Such is the beautiful sense of repose which religion gives us in the presence of danger.

Mr. John Moss, farmer of Loughborough, has obtained a verdict of £80 damages for slander against the Rev. E. Smythies, rector of Hathern.

A medical friend of ours has a patient who is troubled with nervous attacks and very bad dreams. The other night this patient dreamed of Hell, and wrote out a circumstantial account of what he saw there. Carriages were driving along a splendid broad road, like the Queen's Road at Brighton. Then he came to a noble iron gateway,

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blackleaded all over, so that it dazzled the eyes. This led to a long road extending for miles, and roofed in like the Crystal Palace. About every four feet there was a cell, but the dreamer did not look inside. Thousands of attendants flitted about, but all was silent as the grave. Accosting one of these attendants, the dreamer was asked "How long have you been dead?" "I am not dead at all," he replied. Thereupon the ghostly gentleman sneered as if meaning "Then you have no business here."

The Theosophists would look upon this patient's dreams as very significant. We should advise him to eat moderately, take plenty of outdoor exercise, avoid stimulants and narcotics, and, if necessary, take a rhubarb pill once a week. An occasional aperient is a great enemy of devils, whether black or blue.

Mr. Joseph Thomson writes on "The Results of European Intercourse with the African" in the March number of the *Contemporary Review*, and affirms, despite all the missionary reports that "so far, our intercourse with African races instead of being a blessing, has been little better than an unmitigated curse to them."

Theophilus Edwards, a London City missionary for over twenty years, whose wife stated he had no domestic or monetary troubles, was found lying in bed with his throat cut. A knife was lying close by, also a Bible with several passages marked. Probably another case of religious mania.

Buffalo Bill and the Pope met at Rome on Monday. Bill is a big showman, and so is Barnum, but the Pope is the biggest showman on earth. Bill himself seems to have recognised this, for on Monday, when the anniversary of Papa Pecci's coronation was celebrated, he played a second fiddle in the performance. He and his troupe stationed themselves in the Grand Ducal Hall of the Vatican, and dropped on their knees for the Holy Father's blessing as he was carried along on his papal chair. Of course they got the blessing, and Buffalo Bill presented the Greatest Showman on Earth with a beautiful cushion, which will no doubt be appreciated by the bony nether parts of the aged Leo.

The Catholic Church is the final support of every despotism. Bismarck finds he must rely on the Ultramontane party for a majority in the New Reichstag.

The Rev. R. F. Horton says it is an impossible theory that the universe is the result of blind chance. Now if Mr. Horton will define chance, blind or seeing, and show how it could be the cause of *anything*, the matter will be open to discussion. Meanwhile the Materialist may think that the "blind chance" hypothesis is no more impossible than the theory that an Omniscient God could turn out beings who reason like Mr. Horton.

Bishop Walker, of North Dakota, has a "scattered" diocese. He is therefore fitting up a holy car, to be attached to ordinary trains, and switched on to a siding when a service is to be held. He will baptise and confirm on board, and perhaps administer the sacrament and perform swell weddings. Was there ever such a travelling joss-house since old Jahveh perigrinated in his trunk?

"The Bible is the Word of God." That is a plain sentence. Everybody can understand it, and believe it or reject it. But plain dealing is no longer the cue of the Churches. They are going in for round-the-corner business, like Hamlet's politician—"one who would circumvent God." Even the Presbyterians are adopting the compromise that "The Word of God is contained in the Bible." Aye, and so is the needle contained in the haystack; but 'tis a devil of a job to find it.

The Rev. W. Gelley has been replying to Mr. Foote's recent lecture at Blackburn. One half of his sermon was a wretched waste of words. Mr. Foote, holding a copy of Bacon's *Essays* in his hand, quoted from the essay on Superstition the passage that "Atheism leaves a man to sense," etc. The press reporter wrote *leads* for *leaves*—a very easy mistake. Yet upon this simple blunder Mr. Gelley based a half of his sermon! Surely a very little common sense might have suggested that *leads* was a misprint for *leaves*; and that a public speaker who wished to misquote would hardly be so foolish as to misquote from such a popular volume as Bacon's *Essays*. Perhaps Mr. Gelley will be more considerate in future when he sees how the reporter has reproduced *his* extracts from Bacon, the opening sentence of the essay on Atheism being printed in a fashion that would make every hair on Bacon's head stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine.

Mr. Gelley is deceived if he fancies (not having heard the lecture) that Mr. Foote quoted from Bacon as a favorer of Atheism. The Rev. J. O. Davies had asserted that Atheism tended to immorality, and Mr. Foote simply quoted a famous passage from Bacon, among other writers, to show that Atheism left a man to sense, philosophy, and other influences, all of which are guides to moral conduct "though religion were not." Bacon's opinion as to the philosophy of Atheism is quite another matter.

The proposition to have Sunday concerts in St. Andrew's Hall, Norwich, was, of course, opposed by the Rev. G. S. Barrett on behalf of his brother sky-pilots, who desire the monopoly of business on the people's leisure day. Of course Mr. Barrett's chief dread is lest such sacred concerts be held during the hours of divine service and thus prove a rival show to his own.

Still more blasphemy. Here is a firm of distillers advertising their whiskey as "the purest spirit known." This dangerously approaches the confines of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which hath never forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come.

It has been calculated that, from first to last, not fewer than 9,000,000 persons have been burned for witchcraft under the Christian *régime*. For these cruel murders, perpetrated with the accompaniment of torture for the most part on poor old women, God's holy word, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," must be held largely responsible.

Prebendary Anderson says there is nothing like Christianity to afford happiness. Absolutely nothing. What can make a Christian so happy as the thought of a jealous God who damns the great mass of his creatures to everlasting torment, and was only appeased by the blood of his own innocent son? When a Christian thinks of his friends and relations roasting in eternal fire, how can he be other than happy?

The *Banner of Faith* is one of those journals which, put into other covers, circulates as the parish magazine for many different places. The kind of hog's-wash with which the parishioners are supplied may be guessed from the following *argument* directed against marriage by the registrar: "If you'd call yourself married without a clergyman to marry you, and do it all in that godless way, you might do anything." The sentiment is, appropriately enough, put in the mouth of an old woman.

According to the *New York World* Mr. Pentecost says "If the priests are to be believed the devil has been more active than Jehovah, and more powerful too. He always gets there. Jehovah builds churches, and the devil not only occupies the pews but very often the pulpit."

The Rev. E. Sydney Savage, vicar of St. Marks, Barrow, is savage at dancing prevailing in his parish. He denounces it in a letter to a local paper quite unmindful of the dancing of Miriam or the pranks of David before the ark.

How to reach the masses is the problem continually put forward in our religious papers when they are not considering the question of money for foreign missions. We commend to their attention the utterance of a Natal paper which proposes to send over to England a few educated Kaffirs as missionaries and civilising agents among the poor heathen dwelling in Ratcliffe Highway, the Seven Dials, and other similar localities in our large towns. It confesses they would do little good unless they brought over also a cargo of mealies to feed the poor, starving English wretches. Thus provided, the writer considers the educated Kaffir would prove more successful than the missionaries we send abroad, and he says: "I am sure he would extend

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the hand of pity to his poor, unfortunate white brother, who has not the same blessed advantages he himself is able to obtain."

William Nicholson was charged at Hull police court with disorderly conduct. William had got intoxicated upon the worst kind of spirit, the Holy Ghost. He raved and shouted "Glory Hallelujah, Jesus for ever," and when asked to desist he replied "I shall not go away. I'm sent by the Lord, and am the master of all policemen." William declared that by God's grace he would continue to do it all his life. In court he protested his readiness to die for God. William is seemingly of the fanatical stuff of which the Christian martyrs were made.

Another exhibition of the beauties of religion was afforded by two brothers named John and Thomas Price, living at Pistyll Farm, Llandrindod, Wales, who have become insane through religion, and, after frightening several people by attempts to convert them, have been committed to the asylum at Abergavenny.

"God moves in a mysterious way!" Floods and storms are showing his anger in the Western States of America. A cyclone on the coast of Japan has drifted away fishing-boats with a loss of two thousand lives, and wrecks and railway collisions are thrown in as other instances of the supreme benevolence of our heavenly father.

A sample missionary is the Rev. C. B. Cahusac, who having left a wife and three children in England, went to Chicago, where, under pretence of being engaged in missionary work among young girls, he succeeded in bringing several of them to ruin. He has been arrested, and has confessed his guilt.

Canon Westcott, who is probably the most learned writer in the Church of England, has published an edition of the Epistle to the Hebrews with Notes and Essays. Dr. Westcott says, "The Epistle cannot be the work of St. Paul, and still less the work of Clement. It may have been written by Barnabus, if the Epistle of Barnabus is apocryphal." So, for the superscription in the Bible "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," we are given a "may-be." Will Dr. Westcott propose the removal of this false heading in our English Bibles? Not a bit of it. Such facts, though the merest commonplaces to theologians, are carefully kept from the general public.

Who is the W. Rodger Smyth who writes on "Converted Atheists" in the *Inquirer*, that organ of "reverent free thought"? He professes to have in his pocket a list of twenty "leaders of Secularism" who have been converted to Christianity. *Leaders*, mind. Will Mr., Mrs., or Miss Smyth kindly produce them? We suspect not, for he or she has the indecency to refer to Price Hughes's story as "a piece of fiction" which is "much too ideal for the exceedingly realistic mind of the editor of the *Freethinker*." According to W. Rodger Smyth it is "idealism" to print a fiction as though it were a fact, and "realism" to ask for evidence. Even Unitarians seem unable to escape the great historic vice of Christianity, its absolute want of the sense of veracity.

A well-known Manchester Freethinker has received a cadging letter, stereotyped, from the Rev. Sutton Patterson, who hails from No. 1 The Sanctuary, Westminster Abbey, London. An attempt is being made to raise £12,000 to give a free education to clergymen's children, in connection with the St. John's Foundation School, and the cadging letters seem to be dispatched at random. The game must be very profitable to pay for so much powder and shot.

The Rev. A. Gwatkin, who is said to be a personal friend of the Archbi-hop of Canterbury, says that amid all the Primate's business he finds time to address letters to working men who have felt their faith tottering. We hope his Grace will devote a spare hour or so to answering Mr. Foote's recent letters. The columns of the *Freethinker* will be gladly placed at his disposal.

A firm of Roman Catholic publishers had the coolness to refuse to fulfil a contract with a customer who ordered a complete set of Victor Hugo's works. The ground of refusal was that the works were "immoral," the reason for this extraordinary view being the fact that they are placed on the Romish *Index expurgatorius*. The customer sued the firm for damages for breach of contract, and the Supreme Court at Montreal will decide the case. Of course Catholicism is a great power in Canada as well as in the United States, but the Court can hardly be so slavish to Rome as to decide that every little bigot has a right to bark and bite at the readers of the greatest French genius of the nineteenth century.

The Rev. W. H. Farnell, of Wellington, says he once heard the editor of the *Freethinker* deny that a whale could swallow a man. Mr. Farnell admits the impossibility, but urges that the Greek word translated "whale" means a sea monster of an unknown description. Perhaps it was a shark, says Mr. Farnell. But this is jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. No doubt a shark could dispose of Jonah, but imagine the poor prophet's condition after running the gauntlet of the shark's rows of frightful teeth! On the whole he would do better with the whale.

Christian apologists are always ready to boast how their faith has elevated woman, although if allowing her legal justice is any part of the "elevation" it is clear that Christianity has done nothing of the kind. It might do some of these apologists good to read the extract in the *Pall Mall* of Tuesday from the diary of Nawàb Mehdi Hassan, the Chief Justice of Hyderabad. This gentleman thought the Mohammedan marriage law fairer to women than the law of England, and gave many excellent reasons for the opinion.

The Rev. Canon Robert Baynes was charged with being drunk and disorderly. He failed to put in an appearance, and has been summoned to show cause why his bail should not be estreated.

Blessed be ye poor. One number of the *Daily Telegraph* mentions the wills of the Rev. Folliot Baugh, formerly rector of Chelsford, Kent, who has left behind him £26,000, and of the Rev. John Fenwick, late of Thurnery Rectory, Norfolk, whose personal estate amounts to over £25,000. These men of God must have a tough job to pass through Peter's wicket gate if there is any truth in the utterance of their professed master.

ONE OF THE GOOD OLD SORT.

We sympathise with the Rev. Dr. Duncan of Islington. He is one of the good old sort, and we should be sorry to see the species extinguished, for a few of them, at least, should be preserved for the public amusement. The reverend gentleman has delivered a special discourse on "infidelity," of which he has a remarkably profound knowledge. He referred in withering language to the "fees" of Secular lecturers. What an excellent joke! Mr. Duncan is welcome to all Mr. Foote's lecturing "fees" for 1890 in exchange for his annual salary. This is a fair offer, made in downright earnest, and we await the reverend gentleman's answer.

Mr. Duncan found four causes of infidelity—"conceit, ignorance, uncleanness, and folly." Well, we neither know nor want to know anything about Mr. Duncan's "cleanness," but we are bound to say that if conceit, ignorance and folly are the causes of infidelity, Mr. Duncan should be the biggest infidel in England.

"Infidelity," said Mr. Duncan, "has done nothing for literature. If all the books written and published by infidels were burned we should not miss them." Of course not, dear Duncan: *you* would not miss them. But other people would. There is a very small number of readers who would regard Duncan's Sermons as a fair exchange for the works of Voltaire, Paine, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, to say nothing of Shelley, Byron, Swinburne, Mill, Clifford, Darwin, and Huxley. And now, dear Duncan, let us pray!

The Rev. H. G. Watt, of Dundee, finds no fault with football, except that it keeps young men who play Saturday matches from coming to the kirk on Sunday mornings. He would even prefer to see matches held on Sunday afternoons, so long as he was sure the players had first had their weekly dose of sermonising. But what would godly Scotland say to this?

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 9, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell Road, S.E., at 7.30, "Why I am an Atheist."

Thursday, March 13, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 8, "Freethought and Christ." Free admission. Discussion.

March 16, Cardiff; 19, Southwark Radical Club; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

S. P. GODFREY.—*Letters to the Clergy* forwarded. All orders should be sent to Mr. Forder as above.

F. MORRIS (Cardiff).—Bill to hand. You shall be advised as to Mr. Foote's train.

ON THE WAR PATH.—(1) An Agnostic who has a God is an anomaly. Such a person is a Theist, and should call himself so. However, as you approve our assault on Christianity there is that point of agreement between us and you had better leave the rest alone, for our convictions are the result of much thought and research, and are not likely to be affected by occasional correspondence. (2) Your proposal as to a shop for the sale of Freethought literature in the centre of every large town would be a boon if it could be carried out. Certainly a town like Birmingham ought to boast some newsagent willing to display the *Freethinker*.

J. MILLER.—The subject is far too large to be discussed in a paragraph, and we are unable at present to give it the space it would require.

E. S. JONES.—(1) Mr. Wise seems to be developing his faculty for misrepresentation, and if the Liverpool Freethinkers mean to correct him in every case they will have enough to do. Mr. Foote's debate with the Rev. A. J. Harrison took place at Newcastle more than thirteen years ago. Mr. Harrison made no arrangements for a report. Mr. Foote did. But the reporter, who obtained £2 on account, turned out to be a drunken scoundrel, and never supplied a line of copy. The facts were stated in the *Secularist* at the time. You must pardon us if we give no further attention to Mr. Wise or his statements. (2) Thomas Cooper's opinions we only know from his writings, and they are accessible to those who wish to consult them.

W. BUSSEY.—He is a brother (by blood) of *the* Mr. Bradlaugh. The name keeps him going. As Smith, Jones, Brown or Robinson he would be unheard of. Thanks for your good wishes.

J. CLARKE.—Sorry for the misprint in chronicling your success at Liverpool. We will remember your initial is J., not W., n future.

H. NICHOLSON.—We must not expect perfect fairness from the press. It is something to get a few lines inserted in reply to editorial calumnies. We hope the Ox Hill Branch will not be discouraged.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—It shall be seen what can be done in your direction.

F. SMALLMAN.—We value your congratulations.

A. B. WAKEFIELD hopes that Mr. Moss's advice will be followed He has himself opened debates at local Young Men's Mutual Improvement Societies and administered doses of Freethought.

J. DONALD.—Hardly up to the mark.

GREY-HEADED ATHEIST.—Thanks for your offer to stand surety to your newsagent for twenty copies of the *Freethinker*. To obtain a weekly contents-sheet post free it is only necessary to send us the name and address.

C. BENTLEY.—Your letter is not a word too long. Many thanks for that chapter in the history of Secularism. We hope the Bethnal Green Branch will flourish. The London Federation will have to do a bold stroke in the East End.

W. H. TAYLOR.—Pleased to learn you joined as an active member of the N. S. S. on Sunday night. We wish all our readers, especially the younger ones, would join the real Salvation Army. Send us your experiences in regard to leaving copies of the *Freethinker* in public conveyances.

J. DOWIE.—The Free-Lovers, as an American sect, were started by Christians in America. The most noted community was that founded at Oneida by Father Noyes, who, after diligently studying Paul's doctrines, came to the conclusion that they inculcated Free-Love. A full description of the sect was given in *Progress*, March, 1886, under the title "A Bible community."

C. THOMSON.—A full account of the Crusades is found in *Crimes of Christianity*.

M. STITT.—Glad to hear you are going to join the N. S. S. Thanks for papers. See "Acid Drops."

A. SCIARONI.—Thanks for the Italian papers. We have glanced through Dr. Manzoni's papers, and they are rather interesting; but the Paris Exhibition is now a matter of history. Thanks also for your good wishes.

B. HARRIS.—You are mistaken in supposing that we have not studied "both sides." For the rest, we must agree to differ.

FIAT LUX.—Your letter is no reply whatever to Mr. Wheeler's articles. Your statement that Newton's *Principia* is jargon to the non-mathematical is a good specimen of false analogy.

ALEX MCINNES, 204 Dumbarton Road, Glasgow, writes:—"I send you an account of my conversion from Atheism to Christianity 33 years ago. Will you have the honesty to make known my case to your readers?" Well, we have had the honesty to do so. We are also prepared to insert—as a prepaid advertisement—an announcement of the death of Queen Anne.

A. LOVETT.—Your congratulations are welcome. Glad to hear that, although you are more than half dead and blind, Freethought has given you a cheerfulness that you once thought it impossible to attain to. As you say, selp-help is the only practical gospel It is well that we should try to help each other, but such help is futile unless it helps us to help ourselves.

INCOG.—The incident was amusing. Mr. Foote will do his best as President.

H. BRYCESON.—(1) The 9,000,000 killed for witchcraft is Sprenger's calculation, and probably under the mark. (2) Yes, it would be a good thing to have some large posters for the Freethought lectures in London.

JOSEPH BROWN, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subscriptions for the N. E. Secular Federation:—A. B., 5s.; Darlington Branch, 3s.; Mr. Wharrier, 10s.; J. Humble, 1s.; Mr. Collinson, 1s.; F. Humble, 1s.; T. Humble, 1s.; J. H., 1s.: Bedlington Branch, 4s. 6d.; Mr. Sanderson, 2s. 6d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker — Liberator — Der Arme Teufel — Secular Thought — Echo — Truthseeker — Market Rasen Mail — Bulletin des Sommaires — Open Court — Liberty — Overland Ceylon Observer — Leeds Daily News — Freethought — Evening Standard—The Brooklyn World—Hull Daily News—Freidenker—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Menschenthum —Consett Guardian—Eastern Evening News—Belfast Evening Star — Manchester Courier — Western Figaro — Blackburn Times — Fair Play — Echo — Western Figaro — Woman's Suffrage Journal—Inquirer—La Riforma—Il Dovere—Manchester Guardian—Liberty—Loughborough Herald—Crook Wesleyan Magazine—Sunday Chronicle—Retford Times—Twentieth Century—Bishop Auckland Methodist Messenger—Newcastle Chronicle—Shields' Gazette—South Wales Echo—Laughter—Marlow Parish Magazine—Banner of Faith—The Coming Man.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

PERSONAL.

EVER since my attack of influenza I have been more or less unwell; chiefly, I suspect, through not allowing myself an interval of rest. On Thursday night I took the chair for Mr. J. M. Robertson at the Hall of Science. I see now it was a foolish thing to do, but I was anxious about the success of this enterprise, and disinclined to break an engagement. I had a troublesome cough, but I contrived to minimise it to appearance by coughing during the outbursts of applause. On Friday I felt worse, and during the night I was the victim of severe bronchitis and inflammation of the lungs. On Saturday morning Mr. Wheeler did his best to find a substitute for me at Manchester, but his efforts were fruitless, and Mr. Forder had to telegraph to the secretary of the Manchester Branch that I was unable to fulfil my engagement. Seven years ago, also on the first Sunday in March, I was

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unable to keep a lecturing engagement at Manchester because Judge North locked me up in Newgate. Since then I believe I have been able to keep all my Sunday engagements until now. I am very sorry I could not let the Manchester friends know earlier, but I quite meant to go—cough or no cough—until I found on Friday night that I could not move without being half suffocated.

I am writing this with pencil in bed on Monday afternoon. I am rapidly improving, but I must be very careful. For some time I fear I have been overworking myself. As soon as possible I must cast my work aside and spend a few days on the south coast. Meanwhile I find that editing a paper is like turning a wheel. You cannot miss a single revolution. So I am sitting up in bed, pencil in hand, scrawling away, "Copy, copy, copy" for the *Freethinker*.

P.S. (Tuesday evening).—My improvement continues, but on my doctor's advice I have postponed my visit to Chatham, which was fixed for Friday. There is little doubt but I shall be able to lecture, more or less efficiently, at Camberwell on Sunday evening.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. J. CLARKE, of London, took Mr. Foote's place at Manchester on Sunday at very short notice. He was at Oldham and came over on learning the state of affairs. He gave great satisfaction and was heartily applauded. All's well that ends well.

THE circulation of the *Freethinker* is steadily improving, though less rapidly than we could wish. Will those who are interested in its welfare do their level best to push it among their friends and acquaintances, or otherwise during the next few months?

AT the last Executive meeting of the N. S. S. Mr. Foote took the chair for the first time as President. Before the meeting broke up he submitted a scheme for augmenting the Society's revenues. It was unanimously approved, and Mr. Foote was authorised to draw up a circular on the subject.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON'S lecture at the London Hall of Science on "Freethought and the Bible" was a great success. There was a capital audience, and the lecture was skilfully conceived and delivered with fluency and force. Mr. Robertson's opponent, representing the Christian Evidence Society, was the Rev. Mr. Tinling, who did not prove a good debater. The lecturer's replies were very satisfactory, and elici ed great applause from the Freethinking portion of the audience.

MR. G. STANDRING is down for the third lecture of this free course, his subject being "The Church and the People." This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of its London readers before the lecture takes place, and we hope they will bring some of their orthodox friends to hear Mr. Standring. Next Thursday, March 13, Mr. Foote will wind up this course of Free Lectures with an address on "Freethought and Christ." He will be opposed by the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.

IMMEDIATE steps will be taken to carry on this Free Lecture movement, on week-nights, in other parts of London. Freethought will make no conquests by going to sleep. Our cry must be a double one, "Agitate, agitate, agitate! and Organise, organise, organise!"

De Dageraad devotes over a page to a review of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, which it highly praises and characterises as the most important Freethought work published during the past year.

The Secretary of the Oxley Branch of the N. S. S. has utilised his copy of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, by adducing it in evidence against a writer in the *Consett Guardian*, who looks on Freethinkers as obnoxious people of no account.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND:—F. A. Sutton, 1s.; Amicus, 2s. 6d.

THE *Truthseeker* (Feb. 22) gives portraits of Viktor E. Lennstrand and Captain Otto Thomson with a sketch of their labors for Freethought in Sweden.

WE urgently press upon our Derby readers the necessity of responding promptly to the appeal we made last week. Mr. H. McGuinness, who is only a working man, has taken the responsibility of the rent of the hall, which is £10 per annum, and the place will be useless for meetings without furniture. Up to the present only nine shares have been taken up in the Furnishing Company, and they are only 5s. each. Some persons might like to give a subscription instead of taking shares. Mr. McGuinness's address is 20 Newland Street, Derby.

PROFESSOR MAX MULLER, in the fourth of his second course of Gifford lectures, helped to smash another Christian idol. It is taught in the Churches that the Bible is the oldest book in the world. But not a scrap of it can be carried beyond the ninth century before Christ; while the Vedas, according to Max Müller, could not have been collected before B.C. 1,000 at the very latest, and a long time before that is necessary to account for their growth.

WE have received the monthly bulletin of the French Freethought Federation which was decided to be formed at the last International Congress. The annual subscription to the Federation is only four francs, and entitles the subscriber to the receipt of the Bulletin.

WHILE the New York Presbytery was discussing the proposed revision of the Confession of Faith, the Rev. D. G. Wylie said: "Mr. Ingersoll has been quoted in this debate. We are to give up the Confession, because we cannot answer his arguments against the doctrines of the Confession. Can we answer his arguments against the Bible and the character of God? If we cannot, shall we give up the Scriptures and God? The arguments of infidels cannot be answered on the grounds of pure reason."

A METHODIST at Hull having thanked God "for having raised up such men as the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes," Mr. Billany sends a well-timed letter to the *Hull Daily News* exposing that person's inventive genius in his story of "The Converted Atheist Shoemaker," and his subterfuges for refusing to give his name.

WE are glad to give news from the Secularists of Australia. The Freethinkers of Sydney have now a fine edifice of their own, and Mr. Symes reports that the Melbourne Hall of Science is quite a success, and is becoming more and more a centre of influence and power in these colonies. The literature department also, including the *Liberator*, is flourishing as it never did before. Scarcely a day passes without the enrolment of new subscribers to the *Liberator*, mostly in the country districts; and the amount of literature now sent constantly out into the colonies is something astonishing—though not a tenth of what it should be.

MR. SYMES continues, "Still our work is just beginning. Hitherto we have had to do soldier work, sapper, and miner work; we have had to fight for the right to live. We must push ahead. There must be a Secular College for the training of young men and women to cope with the priests and parsons, especially to deal with their dupes. This is where our greatest conquests must be won. The priests and parsons are too wide-awake to subject themselves to the humiliation of a defeat by entering upon argument with us. They leave that to their hangers-on, who have no idea of the merits of the case, and who are too stupid to know how to attack us or to know when they are beaten. Our people must get at the dupes of superstition; not by way of attack; but in friendly conversation they must point out the absurdity of the Christian superstition."

MR. JOSEPH SYMES has been on a visit to Tasmania and

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preaching the gospel of Freethought in that island. At Launceston in the open air the Christians showed by rowdyism how little they relished an attack on their faith. His chairman was thrown down but not injured.

MR. SYMES gives his readers over a column of items from the *Freethinker* and says of our Christmas Number, "The illustrations are very telling. Why don't the hypocrites once more prosecute the paper as they did seven years ago? Have they learned a lesson? Did they burn their poor fingers?"

THE lively, philosophic, and we must add poetic "Nunquam," once more girds at the Sabbatarians in his "As You Like It" columns of the Manchester *Sunday Chronicle*. A sacred concert was given in Manchester on a Sunday on behalf of the widow and children of a respected citizen, whereupon the secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society wrote that this was in contravention of the commandment of God and Act 21, George III. No wonder "Nunquam" was roused.

THE Belfast Secularists give their Society bold advertisement in the *Evening Star*. A Christian lady wrote to that paper objecting to its inserting such an advertisement, but the letter only produced a better advertisement in the shape of an editorial stating that the Belfast Secularists have always shown a love of fair play. They allow the opposition view to be presented at their meetings. Arguments should be met by arguments and not by boycotting.

IN a case of marriage with a deceased wife's sister one of the parties said they could find nothing in Scripture against it, whereupon Mr. Justice Stephen remarked, "The sooner people learn that religious belief has nothing to do with the law of marriage the better."

THE Affirmation Bill doesn't work quite smoothly. At Newcastle, a Mr. Sadler called as a juror desired to affirm as he was of no religious belief. When the form was read over he stopped short at the words "contrary to my religious belief," and Mr. Justice Day rather peremptorily dismissed him. If this is the treatment meted to sceptics the chances are they will be found more numerous than ever in the jury-box.

AN International Conference of Cremationists will be held at Berlin on 4, 5, and 6 of August. Many questions affecting the spread of the movement will be considered.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death of Baron Ferdinando Swift, president of the Workmen's Society of Venice, and one of the leading Italian Freethinkers, who died at Venice on Feb. 22. Baron Swift was some few years ago prosecuted for being president of an atheistical society, and he retained his sentiments till the last. He was distinguished both as a political economist, an individualist, and as a public and private benefactor.

We regret also to notice the death of Photius Fisk, a wealthy and benevolent American Freethinker, of Greek birth, who leaves a large fortune to the poor of Boston.

WHY I AM *NOT* AN AGNOSTIC.

AN Agnostic is one who is in doubt concerning the existence of a God. But, to be candid, I am compelled to say that I am no more in doubt concerning such a hypothesis than I am in doubt concerning devils, dragons, and other chimeras. An infinite good being is precisely as great an impossibility as an infinite bad being, a heaven as absolutely impossible as a hell.

I not only believe, but I know, there is no God—simply because I do not know there is one. Neither does anyone else know that there is one. No one ever has proved it, no one does now or ever can prove it. God himself, if there were one, has not proved and does not now prove it. There is absolutely no evidence, directly or indirectly; no logic, reason, sense, or analogy, to prove it.

If there were a God I should know it, because I have anxiously sought. But I have sought in vain. And if the Theist insists that I should not know God, then I, in turn, insist that, for like reasons, no one else has known or now knows God. And what I cannot know, what nobody else can know, and no one has ever known, is, of course, unknowable, and therefore we should not believe it.

Therefore my honest denial and fearless assertion, There is no God, is tantamount to absolute proof that there is no such being.

Upon those affirming devolves the proof. Should one say, There is a devil, it is not necessary that we should explore the world and sweep ethereal space with our telescopes in search of his satanic majesty. Oh, no; we simply say, No, there is no devil, and this denial is equivalent to proof that such a being does not exist. Those affirming must do the searching, produce the evidence, and submit it to the world, or their bald assertion falls to the ground as so much nonsense.

But the God-idea positively conflicts with all that we know, directly or indirectly. When closely analysed and considered in the light of modern science, it becomes a nursery tale, and the time is near at hand when millions of our best men and women will stand aghast at the thought that at one time they actually entertained the notion.

When we can prove that twice two are five; that two cannon-balls can occupy the same space at the same time; that two locomotives can pass on the same track; that a receptable already full can be filled again; that a finite body can be everywhere at the same time; that nothing can produce everything; that miracles are the order of the day, then, and not till then, may it be reasonably affirmed that there is a God.

Like Colonel Ingersoll, I have subjected my belief to the full scope of freethought, the methods of science and closest reasoning. The freedom of thought and the right of expressing such thought, vouchsafed to us by the genius of our glorious republic, has led me on, even beyond Mr. Ingersoll's Agnosticism; beyond the conservative "perhaps," beyond the equivocating "I don't know;" beyond Spencer's "Unknowable;" beyond the compromising attitude of an unbeliever, to the more aggressive one of an outspoken Atheist and Materialist.

An absolutely authoritative and infallible gospel once questioned, once subjected to human tests and reason, once doubted in its minutest detail, there is no stopping-place until the goal of Atheism and Materialism is reached.

Theology is miracle. Based upon miracle, it must always remain miracle, and, consequently, must be accepted without human understanding or reason. It is emphatically non-progressive, to-day precisely as and what it was two or four thousand years ago. It means to-day what it did then, and one word taken from or added to it destroys its authoritative character. It is either a gospel according to Moses and the prophets, and Peter, Luke, and John, or it is simply a human affair, a fraud, a gospel according to Tom, Dick, and Harry. Until new revelations "from on high" are given to the world, all attempts to evolute religion or to substitute a "new theology" will but tend to destroy the old.

But how many honest, *thinking* minds to-day remain true to the old theology and all it implies? None! It is to-day upheld only by the unthinking but honest masses, who resignedly accept it without thought or reason, and those conventional Christians who go for popularity and to please their good wives. All better and progressive minds within the Church are to-day free to confess their unbelief in many of the most important events and doctrines recorded in the Bible. The six days creation, the personality of God, the doctrine of the Fall of Man, the scheme of redemption, infant

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and heathen damnation. a literal hell, etc., all are alike repudiated. Yet the plain language of the Bible on these things cannot be misunderstood. "And the morning and the evening were the first day," etc., proves beyond doubt that the writers of Genesis meant six literal days of twenty-four hours each, for the creation of the universe! "In the image of God created he them;" "God walking in the garden in the cool of the day;" "Moses spoke to God face to face"—all these expressions clearly indicate beyond cavil that the God of the Bible was supposed to be a person, "very like" a man. Of course "walking in the garden" clearly implies that he could not have been anywhere else in the universe or upon the face of the earth at that particular time. In fact he did not even occupy all the garden, or it would not have been necessary for him to walk or to search for Adam. So much to establish the very limited personality of a God to-day still believed by millions of Christians to be the creator and ruler of an unlimited universe!

Again, the doctrines of man's fall, of total depravity, of infant and heathen damnation to an eternal and literal hell are all recorded there as plain as the rule of three in mathematics. And all are essential to the survival of the Christian religion. If there is no hell there is no Christianity, the mission of Christ was a lamentable failure and his death worse than butchery. If man through Adam's sin is not damned, if man must not be "born again," if the heathen may be saved without Christ, would it not be infinitely preferable if all the human race died in infancy, or if all were born Hottentots and Laplanders and thus saved, than to have them live to see "the light of Christianity" and, perchance, for this reason be damned to eternal perdition? Would not Christ in such a case have been and still be the cause of millions being damned, instead of being the savior of the race?

Being one of the many who by methods of reason have discarded a blind faith in the ancient Bible, I can neither consistently embrace the inconsistencies of the so-ealled "new theology" as revealed according to Beecher, Swing, Barrows, and others, finding no foothold for such a belief, but discover a correct solution for all existing problems in nature, its law and order.

Theism and Spiritism imply miracle and impossibility. These theories divest everything tangible of all potencies to do anything, then invest some imaginary nothing with supernatural powers to do everything. But we know twice two is four and cannot possibly be five. So we know that the universe fills all space at the same time, therefore, all space being occupied by matter—solid, fluid, or aeriform—no other body, person, or thing can occupy the same space.

All objects of knowledge are natural. All we see on the earth, in the earth, over and under the earth, beyond in ethereal space, among suns, moons, planets, stars and systems; all the revelations of our strongest lenses reveal but natural things and causes, never a God.

All causes, powers, and agencies operating within the vast realms of nature are natural; if we can trace any effect to its cause or causes we shall always find a natural, never a supernatural cause.

The universe is eternal. It had no beginning, can never have an end. It is infinite—having no limit, centre, or circumference. Its existing now, absolutely proves that it has always existed—not, indeed, in its present form, but as an infinite aggregation of living, potent, elementary particles, combining (yes, fortuitously) in ever changing form. A beginning implies an eternity of time when it did not exist, when all was infinite vaccuum—eternal nothingness. But if this at any one time had been the actual state of space, nothing would exist now, as from nothing nothing can come. Possessing no attributes or potencies, nothing would for ever remain nothing, and consequently the universe could not exist to-day.

A God postulated as existing before any imaginary "beginning," miraculously creating it from nothing, is still more absurd, as a God existing in infinite vacuity during an infinite period of time, before this imaginary beginning, who would or could not create the universe at least ten millions of years multiplied by this number *ad infinitum*, before the time it is said he created it, loses at once all attributes of an "omniscient" being and vanishes. Because if it was consistent with "divine wisdom" to omit the creative act during all these ages and cycles of beginningless time, he of course would never have consummated it, because if it was consistent with his wisdom to create it six thousand or six millions of years ago, then it must have been very foolish to leave the creative act undone during the eternity preceding this time, and in this case, God again loses his divine attributes.

I insist that it is utterly irreconcilable with reason that an eternal God, who is supposed to be perfect, omniscient, and unchangeable, who existed in infinite dark vacuity voluntarily, and of choice, during all eternity, without relations or conditions surrounding him, could have suddenly conceived of a motive for the creative act never experienced or thought of before; and that after being content in absolute idleness and stagnation in his dark and cheerless abode during eternity, he should all at once so radically change in his manner and tastes as to create a universe, which would henceforth entirely change his relations, conditions, and mode of life, and to say the least, keep him pretty busy making human beings and other animals, listening to the countless prayers of the different denominations, counting hairs, permitting sparrows to fall, and at the same time whirling countless millions of planets through the immensity of space.

But, God or none, any beginning implies a miracle—a creation from nothing—which childish notion must be abandoned.

Again: God, if real, must be a person, a living organic being, otherwise he cannot be a God and all it implies. And surely the personal pronouns and appellations, "he," "his," "him," "our heavenly father" (still indulged in by Professor Swing), etc., would be anomalous if he is not a being or person of some kind. But here again we find it very difficult to retain a God. A personality implies limit, outline, form; necessitates animal organism, nervous system, digestive and respiratory organs, and circulating processes. "What does not breathe does not live." This postulate of science consigns God to oblivion unless he has lungs. Thought necessitates brain; sight, eyes; sound, ears; and speech, physical organs to produce it. All these processes are simply functions of living beings, in the absence of which they have no existence in nature.

Exterminate all animal organism from the face of the earth, and thought, wisdom, love, sight, etc., would vanish also. Science recognises no manifestation of wisdom, love, etc., in inorganic matter, in air, in etheral space, between the earth and moon or sun, simply because it is occupied only by inorganic matter, and this never contains such attributes. Matter, moved by its own physical and chemical potencies, must first evolve into organic forms before any manifestations of intellect and consciousness become possible.

Therefore, if God is a thinking, living reality, he must be an organic, breathing being, or he cannot possibly be a God and all it implies.

But now the problem stares us in the face—and which the church must solve, or Atheism will soon take its place—how can an organic, limited, living God be a God and all it implies and at the same time occupy the relation of creator and ruler of an unlimited universe? How can the limited be related to the unlimited as a controlling power? It is all childish talk to talk about an "infinite God" when we know of only one infinite reality and that is the universe. It is likewise absurd to talk about a God being here and there and everywhere when the universe monopolises every point of space.

It is either all God and no universe, or it is all universe and no God.

Unless the church can intelligently solve the problem how a God with a brain can be infinite, or how a God without a brain can be a God, it will be but a few years before it will come to an ignoble end.

Therefore I am *not* an Agnostic. The God-idea—in spite of its hoary traditions and venerable associations—never having been duly established by logic, science, and reason, and being utterly unthinkable, and, when properly analysed, childish and absurd, I do not put my reasonable unbelief on a par with an unreasonable belief and say "I don't know," but insist that upon those affirming devolves the proof; and unless the idea can be logically demonstrated as consistent with truth and sense, my fearless and simple denial absolutely proves and establishes the fact, startling though it be to the unthinking millions, that there is no God!

And the world will be infinitely better without one.

OTTO WETTSTEIN.

Truthseeker (New York).

Outside man is no salvation.—*Feuerbach.*

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 86 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mr. F. Millar, "The Struggle for Existence."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Remedies for Poverty"

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, a members' special meeting; important business.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Why I am an Atheist."

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Christianity versus Paganism."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, E., 7.45, Mr. C J. Hunt, "Life and Death."

Edmonton Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, a lecture,

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Christianity and Woman."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "An Hour with Rénan's 'Life of Jesus.'"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road. N.W., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Can Man by Searching Find God?" preceded by a recital from "Macbeth."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Who Wants to Go to Heaven?"

Old Southgate—Opposite Cherry Tree, 7, Sam Standring, "God's Wicked Ways."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, G. Cave-Hill, "Monism"; 7, Capt. C. Pfoundes, R.G.S., "Theosophy, its Follies and Failings"; 8.30, music and recitations.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. R. Forder, a lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, various speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. Tolman Garner, "The Dying Creed."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Major-General A. Phelps, "Vaccination at Work," with lime light views.

Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 122 Ingram Street; at 6.30, Soiree.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, Mr. A. Hall will give a reading: Morality of Atheism.

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, 6.30, special important general meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. G. Franks, "Are Foreign Missionaries Successful?"

Liverpool — Camden Hall, Camden Street, at 11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion: "Purified Christianity: its effects on Humanity," Mr. Batricksen to open; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, secular sermon, "Unto the Greek's Foolishness."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, an entertainment or social evening will be given.

Newcastle-on-Tyne — 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, meeting of Sunday Music League; 7.30, important business meeting of members; on Wednesday, Mr. J. Sadler will open a debate on "Socialism."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. Edward Carpenter, 3, "Musical Vibrations" (with experiments); 7, "Foreign Competition." Tea at 5.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King 7, Mr. Waddington, "The Second Advent of Christ Critically Examined in the Light of Reason and Science."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park. June 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkwell Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—March 9, Nottingham. April 13, Nottingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—March 16, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—March 9, Hyde Park. April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—March 9, Liverpool. April 6, Liverpool.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 11.] SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE QUEEN AND THE BIBLE.

FOR a whole generation the religious press used the famous story of the Queen being asked by an African chief what was the secret of England's greatness, and replying, with the Bible in her hand, "*This* is the secret of England's greatness." The story was not only told and retold, but illustrated in the pictorial organs of piety. There stood the African chief, and there the Queen, grasping the blessed volume in her royal hand. But, alas, it was all a fable, one of those pious frauds in which the Christians have ever excelled, from the days of the Apostolic Fathers to the age of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Some time ago it was officially contradicted by the Queen's private secretary, and the poor old thing that bore such a burden of imposture went off to the knacker's yard for ever and aye.

Notwithstanding her seclusion, the Queen has seen a good deal of the world, for she has been brought into contact with all sorts of men, and taken part in all sorts of business. She knows very well, therefore, that the Bible is not the secret of England's greatness, but that it consists in our metal and mineral resources, our science, our geographical advantages as a commercial country, our naval enterprise, our migratory spirit derived from far-off ancestors, and the physical vigor born of a climate hard enough to eliminate weaklings yet temperate enough to admit of continuous industry. These are the influences that have made England strong, peopled such large tracts of the world with her stock, and given her an empire wider than that of Rome. Of course the Bible is kept as our great Protestant fetish, but when our secular welfare conflicts with its teachings they are quietly ignored, or else the hirelings of the Churches receive the hint to explain them away. A spasmodic protest may be made by a few honest conservatives, yet it attracts but little attention, and the reign of religious hypocrisy is practically undisturbed.

A recent case in point is furnished by the Victoria Divorce Bill, which allows the absolute separation of husband and wife for other reasons than adultery. Desertion by the husband, for instance, is rationally held to be a sufficient ground for freeing the wife. The colony resolved to have the Bill, and Lord Salisbury's government could not advise the Queen to exercise her veto. Yet she is Queen *dei gratia*—by the grace of God, as may be read on our coinage; she is Defender of the Faith; she is the head of the Church of England; she reigns over a nation whose laws declare the Bible to be the Word of God, and subject those who bring it into "disbelief and contempt" to imprisonment as blasphemers. Now it is perfectly clear that the Victoria Divorce Bill flies in the very face of the "inspired" teaching, and the *Guardian*—that sixpenny organ of sober orthodoxy—utters a justifiable complaint against its being allowed to pass into law. "Of the provisions of the Bill," the *Guardian* writes, "it is enough to say that they allow divorce for causes which cannot by any conceivable ingenuity be brought under the principle definitely laid down by our Lord, even on the laxest interpretation of his words." It may, of course, be argued by astute clerics like the Bishop of Peterborough, that the Sermon on the Mount applies to public and not to private life; but, as the *Guardian* observes, "divorce is a matter of private life, closely affecting personal conduct." Curiously enough, also, as the *Guardian* farther remarks, "the law of marriage is almost the only subject on which our Lord has laid down a definite practical rule, and the Victoria Divorce Bill openly contradicts that rule." We agree with our pious contemporary that "the Christianity that leads to such a result as this is a very nominal affair."

What is the "definite practical rule" of divorce laid down by Jesus Christ? It is to be found in Matthew v., 31, 32.

> "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is divorced committeth adultery."

This rule is one-sided. It does not contemplate the wife's having any rights against the husband. Her adultery frees him, but his adultery does not free her. She is his, under all circumstances, as long as he chooses to keep her. But, one-sided as the rule is, it is perfectly clear. Fornication, which in married persons is adultery, is the only ground of divorce. This fact was insisted on in Mr. Gladstone's recent article in the *North American Review*. Yet the colony whose Attorney-General prosecuted Mr. Joseph Symes passes a Bill in the teeth of Christ's teaching, a Bill allowing other causes of divorce than the incarnate God permitted, thus showing the most practical contempt for the very Scripture which Mr. Symes impeaches. The Tory Government, led by that Christian nobleman, Lord Salisbury, accepts it without a protest. The Liberal opposition, led by that Christian statesman, Mr. Gladstone, utters not a word of complaint. And our Christian sovereign, Queen Victoria, gives her consent to the Bill becoming law in the most important colony of her empire.

Surely we may repeat the *Guardian's* observation that such a Christianity is "a very nominal affair." The present age abounds with unctuous cant about the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon, we are told, contains the moral charter of morality, the everlasting foundation of righteousness. Yet we see a Christian colony setting the moral charter aside, and shifting off the everlasting foundation, for its own social convenience; the Christian statesmen of the mother country conniving at the blasphemous defiance of God Almighty; and the royal Defender of the Faith letting it be flagrantly flouted under her very eyes. At the same time Freethinkers are treated with contumely, and subjected to legal penalties, for openly disputing the divinity of teachings to which their persecutors and oppressors show a lip homage in

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religious worship and a practical contempt in the business and pleasure of life. Could there be a grosser instance of hypocrisy? Is such a creed, and are such votaries, to be criticised gingerly? Can it be wrong, in such a case, to let the stern voice of truth take an accent of derision. When men are honest, and practise what they profess, even at their own cost, their very bigotry is in a measure respectable. But when they profess one thing and practise another, and at the same time uphold laws to gag the mouths of self-denying sceptics, they invite the sharpest rebuke, and have no right to protest if denunciation is mingled with disdain.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

JOSEPH DE MAISTRE, one of the shrewdest of Catholic controversialists, made the remark that "nothing accords so well with the religious as the military spirit." Both are essentially founded on arbitrary despotism. General Booth no less than General Ignatius Loyola has seen the advantage of combining soldierly discipline with fanatical zeal. Alike, both in their aims and in their organisation, there is this difference between the Jesuits and the Salvation Army, that the one is virtually a secret society, working in unobtrusive silence, while the other obtains its effects by show and noise. It is this which makes the former the more dangerous enemy, for, though the power of a secret society is usually overrated, and never more so than in the case of the Jesuits, one is always less certain as to the issue of grappling a foe in the dark.

Protestants may be astounded at the statement that the aims of the Jesuits and of the Salvation Army are the same. But ostensibly, at any rate, this is so. Both seek to establish the kingdom of Christ, the reign of religion. Both regard Jesus as the great captain of their salvation and themselves as pre-eminently his followers, gladly enduring contumely and persecution for his sake. That they interpret the religion of Jesus differently does not alter this fact.

No one will ever understand the Jesuits who does not admit that not only are they Christians, but Christians of the most consistent and devoted type. Dedicated to the greater glory of God their object is to carry the name of Jesus over the world. Placing God before man and the interests of religion above everything else, they are consistent in deliberately subordinating all the interests of the world to making paramount the will of God. What Macaulay calls their "unscrupulous laxity and versatility in the choice of means" is warranted to them by the great object they have in view. It is just the thoroughness of their religion which has made their name a byeword of consecrated fraud in the vocabulary of every Christian nation.

Carlyle's Scotch Protestant prejudices prevented his seeing this. By identifying "Unsaint Ignatius and his black militia" with cant and insincerity his powerful pen aided popular misjudgments. The Jesuit may be, usually is, deceitful, becoming like Paul "all things to all men," to save some, but he is in deadly earnest. What else could support him in his warfare with society or in his personal trials?

The process of becoming a Jesuit Father occupies at least seventeen years, during which he is under constant supervision. All this time his individual will is subordinated and his mind and spirit trained to the purposes of the Society of Jesus. As a novice he first endures thirty days solitude and perpetual silence. His mind is directed to thoughts of God and Eternal Life, and especially to the horrors of Judgment and Eternal Hell, pictures of which are placed in his cell. Not till he realises the horror of eternal misery and that he must be crucified to the world to escape it, is he permitted to go on. He must then show his ability to bear the cross and perform menial offices for his superiors. A Jesuit novice must carry the slops as though it were a sacred chalice. He must put off the old man, Adam, and put on the new man, Christ. Father, mother, home, country, and kindred are renounced to follow Jesus—that is his superiors who are the chosen body-guard of the faith. "Not my will but thine" becomes his motto.

Implicit, unquestioning obedience to orders is the cement of the whole fabric of Jesuitism. In the *Constitutions* of the order it is written: "Let all be convinced, that those who live under obedience are bound to let themselves be set in motion and directed by Divine Providence through the medium of their Superiors, exactly as if they were dead bodies."

Father Anderledy, the Black Pope, has as much power as any commander-in-chief in time of war. Every member of the black militia is at his absolute disposal. To speak, as many writers do, of secret assassinations and other crimes being the work of over zealous Jesuits betrays insufficient knowledge. The corporate body must be held innocent or guilty for the action of the whole of its members. The entire purpose of the society is to make itself everything, and the individual nothing, but an instrument to carry out its objects.

The faculties given to the General of the Jesuits specifically extend to his employing any person in its service who is not a member of the order. It is this which has given rise to so much controversy about Crypto Jesuits, Jesuits of the short robe, etc. Jesuits may without much mental reservation deny that those are Jesuits who have not passed through the process and taken the vows of the order. But they cannot deny that others are affiliated to their ranks and working in their service who are not technically Jesuits. Men like Mr. W. S. Lilly and Mr. St. George Mivart are in this category. Judged by their writings I should guess they were working with the Jesuits, though I could no more determine their exact relations to that order than they could mine to the Sat Bhai.

J. M. WHEELER

(To be concluded.)

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IX.

ON "CHRIST AND HUMANITY."

To the Rt. Rev. Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[CONCLUDED.]

PRACTICALLY, my lord, you have no remedy for poverty. When you talk vaguely about co-operation and profit-sharing you are not speaking as an Archbishop. Such things have no conceivable relation to your Scriptures or your Church. All you recommend, as an Archbishop, is that the clergy shall take an intelligent interest in social questions; and, apparently, that laymen, whether employers or workmen, shall look up to them as divinely appointed guides. But the clergy have been the people's "guides" for ever so many centuries; indeed, for a long while, the people had *no other* guides; yet the result of their leading is the deplorable state of things which your Grace sees to be fraught with peril of social revolution.

Christ himself, your blessed Lord and Master, never dreamed of abolishing poverty. He looked upon it as a perennial institution—"The poor ye have always with you." Nay, if the words of the Sermon on the Mount are to be taken in their plain, honest sense, like the words of any other preacher, he looked upon poverty as a blessing. "Blessed be ye poor," he exclaimed, and "Woe unto you rich." I cannot conceive, therefore, why you wish to see poverty eliminated. It is making yourself wiser than

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the Scripture, it is setting yourself up against the teaching of God. I must admit, however, that your practice—one sense—is more orthodox than your profession. You take and spend, or save for yourself, a princely income of £15,000 a year, and do your utmost to inflict poverty upon all who produce what you consume. I do not doubt, indeed, that you would cheerfully take a much larger salary, and still further qualify your "dearly beloved" paymasters, the people, to receive all the blessings that are promised in the next world to those who have been poor and miserable in this.

Your Grace devotes a whole chapter to the subject of Purity. You do not expend much eloquence on the vices of idleness and luxury, and it is natural that as an Archbishop, sprung from the privileged classes, you should declare that "Aristocratical institutions in themselves tend to the substantial preservation of 'the Family' as the ground of society." Such a statement, however, is belied by history. Every social student is well aware that family life is most real, durable, and pure among the masses of the people who come into close contact with nature, and whose busy lives prevent the perversion of their instincts.

Speaking as the clerical head of the English Church, it is also natural that you should reprobate the Romish practice of Confession, which the High Church party is trying to re-introduce. Before the Revolution the Catholic Church "had absolute command of all education and of every official rank, and worked through the confessor's access to every home." And with what result?

> "Memoirs of the time make one feel the influence of religion striking every vein of the body—and not the slightest *rapprochement* between it and morals. It was not *à la mode* then, to be a good father or a good husband, wrote a keen observer who had been through it all. Great men went from a mass to an orgy, and numbered great clergy among their intimates. A famous courtesan boarded in a convent, and astonished no one."

The picture might have been painted in far darker colors, but it will suffice as it is. Your Grace thinks it a condemnation of Confession. But is it not a condemnation of Christianity? The *roués*, courtesans, and priestly and titled scoundrels of that age were intensely pious; and their conduct is one of the many proofs that the ages of faith are the ages of filth.

Society is far purer now than it was in the days of Christianity's unquestioned ascendancy. The only cure for sensuality is thought, and this is a thinking age. Still, there are large classes of thoughtless persons, both among the rich and the poor, and you give us, in flying touches, a shocking picture of their depravity. You refer to the dreadful evil of prostitution, and although syphilis is too bold a word for an Archbishop, you speak of "a river of poison flowing into the blood of this nation." But why does prostitution exist in Christendom after all the preaching, all the religious publications, and all the religious training of the young in Sunday schools? What is the use of a religion that cannot abolish the most flagrant social evils? Is there not something radically wrong in Christian methods of reform? I assert that there is, and history bears out my contention. Diseases cannot be treated successfully without a proper diagnosis, and your diagnosis is wrong. The *causes* of such evils as prostitution must be studied. They are more physical and economical than moral. No woman, except a phenomenal Messalina, would sell herself nightly to the first man willing to pay her price. Any girl may be led astray by her animalism, but she is driven into the brothel by the hypocrisy of Christian society and the difficulty of earning an honorable livelihood in an overcrowded labor market. You may preach till doomsday, but you will never diminish prostitution to any serious extent while its causes are in full operation; and all your rescue work is merely the drawing out, for filtration, of a few bucketsful of water from a muddy stream.

Purity is a large subject, my lord, and there is an aspect of it that escapes your attention. It does not occur to you that the Church, by placing the Bible unreservedly in the hands of boys and girls, is the cause of more corruption than it will ever cure. There are portions of the Old Testament which the Jews would not allow their sons to read before the age of thirty; yet those very portions are thrust into the hands of Christian children as soon as they are able to read. Downright, brutal, gratuitous filth is forced upon them as the Word of God. What wonder, then, that the impurity of adults should be the constant theme of pulpit eloquence? There is an old adage which I read in your Scriptures—Physician heal thyself! And I tell you it is idle—nay, worse than idle; the veriest hypocrisy—to preach against impurity to men and women, while you force every successive generation of children to read, ay and to reverence, a volume which contains some of the most libidinous, and some of the most disgusting passages in the whole range of human literature.

There is another evil on which you touch—Drink. You admit that "Intemperance is in far greater rage and ravage" among us than it was among "those Gentiles" referred to by Saint Peter. Alluding to Africa, you say that "the earth's long-sealed dark continent, stored with her grandest products, is being developed for the wealth of the world through the application of intoxication to its innumerable tribes by civilised traders and Christian merchants." What a shameful confession! Drink-sodden populations at home, and the drink-curse carried abroad for the desolation of the heathen! Mohammedanism puts down Drink among its myriads of African converts, while the converts of your missionaries—according to the testimony of Joseph Thompson, the famous traveller—include all the drunkards and loose livers on the continent.

Christianity has had a grand opportunity, and has failed for the simple reason that it could not succeed. In the atmosphere of the church or the cloister it may flourish, but in the free air of life it withers away. Its only legitimate province is to prepare men's hypothetical souls for a dubious future life. When it meddles with the affairs of this life it betrays its hopeless incapacity. Happily the world is turning to other agencies for relief and advancement. Science is taking the place of Faith, and Humanity the place of Christ.

G. W. FOOTE.

SOLD BUT NOT BOUGHT.

Chief Rabbi Adler had a humor of his own. He was pestered once by a miserable fellow who, finding his plaints unavailing, said he would go off and enrol himself as a "converted Jew." The Rabbi bade him go, and be a better Christian than he had been a Jew. The man slunk away, but was soon surprised at being summoned again to the Rabbi's presence. "For fear you should change your mind whilst walking, I have ordered a cab to take you to the office of the Society you want to join," said he. The "convert" did not wait for the cab.

THE small kid had been taught to pray for all the family, and she had a list of "God bless ——" that was much longer than the usual prayer. It was "God bless papa, and God bless mamma, and God bless Uncle George," and so on. She had got it all so perfectly that nobody paid much attention to the names she put in. The grown-up sister happened to come into the nursery while she was saying her prayer, and that seemed to recall the child to a mistake she had made. She stopped a moment and then said: "Please God I made a mistake. Don't bless George Smith, 'cos Kittie went to the theatre to-night with Mr. Simpson, and I guess he's her new beau."

A conceited young parson once said: "This morning I preached to a congregation of donkeys!" "I thought so," retorted a lady, "when you called them your beloved brethren?"

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GREAT EVENTS.

[*Extracts from the Diary of a Gentleman at Hanwell, dated April* 1, 1901.]

It is all true! Baxter is a real prophet and Jesus Christ is just about to appear. All has happened just as predicted by Daniel, the Revelation of St. John and the Prophet Baxter. First the French and Germans went to war, then Boulanger, whose name bears the mark of the beast, united twenty-three kingdoms into a ten kingdomed confederacy as prophesied in Daniel and the *Christian Herald*. It was a rare good thing for the stockbrokers and speculators and newspapers. What a rush there was for the last editions containing full particulars of the battle of Armageddon. And then what excitement at the reported capture of Gog and Magog. When the front doors of heaven were opened the great red dragon appeared in the sky and with his tail drew down a third part of the stars, and the Scarlet Woman seated on the scarlet wild beast with seven heads and ten horns—every one declared they had seen nothing like it at Barnum's Show. When a new Napoleon arose and became king of Syria and made a seven years' covenant with the Jews, all Christians saw plainly that the end was coming. Bishops began to give more away in charity; thousands gave up work and took to preaching; special correspondents were sent to all parts of the world to watch for the appearance of Anti-Christ, and the midnight cry arose "Behold the Bridegroom cometh."

What a great day was that when 144,000 male virgins, "not defiled with women," were collected from all parts of the earth, and ascended bodily into heaven, darkening the air as they flew upward. People then expected that the graves would give up their dead, and large prices were demanded for skulls and other portions of skeletons. And then the monstrous locusts with men's faces, women's hair, and lion's teeth, which came up out of the bottomless pit, and defied all the traps that were set to catch them, spread consternation everywhere. Everyone gave up their customary avocations except the author of *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*. Earthquakes, voices, thunders, and lightnings in the skies abounded, and hail and fire mingled with blood, fell on the earth, and a third part of the trees and all green grass was burnt up between Oct. 2 and 20, 1896, as predicted in *The Great Crisis* of the Rev. M. Baxter. After that there was war in heaven, the downfall of Satan to the earth, the flight of Christians to the wilderness of Sinai, and one third of the sea turned into blood. This was followed by the advent of Demons, Lion-headed Horses, Famine, Pestilence, Martyrdom, and General Smash.

Hallelujah the Lord has come! At last, on this fateful day, April the 1st, 1901, watchful Christians have assembled from all parts, most of them provided with clean nightdresses, Jew's harps, and parachutes. Mr. Baxter, attired in a long white robe, was the first to ascend, in order to meet the Lord in the air. And the Lord did descend, with a shout. Poor Baxter heard it, and endeavored to get ont of the way; but, alas! it was too late. The Lord came down all the way from heaven and fell on poor Baxter with such velocity that the crust of the earth gave way, and both fell through into the bottomless pit, where they were received by the Devil and his angels. We are now anxiously awaiting their reappearance.

LUCIANUS.

AUNTIE, did the angels carry Mrs. Jones up to Heaven?" "Why, Charlie, I think so. Mrs. Jones was a good woman." "She was an awfully fat woman. The angels must be strong." Passengers in the train from Woodlawn turned to look at the six-year-old boy who was bent on getting information. He was a manly little fellow, with a bright, pretty face that showed intelligence beyond his years. His young aunt seemed to be anxious to stop the flow of questions, but he was bound to know something more about angels then and there. "How do you know there are angels, auntie?" "Because we read about them. Wait until you can read and then you will know more about them." "But why—why don't we see the angels? Did you ever see an angel?" "Hush! don't talk so loud, Charlie. Of course we don't see them, but we see their pictures. Don't you remember the angels in the pretty book that Uncle John sent you?" "Yes, but—but where do the angels get their pictures taken, auntie? Is there a gallery where they take pictures of angels—only just of angels?" "Perhaps so. I don't know." "Then why don't the angels put on more clothes when they have their pictures taken."

ACID DROPS.

Hugh Price Hughes is a good liar, but he is far from monopolising the virtue. The Christian imagination, like old Jahveh in the Book of Genesis, broods upon the chaos of ignorance and credulity, and hatches a cosmos of falsehood. There are as many species and specimens of Christian lies as there are of organisms on the face of the earth. One variety is associated with the name of Thomas Paine. Stories of this famous "infidel" are produced every year. It is really wonderful how the Christians keep it up. Now and then one fancies the limit of invention is reached, when up starts a fresh stock, and one is left wondering at the fertility of the Christian mind.

From Dr. Monroe's *Ironclad Age* we see that a Campbellite preacher at Dexter, in Missouri, has been retailing a new yarn about Thomas Paine. When the "infidel" was on his death-bed his daughter said to him, "My mother is a Christian and you are an infidel. Now which shall I follow during life?" And Paine answered, "Follow your mother." How pretty! The only defect in the story is this—Thomas Paine *had no children!*

Another new Paine story reaches us from Redditch, where it was retailed by the Rev. Earl Gray. It appears that Thomas Paine—God knows where and God knows when—was "once journeying to a distant city." Being a man of considerable means, he naturally went on foot. A waggon boy offered him a ride, and of course Paine accepted it. Of course, also, that youth had read the *Age of Reason*. The interest of the story requires it, and Christian invention is not to be baulked by mere accuracy and common sense. Well, they began talking about religion, and Paine told the boy that the Bible was undoubtedly the Word of God. He reasoned against his own *Age of Reason* and "removed all sceptical impressions from the young man's mind."

Charles Lamb wanted to "feel his bumps" when a dreadful fool was boring the company. We should like to feel the Rev. Earl Gray's bumps. His head must be fearfully and wonderfully made, and we hope the skull, at least, will be secured for a phrenological museum. What the brain is like we can hardly imagine. Unless we had seen this Paine story in print we should have hesitated to believe that there was anything in the shape of a man silly enough to relate it, or any audience, even of Christians, silly enough to listen to it.

This Rev. Earl Gray described Paine as "dissolute," and for some mysterious reason, compared him to Judas Iscariot. He forgot to say what cause Paine ever betrayed. This reverend gentleman reminds us of the person who saw a striking resemblance between peacocks and comets. They both had tails. Similarly, Thomas Paine and Judas Iscariot were both human beings, and there the analogy ends.

It will be observed that when the Rev. Earl Gray wishes to damnify an infidel he compares him to Judas Iscariot. What does this show? Why that the Christians have a prize villain of their own with which they measure others.

We have no patience to follow the Rev. Earl Gray in his stupidities about the "last dying speech and confession" of eminent Freethinkers. The real facts are given in *Infidel Death-Beds*. If Mr. Gray is able to impugn the truth of that little volume we will give him the use of our columns.

It is no wonder that belief in witchcraft survives in places where the chief mental pabulum is drawn from the Book which says "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." At Penzance, two brothers named Jilbart have been bound over to keep the peace, they having threatened to carry out the Bible command on an old woman named Mrs. Clarke, who they believed had bewitched their horses.

An American Sunday paper says the preacher in denouncing Sunday papers is simply sticking up for his trade. Let people do as they please on Sunday and his occupation would be gone. It is simply a struggle for trade between the preacher and the Sunday paper.

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Talmage says he has a friend in his family who prevents his reading any unfavorable comments upon himself. He says this accounts for his cheerfulness. We also suspect it accounts for his vanity. But what a task the friend must have and how curtailed must Talmage's reading be.

A big book entitled *Woman's Suffrage Wrong* has recently been put out by Mr. J. McGrigor Allan. One of its chief arguments is that the Bible is opposed to woman's suffrage. There is no doubt that this eccentric controversialist is correct here. Paul is as flatly opposed to woman's emancipation as the spirit of the age is opposed to Paul.

A lecture delivered on behalf of the Church Association at the Town Hall, Cardiff. by the Rev. C. H. Wainwright on the subject "Is the Church of England Protestant?" resulted in a free fight between the contending factions of High and Low Church. Both the lecturer and chairman were continually interrupted, and the noise was deafening. Policemen were called in but without avail. The religious spirit was roused, blows followed words, and a free fight ensued in which feet, fists and sticks played prominent parts. The hatred displayed by Christians towards each other is scarcely exceeded by that which they bear to the infidel.

Nine of the clergy attached to St. Swithin's, Leeds, have gone over to Rome. It was founded by the late E. B. Pusey, and a recent circular issued on its behalf says it has well fulfilled the object for which it was built.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes keeps on energetically touting in the *Methodist Times* for contributions for Methodist Sisterhoods, but takes no further notice of the challenges sent him as to the Atheist Shoemaker.

The *Birmingham Gazette* reports a rare old shindy in a Wesleyan chapel in the Black Country. The organist and the choirmaster had a misunderstanding, which led to a scuffle in the gallery and an exchange of blows. Prayers were disturbed, and the music went to the dogs, the choirmaster starting one tune and the organist playing another. At length the preacher was obliged to terminate the quarrel by pronouncing the Benediction. But the quarrel was not really terminated; it was only adjourned; for the partisans of the organist and the choirmaster breathed out slaughter against each other outside the gospel-shop. How these Christians love one another!

On the 21st of Feb. the Rev. Henry Duncan ascended to heaven from Ozark, Alabama, where he was then hanged for the murder of his wife.

Thousands of pilgrims are visiting the "miraculous" wells at Miklostolek in Hungary, but if they crowd like worshippers they fight like fanatics, and the military have had to be called out to quiet their dissensions.

A young man named Clark has gone wrong at Plaistow. For two years he has been a regular attendant at St. John's Free Church, and on Sunday evening the spirit of the Lord fell upon him and he prophesied. "The end of the world is at hand," he shrieked, "prepare to meet your God. Listen not to false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, but repent! To-morrow sees the end of all things. Prepare, prepare, prepare!" And they *did* prepare. Six men collared him and chucked him out, but it took them all their time, for the spirit of the Lord wrought powerfully within him.

George Lambert cut Grace Lloyd's throat at Lurg, near Greta, Victoria. He cut his own throat with the same razor. According to an entry in his diary, God told him to do it, and the murderer and his victim were going to heaven together. Religion has a curious effect on some minds.

A boy named West drowned himself in a pond at Great Malvern. On the bank was found a piece of paper, containing the following in his handwriting:—"Oh, Lord, give me a new heart, and the Holy Spirit. Pardon all my sins for Christ's sake, amen!" Talmage please note.

George Edward Conyers shot himself on Newcastle Town Moor. He hoped "God would pardon the rash act." Another for Talmage. It is really getting monotonous.

The new Tithe Bill of the Government seeks to release the Church from scandal by abolishing distress for tithes, and making the action for recovery against the landlord. So far there is little objection, but in also seeking to redeem tithes and making over the redemption to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners it is helping permanently to divert money which though now devoted to religion may some day be required for other objects.

Nothing is more certain than that tithes were originally in part devoted to the maintenance of the poor. To use them again for this purpose, or for promoting free education and recreation, would not only be legitimate but just.

Judging from some advertisements in the *Catholic Times* the confidence trick flourishes in religious circles like a green bay tree. One priest advertises for cash for a poor Mission dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. He will say Mass every Sunday for benefactors, and send on some water from the Lourdes grotto—very likely obtained from the domestic tap. Another, who rejoices in the suggestive name of Fazakerley, advertises a long list of prayers to be sold for twelve pence. You begin any week, renew yearly, and are sure of the holy man's prayers as an offset to your peccadilloes. So universal is the holy man's charity that he will enrol the living or the dead on his prayer list, the only stipulation being that if he prays for a dead man the all-important shilling shall be paid by a living one.

The Rev. R. R. Dolling, late missioner of St. Agatha's Landport, appears to be, *mirabile dictu*, a honest man He permitted Mr. Headlam and others to give Sunday afternoon lectures on Christian Socialism in his church, whereupon his spiritual chief, the bishop of Winchester, drops on him and Mr. Headlam like a thousand of bricks, and as head of the mission, threatened to sever his connection if Mr. Dolling continued missioner, whereupon Mr. Dolling sent in his resignation, to the great grief, it is said, of his congregation.

Much nonsense has been talked about there being room in the church for all parties. The treatment of Mr. Dolling, who, according to his own account, has been driven from place to place, and of Mr. Headlam, who is prohibited from preaching in London, is a sufficient comment on the liberality of the Church.

The Rev. Mr. Mayrick, vicar of Landegfan-cum-Beaumaris, having failed to conduct public worship in his church for some time and having refused to allow the curate appointed by the Bishop of Bangor to do so, has been suspended for two years and has to pay the cost of the proceedings.

The writer of "Powder and Shot" in *The Weekly Times and Echo* wants to know if the prophet Jeremiah took his tot of absinthe daily. The question is suggested by the passage "He hath made me drunken with wormwood" (Lam. iii., 15). The "he" is usually taken to mean Jehovah. As the same lugubrious prophet says, in language more forcible than polite, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue and fall and rise no more" (Jer. xxv., 27). We can hardly think that the liquors of Palestine were so innocuous as they are sometimes represented by our Christian Temperance friends.

More thorough humbug than this gospel temperance business can scarcely be found unless it is with those who find vegetarianism in the Bible. The fact is the Church is forced by outside pressure to take up questions of secular interest, and hopes to regain lost ground by patronising "temperance" despite the example of its founder at Cana in Galilee.

The Rev. E. Bigoe Bagot, in introducing the claims of the Christian Evidence Society to the Manchester Ruridiaconal Conference, spoke of "the restless and ubiquitous propaganda of Infidelity under the name of Secularism." The Rev. Bagoe Bigot accused his opponents of "fallacies,"

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"misrepresentations," and "mendacious assertions." "Fibs and sophistry," "dirty work," and "blood poison of scepticism" were among the "choice derrangement of epitaphs" which he hurled at Secularists, to make good the claims of the C. E. S.

The Bishop of Rochester, preaching in St. Paul's Catheral on Sunday, said that "Christianity distinctly declines to be proved first and practised afterwards. Its practice and its proof go hand in hand, and its real evidence with its power." This is a pompous variation on the old tune of "Open your mouth, and shut your eyes, and take what the parson gives you."

Dr. Thorold also said that for such questions as that relating to the origin of evil "science properly so-called has nothing but unspeakable disdain and religion a solemn indignation." But of course "science properly so-called" and "religion" are the same thing in the mouth of a Bishop. Real science sees no difficulty in the origin of evil. "There's nothing good or ill, but thinking makes it so." The difficulty about toothache, for instance, doesn't come in until you say it is an ingenious device of Almighty Goodness. Then the joke is enough to shake an elephant.

The Bishop of Ripon, preaching at Bradford, admitted that modern criticism had played havoc with old ideas about the Bible. Things that were thought to have been written by Moses and Isaiah were really written by other persons. But what did it matter? Whoever wrote them, there they were. The grand old Book stood firm all the same. In other words the Christian will stick to his fetish, and priests will still earn a good living by looking after the joss-house.

"One who knows" writes in the *Daily News* that "we have more genuine cases of boycotting in Herts than in all Ireland," and he gives cases illustrating the pressure and injustice brought to bear on chapel goers by the church party.

It was elicited by a question in the House of Commons that children attending the Fisherton National School, Salisbury, had received religious instruction contrary to the express wish of their parents, and it was stated that others who had been exempted have been, in winter, shut up in a porch between the inner and outer doors in darkness and cold and without instruction. Salisbury is a most pious city, where School Boards are detested. This treatment of the rights of nonconformists indicates what the Church party would do if it only dared.

Who is the Philip Childs, cabinet maker, of Islington, whose name appears in the papers as the prosecutor of a poor old man for embezzlement? The jury acquitted the prisoner, and on the whole rightly, for, although the old man seems to have helped himself, he had apparently been badly used by his employer who was actually in his debt to the tune of £6. According to the evidence the prosecutor was a Freethinker and the prisoner a Christian. If this be true we are sorry for it. Meanness and unkindness are always hateful, and we detest them all the more when they are displayed by those who profess to share our convictions.

The superintendent of the Christian Lad's Society at Finsbury Park, is accused of indecent conduct with one of the Christian lads, and has been remanded.

The Pope is said to be preparing yet another Encyclical letter on the subject of Socialism. Poor Pecci! The world's course will hardly be altered by letter writing.

The Rev. C. Friskin, a Presbyterian minister at Spennymoor, recently died in his pulpit. The event was natural enough, for the reverend gentleman's heart was affected. But what a lot of trashy sermons would be preached on the event if a Freethought lecturer fell dead upon the platform in the midst of an "infidel" discourse. Heart disease or no heart disease, such a death would be treated as "a judgment."

The Vicar of All Soul's, Brighton, got chronicled in the papers what he calls a remarkable answer to prayer. For some time past the schools connected with the Church had been in financial difficulty. On Friday public prayers were offered for help, and Saturday's post brought the rev. gentleman a cheque of £50 from an unknown friend. Wonderful. Almost as wonderful and astounding as Muller's Orphanage supported entirely by prayer and advertising. If the vicar wishes to test the value of prayer he should not express his wants publicly but obey the precept of Jesus, retire to his closet and pray in secret, and then see if his father, who sees in secret, will reward him openly.

The Presbyterians of America are much exercised upon a revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which has been proposed by the Presbyteries of New York and Chicago, and the question is being put to the vote, as though the decrees of an immutable deity could be affected by the opinions of Presbyteries. The parsons take care that hell is always as hot as the people will stand it, and it is only because they show signs they will not stand it that the sky-pilots now hint that the temperature has been reduced.

By a vote of 22 to 18 the Presbytery of Cincinnati have declared that "infants dying in infancy are saved." What a narrow escape for the poor babes! Three more votes would have damned them forever.

The Archbishop of Paris has issued a blast against Cremation, which he describes as an outrage on Catholic doctrine, tradition, and sentiment. It is, he declares, one of the devices of the atheistic Municipal Council of Paris to destroy religion. Poor Archbishop! We half pity him. The time was when his Church could murder Freethinkers. Now it can only scream at them.

M. Rénan takes a peculiar view of Cremation. Like Voltaire, he says that anyone can have his body when he has done with it, and he does not care whether he is burnt, buried, or dissected. But he thinks the survivors have an interest in the matter. Burying the dead is sad enough, but burning them is still sadder. We fail to see why, however. It is custom that counts most in these things.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward, the author of *Robert Elsmere*, is trying to set up an imitation of Toynbee Hall on the lines of the experiment suggested in her novel. The circular of the "University Hall" scheme is a very lengthy document, but the *Pall Mall Gazette* thought it good copy, and printed it in full on Monday evening. University Hall is to be "a fresh rallying point for all those to whom Christianity, whether by inheritance or process of thought, has become a system of practical conduct, based on faith in God, and on the inspiring memory of a great teacher, rather than a system of dogmas based on a unique revelation." Like other schemes, it will require cash. £700 a year will be needed for three years, and we have no doubt it will be raised. But we have also no doubt that the scheme will finally fail. There is no logicality in the principle it embodies. Christianity without doctrine, the worship of Christ without a belief in his deity, a special veneration and study of the Bible without regarding it as inspired; such things are sentimental compromises, doomed to extinction in the mighty struggle of opposites like Catholicism and Freethought, each of which has a vital idea that acts upon every study and every department of practice.

"Nunquam," of the Manchester *Sunday Chronicle*, replies as follows to a correspondent who complains of his hostility to the Church, and says that a Christian, who has a heaven in prospect, is better off than the unbeliever:—"But I don't object to the Christian consoling himself with the hope of a heaven to come. What I object to is the bishop drawing ten thousand a year for telling me that I shall be damned if I don't agree with him."

An African clergyman, in preaching from the text: "And multitudes came unto Him, and He healed them of divers diseases," said: "This is a terrible text, my dying congregation. Disease is in the world. The small-pox slays its hundreds, the cholera its thousands, and yellow fever its tens of thousands, but in the language of our text, if you take the divers, you are gone. These earthly doctors can cure small-pox, cholera, and yellow fever, if they get there in time, but nobody but the good Lord can cure the divers."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 16, Public Hall, Queen Street Arcade, Cardiff: at 11, "After Death—What?"; at 3, "The Gospel of Secularism"; at 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

Friday, March 21, Gladstone Hall, Military Road, Chatham, at 8, "What has Christianity Done?"

March 23 and 30, Hall of Science London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

R. FENN.—We cannot insert business notices in this column.

J. M. HYSLOP.—We will devote an article to Archdeacon Farrar's seven silly questions.

FREETHINKING POLICE OFFICER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

MISS MCINNES, Goodram Gate, York, supplies the *Freethinker* and other secular publications.

A. R. WILSON.—We respect your right to differ on some points. Very likely the Siamese twins differed about some things.

W. GODWIN.—For the circumstances of Darwin's death see *Infidel Death-Beds*, under his name, and *Darwin on God*, pp. 21, 22. There are no *material* advantages attached to membership of the N. S. S. except the possibility of assistance in distress.

R. D. WILLIAMS.—Mr. Foote appreciates the flattering resolution of the Swindon Branch, and hopes to merit its "steadfast support."

K. A. G.—Joseph Cook is not a biologist, except in the amateur sense of the word. Huxley is not likely to waste his time in discussing biological problems with anyone but a specialist.

QUIZ.—The explanation is absurd. There is not the slightest evidence of the existence of any Christians at Damascus before the Ascension. Besides, Paul says that Jesus was seen of 500 of the brethren *at once*. How could this be if 120 were at Jerusalem and 380 at Damascus? And why so many at Damascus (a foreign city) and so few in Jerusalem?

W. GUISE (Redditch) writes: "For a long time I was the only one in the town who regularly took in your admirable paper, but with some little trouble I have increased its local circulation to nearly twenty copies." Other dear readers, as the Christian editor would say, might go and do likewise.

L. BROWN.—Mr. Foote would have brought the matter before the N. S. S Executive, but Mr. Bradlaugh is averse to the idea of a testimonial or a banquet.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We never heard of Philip Childs before. He is not a member of the N. S. S.

C. TOMLINSON.—Improvements can only be made gradually, if they are to last. Besides, general advice is of little use; it is necessary to suggest something definite and practicable. Mr. Foote will gladly listen to anything of that kind. Meanwhile, if you take an active interest in the work of some Branch, you will see in what direction it is possible to move.

J. O'DONOVAN.—Received. Shall appear in our next.

J. H. S.—No worker in the cause "intrudes" in writing to us. We are always glad to hear from such. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. It is pleasant to learn that some of your Christian friends find the *Freethinker* "interesting" though it does not reflect their ideas.

G. WISE.—We give publicity to your statement that you have made no such reference to Mr. Foote's debate with the Rev. A. J. Harrison. Our correspondent said he heard you refer to the debate in a manner which justified his writing.

T. BOX.—Mr. Forder has been desired to attend to your complaint. Thanks for the cutting.

H. COURTNEY says he went to hear George Chainey at the Zepher Hall on "Revelation Revealed," and left in disgust because the lecturer had "conscientious objections to discussion." The chairman described him (Chainey) as "lately the Bradlaugh of America." Gods and fishes, what a Bradlaugh! Enough about poor George.

J. W. WITTERING.—Thanks for your congratulations. We should feel a good deal more thankful if the Grimsby Branch could be more active in propaganda. Is it not possible to make an effort?

J. D. LEGGET.—Cuttings are always welcome.

G. J. WARREN.—Mr. Foote is very uncertain about any open-air lecturing this year.

J. W.—We don't understand the extract. Could you send us the magazine?

A. GUEST.—Mount Olivet is about half a mile from Jerusalem, Bethany two miles. The supposition that the eastern declivity of the mount was called Bethany is only a plausible conjecture to avoid the difficulty of Luke saying he went "as far as Bethany." Why should there be even an apparent discrepancy in the word of God? As the Ascension is not mentioned by either of the apostles Matthew or John a slight discrepancy begets suspicion. Moreover it appears from Matthew xxviii., 16, that the last appearance of Jesus to his disciples and his charge to set on a mission to the Gentiles was given in Galilee.

F. SOUTHWELL, Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, will supply the *Freethinker* wholesale to newsagents.

HARRY ROSE.—Apply to the Liberation Society, Serjeant's Inn, Fleet St., E.C. We have no special work on the Church and Education.

HARRY LONG.—"Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, New York, U. S. A." is sufficient.

LAURET.—There is no verbatim report of Mr. Foote's speech on his election as President, but a pretty full one appeared in the *Freethinker* for Feb. 23.

C. EMMET.—Received with thanks.

W. WAKEFIELD.—Pleased to have the good wishes of such a veteran. You are right in saying that something should be done at Leeds. The present state of the Branch is a perfect scandal. If the recently-formed Federation does not improve matters in Leeds, the Organisation Committee will have to take the business in hand.

K. K.—The Truthseeker Publishing Co., 28 Lafayette Place, New York.

R. D. WILLIAMS.—Mr. Foote is uncertain as to the train.

G. H. WILSON.—The N. S. S. does not insist on Atheism, but it opposes all theology Perhaps you have perused an old copy of its Principles. They were revised two or three years ago. Mr. Forder, or the Branch secretary, will supply you with current copies.

FREETHINKER'S BENEVOLENT FUND.—D. Baker, £2.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—D. Baker, £2.

L. STANLEY.—Thanks for the cuttings.

J. BRUMAGE.—Glad to hear your health improves. Mr. Foote is getting better.

T. R. FOX.—The Sunderland Branch would have done well—in fact it *was* doing well—if it had not been driven from pillar to post. The bigots went to the proprietors of halls, and every placed was closed to them. Still, we should like to see a fresh effort in the town, where there are many Freethinkers. Perhaps the N.E. Secular Federation will see what can be done.

G. RUTLAND.—The Christians must be thankful for small mercies to crow over such a case. The man is not a member of the N. S. S.

QUID NUNC.—Conscience is an ambiguous term. It sometimes means the perception of right and wrong, sometimes the shrinking from the wrong, and sometimes remorse for having committed it. But the subject is too big for a paragraph.

T. CLARK.—Contents sheet shall be sent. Thanks.

R. E. HOLDING.—Yes, the presidency means work, but someone must do it. The Wiggans' sheet seems to us beneath contempt. We can't make paragraphs out of sheer idiocy. There must be something to catch hold of.

FREETHOUGHT.—We do not know of any statistics as to the percentage of crime among the various religious sects in England.

J. HOUNSTONE.—The subscription to the N. S. S. is 4s. per year, payable quarterly or annually. To be enrolled you require to write your name and address at the foot of the Principles. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, will supply you with the necessary form on application. Or you might join the Camberwell Branch any Sunday evening.

H. CALASCA.—Thanks for cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Echo—Truthseeker—Market Rasen Mail—Bulletin des Sommaires—Liberty—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethinker's Magazine—Freethought—The Hindu—Life Lore—Knowledge—Star—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Western Mail—Ashford Express—East Anglican Daily Times—Birkenhead News—Yorkshire Daily Chronicle—Eastern Evening News—Evening Standard—Devon Evening Express—Portsmouth Evening News—Fair Play—Gravesend and Dartford Reporter—Bradford Observer—Swindon Advertiser—Ashton-under-Lyne Reporter—L'Eclair—La Lanterne—La Battaille—Mot d'Ordre—Le Rappel—Petit Parisien—Western Figaro.

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

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SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a splendid audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening. He was in improved though by no means in perfect health, and managed to get through his work to the obvious satisfaction of the meeting. But the effort told on him the next morning. Happily, however, it produced no serious evil, and with proper care Mr. Foote will no doubt be soon himself again.

AFTER Mr. Foote's lecture, and a moving appeal for the Swedish prisoner by the chairman, Mr. Angus Thomas, a collection was taken up on behalf of Viktor Lennstrand and his gallant colleagues. A fair sum has been subscribed to this Fund, but up to the present very little has been done by the Branches.

MR. FOOTE lectures at Cardiff to-day. His subjects will be found in another column. We draw attention in this place to his visit, as it may meet the eyes of readers in the district who might regret to lose the opportunity of hearing the lectures.

MR. STANDRING'S free lecture on the "Church and the People" at the Hall of Science was well attended, and the discussion with the Rev. F. W. Ford, who appeared on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society, was satisfactory from the Freethought point of view. On the 13th, Mr. Foote concludes this series with a lecture on "Freethought and Christ," being opposed by Mr. Engstrom. These free lectures have been a great success and arrangements are being made for courses to be given at Milton Hall, Camberwell, and elsewhere.

WE are glad to report that Mr. Forder, the Secretary of the National Secular Society, is somewhat improved in health. He has been seriously unwell, and some of his friends were alarmed; but the milder weather is in his favor, and we hope he will speedily recover. Meanwhile he would do well to refrain from entering into any fresh lecturing engagements; indeed, we are of opinion that, with his chronic weakness of the chest, he ought not to lecture at all in the winter.

BY the way, there was a queer mistake in Mr. Forder's official report of the last N. S. S. Executive meeting, and Mr. Foote has desired him to correct it immediately in the *National Reformer*. The seconder of the resolution on Mrs. Besant's letter was not Mr. Foote but Mr. Truelove. Presidents are not in the habit of seconding resolutions.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—D. Baker £1; Collected at Camberwell after Mr. Foote's lecture £1 7s 0d.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—This fund will be closed on March 31. Friends having money to remit are requested to do so before that date. Twenty-five pounds have been forwarded to Sweden and the balance will be sent on April 1. I have to acknowledge the following sums:—R. Green, 5s.; W. Dexter, 1s.; W. Murton, 1s.; W. Putz, 1s.; J. Unsworth, 2s. 6d.; R. B. M., £1.—R. Forder, Secretary.

"WE have received from J. M. Wheeler, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C., England, a copy of his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, just out. It is a handsome cloth bound volume, costing about 1.50 dols., or 1.25 dols., for we never could readily reduce Brother Bull's pounds and shillings into good sound understandable money of the U.S. of A. The book fills a long-felt want, and every unbeliever wants it, and wants it bad and now. So write a letter to the above address and find out all about it."—*Ironclad Age.*

"J. M. WHEELER, associate editor of the London *Freethinker*, has done a good work in compiling and publishing a *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. The book will, as the author hopes, "do something to show how many of the world's worthiest men and women have been Freethinkers." With the exception that many Freethinkers who combined Spiritualism with Freethought are omitted, the book is as inclusive as could be desired. The price of the Dictionary in England is about $2, but the United States puts a tariff of 25 cents on each copy, presumably to encourage its republication in this country."—*Freethought.*

NEXT Sunday (March 23) the Battersea Branch will have a Tea and Soiree after the quarterly meeting. The tea will begin at 5.30, and it is hoped there will be a large muster.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Swindon Branch takes place to-day (March 16) at the Golden Lion, Bridge Street, at 7 o'clock. Members and friends are earnestly invited to attend.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Three Towns' Branch will be held this evening (March 16) at 7, at 100 Union Street, Plymouth. Very important business has to be transacted, and every member should attend.

THE Bethnal Green Branch is raising a little assistance for John Dell, a Freethinker eighty years of age, who is unable to earn anything. For fifty years he has been a helper of good causes, and now he needs a friendly hand. The secretary's address is Mr. J. Neate, 385 Bethnal Green Road, E. Donations will be thankfully received.

OUR veteran friend, Mr. Daniel Baker of Birmingham, has just celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday in an original manner which we should like to see become common. He sends us £5 to be divided amongst three Funds—the *Freethinker*, the Benevolent, and the Swedish Prisoner—in the proportions indicated elsewhere. Mr. Baker calls it a thank-offering. We presume he is grateful to Freethought for giving him a vivid interest in life at such an advanced age. May the snows fall gently on his honored head.

The Hindu, a large-sized journal published at Madras, prints a letter from its London correspondent on the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and his comments on the educational part of the missionary movement in India. Incidentally the "converted Atheist shoe-maker" is referred to. The writer says he knows a gentlemen who is neither a Wesleyan nor a Secularist, and who, after reading Mr. Foote's pamphlet, said: "Mr. Foote has the best of it. Mr. Hughes is nowhere."

WE are pleased to notice signs of increased activity among the Freethinkers of Paris. M. Clemetshaw of *La Verité* sends us papers announcing various re-unions, among which we notice discourses by citizen Schacre and Julien Vinson. Anti-clerical banquets for Good Friday are also being organised.

THE proposal to have Sunday concerts at Norwich has led to a wordy warfare in the columns of the papers, and people's eyes are being opened to see that the clerical opposition is just an attempt to prevent any rivalry to their own trade. At Swindon also the Sunday question is arousing attention, and letters from Freethinkers have been inserted in the local *Advertiser*.

SUNDAY football is being played in a field near "The Pig and Whistle," in the parish of High Laver. A correspondent of the *Essex County Chronicle* draws attention to this abominable outrage, and hopes it will be put a stop to. We fear it will take a very large quantity of hope to stop the ball from rolling. Another correspondent states that the clergyman of the parish church was hooted and groaned at for denouncing Sunday football in the name of the Lord. How dreadful! Poor old England is going to the dogs.

A SELECTION of the writings of Karl Heinzen, will be published at the *Freidenker* office, Milwaukee, under the title "German Radicalism in America."

A MISSIONARY states that in Japan only 7,000 children go to school where religious knowledge is part of the curriculum, but over 3,000,000 attend where the teaching is purely agnostic.

A JOURNAL for Freethinking women has been started in America by Matilda Joslyn Gage. It is entitled the *Liberal Thinker* and published by Josephine Cables Aldrich, Syracuse, New York.

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THE *Freethinkers' Magazine* for March is to hand. In addition to its usual varied contents it gives a portrait of A. T. Lilly, who has recently died, and a view of an institution which he has founded at Northampton, Mass., for teaching science to women without superstition.

MRS. LUCY COLMAN'S Reminiscences, which have been coming out in the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, are to be published in book-form.

A NEW Freethinker's Union has been established at Breslau in Germany.

THE *Truthseeker* gives its readers a cartoon, "Marriage as a Sacrament." A man with a whip is chained by the neck, with a big padlock, to a woman he is ill-using. The priest stands by with a key labelled "whom God hath joined let no man put asunder."

MR. GEORGE MEREDITH'S admirers will be glad to learn that a new novel from his pen may soon be expected.

THE Edmonton Liberal and Radical Club, which in 1886 refused the *Freethinker* admission to its reading-room, has by a full committee rescinded that resolution.

A PIOUS DODGE.

CHARLES HILL, of 13 Bedford Row, London, W.C., is the paid Secretary of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association. How many working men the Society boasts we are unable to say, but not a single one is to be found in the printed list of Vice-Presidents, who are all baronets, M.Ps., or esquires. Anyhow Mr. Hill has to earn his living, and to do this he must kick up a fuss. We are not aware that he has instituted any prosecution against the Gas Companies or other concerns that employ Sunday labor, although one would think it fell within the scope of his Society's action. But, on the other hand, Mr. Hill appears to be very anxious about Freethought meetings. Perhaps he deplores that working men should desecrate the Sabbath by walking to a Secular hall. May be he thinks it a violation of the "day of rest" to deliver a lecture or take part in a discussion, although preaching and praying fall into a different category. Whatever the reason, the fact is certain, that Mr. Hill is anxious about Freethought meetings. Still, he knows that Freethinkers are not easily frightened. Accordingly he tries a little judicious pressure on the proprietors of meeting-places. Here is a case in point.

The Woolwich Branch of the N. S. S. was started last summer after one of Mr. Foote's open-air lectures. Now it numbers nearly fifty members. Its Sunday evening meetings are held at the Assembly Rooms connected with the "Sussex Arms." A modest charge is made for admission to cover the expenses, the costliest seat being obtainable for threepence. The proceedings have been orderly, not even the timidest inhabitant has complained, and the Branch would, if left alone, go on quietly spreading its principles by the force of persuasion. But the soul of Mr. Hill is perturbed. He lives six miles or so away, but his piety (or his bigotry) is far-reaching, and he has addressed the following letter to the proprietor of the Assembly Rooms:—

Sir,—A copy of a bill has been sent to me announcing lectures at the Sussex Arms on Sundays to which a charge of 2d. for admission is made. Allow me to inform you that such Lectures are illegal under heavy penalties and that you incur risk of prosecution. The statute under which the charges are illegal is 21 George III. c. 49. Several companies have incurred heavy pecuniary losses under the statute, and you would be wise to consult a respectable solicitor on the subject. The Act is by no means dead.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, CHARLES HILL.

The Act in question certainly exists, but the rest of Mr. Hill's statements are imagination or dogmatism. It is impossible to say what view the judges would take if some common informer—say Mr. Hill—were to set the Act in motion. Anyhow, if Mr. Hill's Sabbatarian soul is exercised about Sunday meetings, it is difficult to see why he should bestow his attentions upon Woolwich. There are Freethought meeting-places like the Hall of Science that are far more notorious. They have existed for years, and the old Act of George III. is defied in them every Sunday. Mr. Hill does not seem to mean business. His letter is probably an attempt to put an end to a series of Freethought meetings by frightening the proprietor of the building in which they are held.

Should Mr. Hill, however, really mean business, we shall have to do two things. *First*—waiving the question of what the Woolwich meetings have to do with Sunday labor—we shall have to ask some of the Vice-Presidents of Mr. Hill's Society whether they approve of this underhand way of trying to suppress Freethought. There is Mr. Arnold Morley, the Liberal whip; there is Mr. W. Abraham, the representative of the Welsh miners; there is Mr. Benjamin Picard, another labor member of Parliament. These gentlemen will have to be tackled upon the subject, and compelled to hold their Secretary in check, or else to take the responsibility of his bigotry. *Secondly*, the Secular party will have to take steps to defend its very right of existence. For the old Act of George III.—if not obsolete, as it has been called in the House of Commons—applies to every Sunday lecture-room in the country, where money is taken, either by charge or collection, and where any questions are debated.

Meanwhile we wait to see the result of Mr. Hill's bombastic letter. If it leads to anything serious, the agitation it will give rise to will involve a good many more things than the old Act of George III.

G. W. FOOTE.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

HEATHEN JAPAN AND CHRISTIAN ENGLAND.

Mr. H. W. Hawkes, who is sojourning in Japan, has sent to our contemporary, *The Inquirer*, a remarkable description of his impressions of life as seen in the streets of the capital city of Tokyo, where the children everywhere look happy and well cared for, and are clean and mannerly, and "the frightful contrasts between rich and poor" which we are accustomed to, are "nowhere to be seen." Mr. Hawkes finds himself constantly asking "Where are the street-corner roughs, and where the droves of ragged boys and girls, wolfish of face, begging under pretence of selling matches and papers; and where "the bloodless, starved, cowed, disheartened wrecks of humanity which daily confront one in our large cities?" The absence of anything corresponding to our flaring gin palaces is also noteworthy. As to the drunkard reeling home to abuse his wife and curse his children, "Japan knows him not." Let us hope the jolly Japanese in their passion for absorbing occidental civilisation will not take to beer and Bible or gin and Gospel.

"What is the greatest miracle in the Bible?" Saphir asked a young lady at a party. Without giving her time to reply, a forward coxcomb answered: "That Elijah was not burned when he went to Heaven in a chariot of fire." "No," returned Saphir: "That Balaam's ass spoke before it was questioned."

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GOD'S CURSE.

One cold winter evening, as I was comfortably seated before a blazing fire, trying to forget the discomfort outdoors, a knock came to my door. In a minute the jovial, burly form of my friend Doctor C—— appeared in my sanctum, shaking the frozen snow off his overcoat like some big retriever dog. Having removed his wraps, and seated himself by the fireside, he, after some preliminary conversation, began telling me about a most distressing case he had just come from.

"You know," he began, "that most of my practice lies among the poorer part of the population of our city, so I was not surprised when, last evening, I received a call from a patient who was lying in the 'Traveller's Rest,' one of the lowest of our common lodging-houses in the Grassmarket. Speedily I made my way there. and, in one of the darkest corners of a most wretched room, I saw, stretched upon a shake-down, a man, or rather the mere semblance of one, who, I afterward learned, had held a high position in this, our Modern Athens.

"'Are you the doctor?' he asked, in almost a whisper, as I approached his bedside.

"I replied in the affirmative, when, he continued, I did not want to send for you, knowing that I was past all medical aid, but the people of the house desired it—I suppose, to save them the trouble of a coroner's unwelcome visit. But since you are here I should like to tell you my tale—I will be dead ere morning—a curious tale, from which, since you are a doctor, you may draw a moral that may prove of some benefit to the people.' Here a fit of coughing intervened, so violent that it seemed to rend his frame in twain.

"His disease was simply alcholism—a frame weakened by excessive drinking and insufficient food to such an extent that recovery seemed impossible.

"Having recovered himself from his fit of coughing, he turned his large, dark eyes upon me and said, 'Doctor, do you believe in heredity?'

"As I had never given the subject much thought, I simply replied, 'Sometimes.'

"'I do,' returned he almost savagely, 'and that the vices of our parents more often descend to us than their virtues. Why, I cannot say, only that vice is a most infectious disease. At least, it was proved so in my case, for all that my father bequeathed me was an inordinate desire for liquor. Nor could that desire be satiated. I prayed and struggled and fought against the black demon without avail. My prayer was unheard, or if heard, the comedy was too good, too pleasing to that loving God to end so soon. Yet, I ought to have known that one might as well have cried to the purring wind as to have addressed his supplications to that almighty fiend. But I was a Christian then and thought God was the loving father the priests described him to be. How easily men are gulled!

"'Then in my misery, I came to the conclusion that God could not exist, else he could not be so cruel as to punish me in such a manner for the fancied slight put upon his name by some of my ancestors. Why should I be punished for my father's sins? Is it only to satisfy an innate fiendishness in the almighty's nature? If so, he is the devil masquerading in the good God's robes. Can there be any love in the nature of a God who damns the better portion of his children to eternal torment only to enjoy their agony? O God of stone! I have worn my knees in prayer, I have pleaded, and rent the air with my cries for help, all in vain. He cared not nor answered.

"'O beneficent father, divest thyself of thy sheep's clothing and appear to the world in thy true form. I have said enough. Speaking hurts me. But I detest that God who, though he could, would not save me.' He sank back on his pillow exhausted. I watched by him until early this morning, when, about three o'clock, he opened his eyes, which shone with an unwonted brilliancy. I saw at once by his appearance that it was merely a question of minutes.

"'Good-bye, doctor,' he said in a low whisper, and as I shook his hand a smile came over his face as he said, 'Don't—let—God—f-o-ol—you.' He closed his eyes again, sighing wearily, as the shadow of the angel's wings passed over him and this poor half-maddened soul crept unto the great unknown."

Such was the doctor's tale. The tale of a life wrecked amidst the breakers of dissipation, of a madman, dying, yet breathing his defiance at the supposed author of his misery.

A. Buton.

(*From the New York "Truthseeker."*)

THE PERSONALLY CONDUCTED TOUR OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE DESERT.

And thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.—Deut. viii.

The following interesting account of the longest walking feat on record has come into our hands, through an indefatigable member of our staff, who is digging up the whole of Palestine in his thirst for genuine, front seat, 24-carat, hall marked, records.

"THE MOUNT SINAI EXPRESS."

Special Extra Edition.

From our Special Correspondent.

The forty years having elapsed, your own correspondent was on the spot to faithfully report for the paper that has the largest circulation in the world. And your readers will no doubt be affected to tears when they read the state the Israelites were in at the end of their long wandering about the sterile plains led by Moses himself, although I never could make out why he kept them prancing around that desert so long, as I in my search for news have gone across it in about ten days. But to return to our Ba Baas. I placed myself in a situation of advantage and saw the first man issue from those regions, which must have had such terrible experiences to all that host of the Israelitish people. The sight caused many manly eyes to feel damp and many a manly nose to sniff, for big, brawny men, forty-one or forty-two years of age, who had gone into that desert as babes in open-worked frocks, appeared now in the same identical clothes, fitting skin tight, not having grown quite so quickly as the human being—great muscular limbs encased in fancy drawers coming only down to the knee with soiled lace round the bottom, the colossal brown legs seeming to be about to burst from their infantile bondage.

Other Israelitish warriors, with truculent looking faces, appeared with their shock heads encased in fantastic baby caps, fitting so tightly that the wearers seemed unable to shut their eyes; others, from habit I suppose, still wore their tooth-persuaders or rubber dental pads hanging at their none too slender waists. Great feet appeared in tender delicate wollen bootekins tied in front with neat pink bows making all us spectators think of the time when these burly warriors were thrown in the air by their fond mothers to the jubilant cry of "Ketcher Ketcher."

The babes of only a few weeks old had utilised their progenitors feeding bottles, but seemed liberal with their lacteal nourishment; ever and anon offering their swash-buckling parents a pull at the rubber nipple, thinking no doubt by the similarity of their dress that their proclivities tended that way.

The most heartrending sights were of those who had gone into that desert as boys in skeleton suits. The trousers buttoning over the jacket, and Jehovah having been remiss in not making the clothes grow with the same celerity as the human being. The consequence was the poor fellows looked like bloated aristocrats or human pincushions stuffed to repletion. It seemed an accident with a pin would have the same effect as an incision in an air ball.

Great big-limbed women, termagantly inclined, still in the habiliments of sweet dimpled childhood, some not having been short coated when Moses entered the desert, now appearing still wearing their first long clothes with gaudy ribbons tying up the fleecy sleeves, showing now, alas, an arm that would make the strongest husband tremble. These forty-year-old mothers, dressed in the trappings of babyhood, nursing their babies, similarly accoutred to themselves, was a sight inclined to raise a smile, were you not made sad by the looks of evident pain on the faces of those stout Jews who seemed to desire to burst from their too tight knickerbocker suits and bound along in the costume of Nature.

[Here the fragment ends, and by the ring on the manuscript, seemingly caused by a pint vessel having been placed thereon, the correspondent seems to have devoted some of his energies to producing a vacuum in the pewter.]

A certain politician holding office now in Washington comes from Gilead,——, and he is proud of his native town. It is told of him that on one occasion a visiting clergyman preached in the village church, and during the course of his remarks, he exclaimed: "Is there no balm in Gilead?" Mr. Blank jumped to his feet at once. "Of course there is," he sung out, to the horror of the congregation, "but you can't get it on Sunday."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7 "Buddhism or Enlightenment: its Gospel and Doctrines."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture.

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, adjourned special members' meeting; important.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, "The Most Comfortable Sacrament." Preceded by Shakesperian recital.

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. S. Standring, "How and What did Jesus Teach?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. T. Parris, "Why I became a Freethinker."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. George Standring, "Christian Apologists Examined."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road. N.W., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Can Christ Atone for the Sins of Men?"

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "Good Old Satan."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 10.30, committee meeting; at 11.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "Phases of Freethought—The Aggressive"; at 7, Mr. Heaford, "Dr. Magee v. Jesus." At 8.30, music, etc

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "Man in the light of Darwinism."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, various speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Salvation."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. Forder

Cardiff—Queen Street, large hall (entrance from Working Street)—Mr. G. W. Foote, at 11, "After Death, what?" at 3, "The Gospel of Secularism"; at 6.30, "Heaven and Hell." Tickets at the door.

Chester-le-Street Branch, Old Pelton; monthly meeting at 6.30; discussion, "Secularism v. Spiritualism."

Derby Branch, 20 Newland Street; at 6.30, members' meeting, important.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Stree.—5 30, committee meeting; 6.30, Mr. J. B. Glazier, "Prof. Huxley and Natural Rights."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, Mr. A. Hall will give a reading: "Mistakes of Moses," by Colonel Ingersoll.

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, 6.30, Mr. Owen Balmforth, MS. lecture by the Hon. Auberon Herbert, "A Liberty Creed."

Liverpool Branch N.S S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—at 3, discussion class, "The Comparison of Ancient and Modern Civilisation"; at 7, "Mr Samuel Laing's Philosophy"—Mr. Doeg.

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Henry, "The Malthusian Question."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, at 7, Mr. Lill, "Is the Bible a True Book?"

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street; at 7, business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon Road, London, S.E.—March 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park. June 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkwell Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—March 16, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 6, Liverpool.

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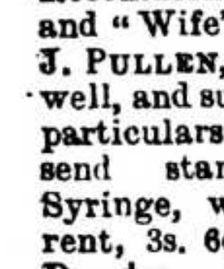

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 12.] SUNDAY, MARCH 23, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

GOD IN A COAL PIT.

THE Morfa disaster will of course be inquired into and we have no desire to anticipate the result of the investigation. Nor will any proceedings bring the dead to life again and repair the ruin of scores of homes. The butcher's bill of the catastrophe is appalling. It brings home to us the fact that the miner's occupation is more dangerous than that of the soldier. Only now and then are military men called upon to face the death-dealing cannon and rifles of an enemy, but the brave fellows who dig in the bowels of the earth for one of the prime necessaries of our civilisation are always in peril. They go down into the mine, carrying their lives in their hands, to earn the daily bread for their wives and families. Yet their simple, unostentatious courage is overlooked by the poets, who celebrate in glowing strains the hectic courage of battlefields. The epic of war has been sung, but when shall we have the grander epic of battle with the forces of nature for the well-being of man?

It is impossible to rate too highly the heroism of the relief parties who risked death for the mere chance of rescuing their comrades. One gallant fellow fell a martyr to the enterprise. Godly men and women were praying at the pit's mouth, but the cruel gas is no respecter of persons or beliefs, and it slew a hero who died to save his fellows in a more real sense than some of those whose names are on the lips of religionists. No aid was vouchsafed from heaven. The prayers of faith fell upon the deaf ears of the great Sphinx. Yet that was an occasion when help might have been expected. The veriest Devil might have stretched out a hand to save one who, as truly as Hercules in the grand old Greek story, was filled with unselfish love, and fighting with Death for the sake of those who had stirred the pity of his heroic heart.

Saturday witnessed the burial of many of the victims of the explosion, and there were heart-rending scenes at the grave-sides. Women and children cried and wailed, and strong men melted with grief. The fine promises of the officiating ministers were powerless to staunch those bleeding hearts. Heaven was so dim and distant, the future meeting to part no more was so shadowy. The poor mourners yearned for the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of the voice that was still. They wanted their loved ones by their side again. Their sorrow was not to be assuaged by priestly words. In the grim presence of death they felt the reality of their loss. They grieved for their dead like Atheists, and every sob and tear belied the teachings of their creed.

During Sunday the preachers in the many churches and chapels of the district were engaged in justifying the ways of God to man. They are in the habit of talking freely about Providence, and the occasion demanded a little explanation. We have waded through several columns of their eloquence, and the upshot seems to be this. The survivors of the catastrophe are congratulated on their escape, while those who perished are said to have gained by the transaction. In short, it was a mercy either way! Of course the logic of the argument is beneath contempt, but it serves its purpose all the same. Religion is not a matter of reason, but a matter of feeling. The survivors feel they are lucky, and the ministers assure them that the dead are in God's good keeping; so "all's well that ends well," and the men of God pull through the difficulty on the famous old plan of "Heads we win and tails you lose."

Judging by the reports, every one of the preachers took it for granted that God allowed the explosion to happen; that is, he could have helped it, but did not. According to the principles of English law he is responsible for the disaster. Yet he is a God of love. How, then, is the contradiction to be explained? Finite men, full of brave compassion, tried to save their fellows; and infinite God, whose love is boundless and unspeakable, winked at the slaughter. No wonder that the lines of Cowper were quoted—

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform.

But the same preacher told his hearers that God "doeth all things well." He did not see, however, in that case, that the rescuers were presumptuously trying to frustrate God's purposes. If Almighty Wisdom caused the explosion, the poor fellows in the pit should have been left to their fate. But the logic of theology is too hard for flesh and blood. God's worshippers did their utmost to minimise the effects of his act of providence, and bowed their heads submissively when they could do no more to check his "tender mercies."

Perhaps the most thorough-going theologian was a Baptist preacher, the Rev. J. Dyfan Davies. Seeing the Lord's hand in everything, he discerned a moral significance in the Morfa disaster. The Bible said "Let the people tremble." God liked them to tremble; he expected it of them, and would not stand a disappointment. But the people were very firm nowadays; they had strong nerves; and some "extraordinary vibration" was needed to startle them. God therefore sent his "special servants" sometimes "to rouse up and shake their neighborhoods"; and when people went "after their own devices" he "startled them into solemnity by disasters." It would appear, then, that the Lord deliberately got up the Morfa explosion to show the people of England that he has his eye upon them; although he might have demonstrated the fact far better, and more beneficially, by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and healing the diseased. Were he to suddenly cure, in the selfsame night, all the patients in our hospitals, he would arrest our attention as surely as if he burnt down a city or decimated the population with pestilence. Nay, *more* surely; for we are used to accidents and disasters, and a slice of good luck from above would be unusual, and would set everybody thinking.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

(*Concluded from p.* 122.)

SOME reptiles take a deal of killing. The cohorts of Jesus are of this order. They have defied Cromwell and Gustavus, Pombal and Pascal, Bismarck and Bert. They are now as numerous, as powerful, and as unscrupulous as ever. Their web-like meshes extend in all directions, and their ability to focus all their forces at once with unerring accuracy upon any given point gives them power out of all proportion to their numbers. Their system crushes out individuality, and few individuals of eminence are to be found among them. It is said they rejected Cardinal Newman when, many years ago, he applied for admission to the order. If this is true—and the statement was made in the *Quarterly Review*—the decision was doubtless a wise one. The subtle and original mind of Newman could not be easily enough manipulated by Jesuit casuistry. Men of marked ability cannot be expected to submit to the relentless crushing out of their individuality which is the essence of the Jesuit novitiate. But training and discipline give them cunning and ability, if not wisdom.

Little as individuals, their corporate power is great. Jesuits have instead of individual ambition an intense *esprit de corps*. They believe themselves to be the salt of the earth, destined to redeem it. Devoted *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, to God's greater glory, they esteem themselves the true soldiers of Jesus, having, in obedience to his orders, given up friends, family, and home to establish his kingdom; and they declare that "His honor is concerned in the Society called by His name." They believe their order to be as lasting as religion itself. "That which is risen from the dead is immortal," said Father Burke, one of their great orators. Many thought the brief of Clement XIV., suppressing the order in 1773, had killed Jesuitism for ever. Clement died, whether from poison or remorse, soon after. But as Redemptionists, the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Fathers of the Faith, and under other titles, the Jesuits lived on. If the order died in 1773, it rose from the dead in 1814, and ascended into power in 1886. It now sits on the right hand of the Pope, whose brother, Cardinal Pecci, in dying recently, left all his money to the Jesuits, by whom he had been educated.

In England they have more collegiate establishments than ever before. Forty years ago Carlyle wrote: "The Jesuits proper have long since got their final mitimus from England." Jesuits proper never laugh, but a semblance of a snigger must appear on their faces at Stoneyhurst and Windsor when they read this passage.

The expulsion of the order from Germany in 1872, and from France in 1880, largely increased their ranks in England as well as in Ireland and America. The brief of the Pope in their favor dated July 13th, 1886,* has given them new standing. This was followed by the beatification, as religious martyrs, of Jesuits imprisoned and executed in England as political traitors convicted of conspiring against the life of Elizabeth and asserting the deposing power of the Pope. English is taught in all their schools, and there are abundant signs that the reconversion of England is the subject of their earliest orisons and their latest vespers. As we pointed out recently, three divisions of "Ransomers" are being trained to operate on High, Low and Broad Church. Although it is certain that Disestablishment would lead many to embrace Romanism, the Establishment is to be defended as against Dissenters, with the view of ultimately making it their own. Their aim is, in the words of Cardinal Manning, "to subjugate and rule an imperial race," and their boast is that they alone are able to do it. Ridiculous enough it may seem if we compare the paucity of their numbers with the grandeur of their aims, but it would be more ridiculous were not so many High Churchmen playing into the Jesuits' hands, and had we not historical examples of what the order have been able to effect in other countries.

Certain it is that the Jesuits have made the Catholic Church Ultramontane, and now have their reward in being received into the bosom of the Papacy. We may expect, as the result of their re-establishment, to find the Vatican more astute and more political. The Pope, indeed, is little more than the puppet of the Jesuits. If they no longer stand behind thrones and use the confessional of kings as an instrument of their order, they find that plutocrats now serve their turn, and the confessional is as ever the key of the money-chest.

Is it not monstrous that a secret society, whose advent in every country has been attended by conspiracies and disasters, who have been expelled for proved crimes from almost every civilised state, may by death-bed terrifying, receive endowments of land and money, while any bequest to a Freethought Society or the endowment of a hall where Freethought is propagated is at once nullified? Does it not show that almost anything can be done in the name of religion? We are not of those who wish to suppress the Jesuits. We seek to meet these hereditary enemies of liberty with no other weapons those supplied by liberty itself. Freethinkers are the natural opponents of Jesuitism. Give us fair play. Place us on an equality before the law, permit our propaganda to receive bequests and endowments, and we undertake that Jesuit efforts for the reconversion of England shall be fruitless. J. M. WHEELER

* Issued after a severe illness said to have been due to poison.

"BEAUTY LIVES WITH KINDNESS."

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

From the "Twentieth Century."

EVEN Shakespeare never compacted more sturdy truth and wholesome sentiment into four words than when he wrote: "Beauty lives with kindness." Justness and right doing are the foundation of social amenity and civilised happiness; but kindness is the superstructure. Goodness is the root of character, but kindness is the stem and flower. Kindness can never take the place of justice, right and goodness, nor do the work that must and can only be done by these alone; but it can wonderfully smooth the way for the accomplishment of that work.

I like this word kindness. I am glad Shakespeare did not say: "Beauty lives with love." Love means so many different things. One must always be defining it. What do we mean by love? Almost everyone has a definition of his own. What does Paul mean when he says: "There are faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love"? What does Jesus mean when he says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself"? What did he mean when he said: "Thou shalt love thine enemy"? In what way are we to love our enemies and where are we to draw the line? Are we to love the Devil? And how can we love neighbors whom we do not like?

I know all sorts of answers are given to these questions, no two of which are alike. That is what I say. When you speak of love you have to explain what you mean, and in many instances nobody knows what you mean after you have explained. Did any one ever explain to your satisfaction how you can love your enemy? Or even how can you perform

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the duty of loving anybody that you do not happen to even like?

Can we learn what this Pauline and Jesus-taught love is by watching the practice of the Church or the majority of individual Christians? It looks to me as if the Christian world had given up the problem as to what love means as a hopeless conundrum, and were trying to make it quite plain that they know how to practice what it does not mean. I am sure it does not mean anything that calls for such a large use of guns and locust clubs and hempen ropes as we are accustomed to, nor such contempt for the poor; but I do not pretend to know what it does mean, except in a general way.

The apostle John says: "God is love." What does it mean? Are cancers and poverty, and floods and famines, and a Presbyterian hell the expressions of his love? When I consider that God is almighty, which means that he can do just as he likes and have things just as he wants them, and look abroad upon the way he has fixed things, I can see plenty of evidence of hate, and if God hates he cannot be, in his essence, love. I can believe anything about God except that he is love. I can believe that he is bad, or that he is weak and that some other power gets the best of him. But in that case he is not God. I do not know what is meant when it is said that God is love.

I am glad that Shakespeare said kindness and not love. It is easy to understand what kindness means. It is easy to be kind to people whom we do not love. I know how to treat my neighbor or even my enemy kindly, though I do not always know how to love either of them. There is not a relation in life wherein kindness is not a duty and is not possible. And there is nothing that oils the machinery of society like kindness. Whoever is kind is handsome. Whoever is kind is lovely. For "beauty lives with kindness."

It is barely possible that some of you who are accustomed to hear me speak always upon questions of public interest wonder why I have chosen such a theme as this, a theme that leads the mind so directly to our personal relation with each other. I will tell you. When I look at you from week to week I think of you in your home life, in your friendships, in your stores and workshops. And I wonder how you live in these relations. And I fain would say something that may be of use to you in working out your problem of personal happiness.

We are interested in great public questions of religious and social regeneration. I am convinced that personal character depends for most persons more largely upon the conditions under which they live than upon hereditary or any other influence in life. But it may be very long before the minds of all the people are free from degrading religious and political superstitions and the bodies of all the people are free from industrial bondage. It is possible, however, for very many of us to largely solve the problem of our personal goodness and happiness under our present uncivilised conditions, and to this end I have introduced this personal subject. The key to the mansion of personal happiness under any conditions is kindness.

We rub against our fellows everywhere—in the streets, horse cars, railroad trains, ferry boats, places of assembly. Two courses of conduct are always possible for us. We may be ill-natured, grumpy, always out of temper; or we may be kind. We are always bumping into one another, stepping on each others' corns, pushing for an advantage, and whether you get home or to your place of business in a happy frame of mind will largely depend upon how you have behaved yourself on the way. If you have been kind on the way you will be beautiful when you get home or to your place of business. If you have been surly, standing punctiliously upon all your petty rights, you will be a nuisance to all your companions when you reach the end of your daily journey.

We are always having small squabbles and misunderstandings with persons with whom we do business. It is possible to magnify these mole hills into mountains by irritation and small pride and vindictiveness. It is also possible to smooth out such difficulties by kindness that costs no loss of self-respect—that adds, rather, to one's wealth of self-respect.

There are persons who pooh-pooh the idea that we can go through this world without fighting for our rights, without demanding an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I know from constant daily experience that if some one smites you upon the right cheek without you having deserved to be smitten, the surest way to avoid being smitten on the left cheek is to turn it to the smiter. People say that if you do not stand up, pugnaciously, for your rights you will be run over and trampled under foot. That is true if you have a craven spirit and bow before injustice with slave-like humiliation, but it is not true if you are brave enough to clearly point out wherein you have been wronged and also brave enough not to fight for your rights except with argnments tempered and made strong by kindness.

Three times have editors of daily papers retracted false statements about me (almost a miracle), one of them writing me a personal apology (quite a miracle), because I simply pointed out to them wherein they had wronged me, but made no bullying threats nor bombastic demands.

(*To be concluded.*)

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A SCEPTIC'S VIEW OF THE CREATION,

As given in Genesis.

A God awoke in darkness
Six thousand years ago,
And looked around on nothing,
To see what he could do.

He'd never had beginning—
Not born like you and me,
But always had existed
From all eternity.

But what he had been doing
Through all these countless years
No priest has ever told us,
It in no book appears.

Perhaps he had been sleeping
With nothing for a bed,
With nothing for a pillow
And nothing in his head,

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With nothing for companion
Through all that dreary night,
And only boundless nothing
On which to feast his sight.

He now arose to action
Like one aroused from sleep,
But of his six day's labor
The tale is rather steep.

He took a pinch of nothing
And made this glorious earth;
Another pinch of nothing
And oceans had their birth.

A little lump of nothing
Produced the powerful sun,
And so he worked on nothing
Till sky and stars were done.

And when the world was finished,
Of dust he made a man,
By mixing it with nothing
On some mysterious plan;

Then took a rib from Adam,
With nothing for a knife,
And, mixing it with nothing,
He made a full-grown wife.

ACID DROPS.

Providence has been multiplying the rats in Lincolnshire, and they have become a perfect pest. Farmers are killing them by hundreds, but the cry is "still they come." They are actually running over the patients lying in the fever wards at Spalding. Several were seen the other evening in the Exchange Hall while Canon Barker was addressing a temperance meeting. There is evidently room for a little temperance on the part of Providence in the production of rats.

Price's Patent Candle Company maintains a gospel-shop for its employees. At the last meeting of the Company the Chairman moved that £565 should be voted to pay the balance of the cost of erection. It would be interesting to know if the men are properly grateful to the Company for its solicitude about their immortal souls. For our part, we venture to think it probable that they would prefer to receive the Company's philanthropy in the form of increased wages.

Is it true that attendance at the Candle Company's gospel-shop is compulsory? Or has it ever been so? And have boys been fined sixpence for not gracing the place with their presence?

What a lot of humbug is talked on British platforms about the noble way in which Christianity liberated the negro slaves in America. That the slaves were liberated we know, but the act was a strategic move in the midst of the civil war between the North and South. And what has been the result? Ever since the "emancipation" the Christian whites have treated the blacks with insult and injustice. So flagrant has the infamy become—the very Young Men's Christian Associations refusing to admit a colored member—that the negro Bishop of Georgia, the Rt. Rev. H. M. Turner, has written a letter advocating the adoption of Senator Butler's Bill for sending the American negroes to Africa. "No court in America," he says, "has given a decision in favor of a negro in twelve years. The Supreme Court is an organised mob against him." He predicts that Africa, leavened by the American negroes, will become "the sanitary, commercial, and evangelical heart of the globe." And the last part of the prediction may be realised, unless Mohammedanism forestalls Christianity, for the religion of the Bible is more suitable to Africans than to Europeans.

Dean Lefroy is a fine, ripe bigot. The other evening he addressed the Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter Hall, and he pathetically warned them against scepticism. He said he had been thirty years a minister, and he had come to the conclusion that the cause of scepticism was more moral than intellectual. Yes, scepticism was a defect in the morals! Thus the great Lefroy drivelled on, and the report says that he created a "profound impression," which we can well believe when we remember the audience he was addressing.

David said that all sceptics were fools. Dean Lefroy says they are rogues. We say they are neither. It is impossible to debate the point with David, but we are willing to debate it with Dean Lefroy. We defy him to prove that scepticism, including all varieties of it, furnishes an appreciable portion of the crime and vice of England. If he accepts our challenge he may find, before we have done with him, that *one* sceptic, at least is no fool. That will dispose of David, and the discussion would probably dispose of Lefroy.

John Henry Thompson, *alias* John Henry Jones, is now serving a term of five years' penal servitude. His professional occupation was "burgling," and in pursuit of it he entered a church, lit a fire in the vestry, had a good nap, and finally went off with the communion plate. We daresay, also, he made inroads upon the bottled Blood of Christ, and, considering the awful sacrilege he committed, he should be thankful that the holy liquid did not poison and kill him after a long agony. The deity must have been in a placable mood on that occasion.

Toronto has a "godly" university, which was established in pious rivalry with the one that was recently burnt down. Its object is "the education of youth in the doctrines and duties of the Christian religon" as well as in secular matters. Thousands of pounds were collected for it in England, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge voting £3,000 at one swoop. But it appears from an article in the *Speaker* that this "godly" university resorts to very mean tricks to replenish its exchequer. It sells degrees in music for £16 a-piece. The trade is a bad one, but it pays, the proceeds being nearly all profit; and, as the *Speaker* says, "the holy men of Toronto will maintain, no doubt, that what they are doing is for the good of their Church."

Sir Edwin Arnold, in his letters from Japan, describes the Japanese woman as the most free and at the same time "the most modest and most self-respecting woman, after her own fashion, in the whole world." Christian missionaries with the Pauline gospel of woman's subjection in all things to her master, are energetically seeking to alter this, and the Pope, to be early in the field, has appointed an Archbishop of Tokio with four bishops under him.

Madame Blavatsky is very thin-skinned considering the beautiful abandon of speech in which she sometimes indulges. Tuesday's *Pall Mall Gazette* apologised for inserting "some very offensive expressions about Dr. Elliott Cones" in the report of an interview between one of its representatives and Mme. Blavatsky in October. The expressions "appeared by inadvertence in one edition."

Accuracy is not a Christian virtue. The Rev. T. Given-Wilson, vicar of Plaistow, writes an introduction to the professed recantation of James Marchant, a piece of writing which appears to have come, in whole or in part, from some other pen than that of its reputed author. According to Mr. Given-Wilson, James Marchant has returned to "the belief of his childhood." That is true enough, but other statements show less exactitude. For instance, Mr. Given-Wilson says he learned that "Mr. James Marchant, president of the West Ham Branch of the National Secular Society, had resigned his position, and renounced his infidel views." This is absolutely false. James Marchant did not resign his position. He was not at that time president of the West Ham Branch, an office which he only held for three months, and which he was not able to retain. Again, Mr. Given-Wilson writes so as to suggest that the West Ham Branch was ruined by the fall of the Cromwell Club. He says that "the old members clung together, and from time to time they have made their appearance in the neighborhood, lecturing in public-houses and debating on Plaistow Green." This is worthy of Hughes Price Hughes. The West Ham Branch has its own premises, not connected with

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any public-house, and a fair-sized lecture hall, in which Sunday meetings are held regularly. We advise Mr. Given-Wilson to request the prayers of his congregation for their pastor, that he may profit by a study of Revelations xxi., 8.

The religious conscience is a curious study. Douglas Green, of the New York Stock Exchange, left his wife and eloped to Europe with Mrs. Alice Snell McCree, who insisted on first being married by a minister to Green. She had no objection to taking her husband from his lawful wife provided she could obtain the consecration of a man of God, which she did. Her scruples were as truly pious as those of the Catholic burglar who refused to steal meat because it was Friday.

There are twenty-three Jewish convicts in England, all of them being assembled at Portsea prison, where a small synagogue has been erected. No necessity has yet arisen to build a little Hall of Science in connection with some penal establishment for Secularists, Atheists and Agnostics.

By the way, the Jews furnish a much smaller percentage of criminals than the Christians, although one would think that the "new dispensation" should produce a higher morality than the "old." Judging the tree by its fruit, Christianity is anything but an improvement on Judaism, and one is at a loss to understand why the second person of the Trinity took the trouble to be crucified for such a questionable result.

The London editor of the *Detroit Free Press* has been fishing for advertisements from the leading bishops and clergy. He has sent them the following conundrum, accompanied with the opening chapter of a story of the time of Christ, by Dr. E. S. Brooks. "Ought the characters of the New Testament, including the central character, to be introduced into works of fiction?" Most of the bishops decline to commit themselves, but from the clergy the editor got a majority in the affirmative, "provided the story teller writes in a reverent spirit." A reverent spirit is always the desideratum in dealing with solemn humbug. The question we would ask is, Are not the characters of the New Testament, including the central character, themselves works of fiction?

Lecturing in a Primitive Methodist chapel at Bolton, Mr. George Harwood, M.A., remarked that "Religion had done more to civilise, purify, and regenerate the world than anything else, but they must also say that it had caused more misery, more destruction, more bloodshed, isolations and separations than all the other causes." We dissent from the ffrst half of Mr. Harwood's remark, but we cordially endorse the second half.

Instances of clerical bigotry and intolerance towards Dissenters are continually cropping up. According to the Rev. John Luke, a Bible Christian minister, a member of his congregation, who had lost his father, desired him to be buried with his mother in the parish churchyard, and that the service should be conducted by Mr. Luke. Upon expressing this wish to the Rev. Franklin Tonkin, vicar of Madron, that worthy told the son that such a funeral was "an insult to Christ and his Church," and put every possible obstacle in the way of its being carried out as desired.

Another burial scandal has taken place at St. Erth, Cornwall, where the vicar—because the funeral party of a poor person which came a long distance was ten minutes late—went off in a huff, and the mourners were kept waiting in the churchyard for more than two hours, until a clergyman was brought from a distance of six or seven miles, who conducted the funeral rites by the light of the moon.

Hospitals invariably, and most properly, invite subscriptions from all sections of the community, yet it is by no means unusual to find that the nurses are chosen only from the Church of England. An advertisement of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, for a Lady Superintendent enumerates among other qualifications "member of the Church of England." A few years ago a hospital at York issued a similar advertisement, and the result was a local agitation and indignation meeting of subscribers.

The superintendent of the Christian Lads' Society, Finsbury Park, has been committed for trial on the charge mentioned in our last. The prisoner asked a lad who appeared as witness against him why he did not complain to Mr. Stone, saying, "You and I have always rested on his teaching of the Bible." Probably the sacred volume was the means used of debauching the minds of these Christian lads.

The result of the German election being that the Government requires the support of the Catholic party, it is said they will demand, as one of their conditions, that the Jesuits be permitted to return to Germany. To this, it is believed, the young Emperor will never accede.

Dr. Pigou, Dean of Chichester, preaching on Sunday in Rochester Cathedral, made some curious observations. He referred, for instance, to the telescope which enables us to see distant objects, and from which he derived "a fine argument for a future state, which he did not think an Atheist would attempt to falsify." Unfortunately Dr. Pigou did not work out the argument, and we are therefore unable to "falsify" it. Our intellect is not subtle enough to find the connexion between telescopes and immortality.

Dr. Pigou said he "remembered once speaking to a celebrated controversialist whom Bradlaugh would not meet." Name, please. We should like to see the controversialist whom "Bradlaugh" would not meet. It looks as though Hugh Price Hughesism were spreading.

At the New York congress of Presbyterians on the subject of the revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Dr. McIlvaine said: "I say here solemnly that if God is as he is here represented I will take refuge in materialism, and there is no other help for me." This statement made a sensation which was intensified by what he related subsequently. He said he knew of a young lady who had been taken to a lunatic asylum, being afflicted with religious mania. "Does she belong to the Presbyterian Church?" inquired the doctor. She did; and then the doctor said they had more patients laboring under that form of mental disease from the Presbyterian Church than from all the other churches put together.

Dr. McIlvaine may well be ashamed of the creed of which he is a sworn defender. But after all, the Westminster Confession of Faith, with its doctrines of election and reprobation, is founded on the Bible, and is the logical result of Theism. It is Paul who says we are as clay in the hands of a potter, and that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy. If there is an almighty omniscient God he must have foreseen and foreordained the fate of everyone who frizzles in the everlasting bonfire.

The *Rock* says of the Elsemerian Institute promoted by Mrs. Humphrey Ward, the Rev. Stopford Brooke and others—"This new anti-Christian sect is too like existing bodies to be dangerous." Religionists are not afraid of half and half measures that appeal only to the respectable and treat humbug with reverence. A West-end Hall of Science would stir them more than any amount of vague Christian Theism.

H. L. Hastings, the Yankee infidel-slayer, who is now wooing Fortune in England, seems to be completely pumped out. Every now and then we receive a fresh pamphlet from his pen, but although the title varies we always find on looking within that it is the good old "Is the Bible Inspired?" in a new cover. Then it goes into the waste-basket.

Professor Blackie says that the Atheists are "mostly crotchet-mongers." This is very much like painting his own portrait.

The Rev. James Brighton, rector of North Piddle, has been paying insufficient attention to the Sermon on the Mount. He lodged at the house of Mrs. Jane Newman, who had to sue him for the balance of rent, obtaining judgment for £6. Thereupon the reverend gentleman wrote a letter, describing her claim as unjust, and accusing her of perjury; and as this libel prevented Mrs. Newman from letting her rooms, she brought another action against

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him for slander, and obtained a verdict for £15 damages, with costs. Poor Parson Brighton! How are the godly persecuted!

D. M. Ross—whoever he may be—is writing a series of letters to a Scotch paper on "Life in Australia." He appears to have seen Joseph Symes on board a steamer. Who else, indeed, can be the "notorious infidel lecturer of Melbourne"? D. M. Ross seems to be a sky-pilot, and he very naturally chuckles over the fact that the infidel was treated with violence at Launceston. Just as naturally he refers to Joseph Symes's "propaganda of infidelity and dirt." What a beautiful thing Christian charity is, to be sure, especially when it gets a chance of displaying itself to "infidels." St. Paul said that charity "thinketh no evil." "Bah!" says the noble Ross. "charity, as I understand it, is best shown in blackguarding sceptics."

The Clericals in Austria, as in England, have attempted a reaction upon the education question. A Commission of High Churchmen was appointed to discuss the principles of instruction in national schools, and their protocol, signed by three archbishops, seeks to recall the condition of schools two hundred years ago. It demands the establishment of purely Catholic schools, so that Catholic children shall not be "contaminated" by intercourse with children of other confessions; the children must be taught by the principles of their faith alone; all teachers at Catholic schools must belong to the Catholic faith; the appointment of teachers must be ratified by the Church; the plans of instruction books and other materials for instruction must not contain a word that offends the Catholic faith; and finally, the schools must be placed under the control and supervision of the Catholic Church and its organs. This is what the clericals seek everywhere, but they are too wary in this country to ask for it all at once.

The vicar of Blackpool convened a meeting to establish a Branch of the Protestant League. He was told by Dr. Kingsbury that the Catholics were succeeding because he, the vicar, neglected his duty of visiting his parishioners.

The Baptists, too, at Blackpool, have been having a split, and their late minister, the Rev. Mr. Pilling, characterises those in his church as "treacherous sneaks" whom not so long ago he described as good angels. Christian charity soon flies to the winds in the event of a dispute.

Canon Liddon is down on the *Lux Mundi* volume. Mr. Gore, the head of Pusey House and the chief of the little band of writers in that volume, supposes that Deuteronomy is a republication of the law "put dramatically" into the mouth of Moses. But Canon Liddon declares that "such a representation is irreconcilable with the veracity of the book." Mr. Gore judiciously looks upon the books of Jonah and Daniel "as dramatic compositions." But Canon Liddon remarks that "our Lord Jesus Christ set the seal of his infallible sanction" on both those Hebrew romances. Thus the battle goes on, *inside* the Church now as well as outside; and Rationalists may expect the clergy to imitate the performance of the Kilkenny cats; only the last parson need not devour himself, for there will be a Freethinker ready to save him the trouble.

Canon Shuttleworth held forth the other evening at the National Liberal Club on the blessings of a State Church. He wishes to see the clergyman elected by the parishioners, and the only qualification should be that he is a Christian. This of course excludes all Freethinkers and Jews, but as the Christians are in the majority they are entitled to have their own way, and apparently to use the money of the minority to propagate what is hostile to their convictions. Such is Christian Socialism as understood by a prominent member of the Guild of St. Matthew.

Under the Canon's "democratic" scheme the clergy would be "a teaching body, holding up to men standards of truth and morality for the guidance of human life." What a pretty picture! But is a white-chokered gentleman elected by the parish, after a heated contest, likely to have any special standard of truth or any special guidance for his fellow mortals? Is not the scheme, at bottom, an ingenious little device for sharing the Church funds with Dissenters rather than losing them altogether?

Canon Shuttleworth seems to have no idea of the strength of other people's convictions. He starts the ridiculous theory that as the State runs a parcel post, it may as well run a religion. Surely this is confounding convenience and principle. The State may carry our parcels and letters, more or less efficiently, but it has no qualification for deciding the battle of ideas in religion and ethics. Besides, as Leopardi points out, while the majority is nearly always right in practical matters, it is nearly always wrong in matters of speculation.

Succi has started on his forty days' fast (why forty if not in emulation of J. C.?) at the Aquarium. He took in a good cargo of provender before commencing, not expecting any angels to minister unto him after the trial is over.

The Sultan has only given permission to the Palestine Exploration Fund to go on digging on the express condition that all objects found during the excavations shall be transmitted to the Imperial Museum at Constantinople. Should they discover the tomb of Moses or the cross of Jesus Christ himself, it will have to be handed over to Mohammedan keeping.

The article on "Benighted Ireland," from the pen of an Irish patriot, which we print in another column, throws light on a phase of the Irish question which is often overlooked. Unjust legislation is responsible for many of the woes of Ireland, but while the priest, whose interest lies in the ignorance of the people, is all-powerful, even just legislation will be unable to raise Ireland to the rank of nations where mental liberty prevails.

"The Evil Eye" was the subject of a paper read before the Scottish Antiquarian Society at Edinburgh by the Rev. Dr. Stewart. The reverend gentleman gave some interesting stories of this superstition, which still lurks in sequestered parts of Scotland. He does not appear to have added, however, that the evil eye is a part of witchcraft, and that witchcraft is taught as an actuality in the Bible.

Mr. Labouchere paid the Almighty a strange compliment in addressing an Irish audience on St. Patrick's Day in the Birmingham Town Hall. Dealing with the Tory friends of the late lamented Pigott, the senior member for Northampton said he would not be too hard upon them, for they were no doubt as God had made them, selfish, callous and unscrupulous. This is rather rough on God.

Truths to Live by is the title of Archdeacon Farrar's new book. Substitute "doctrines" for "truths," and the volume need comprise no more than the Thirty-Nine Articles. And instead of "Finis" the volume might end with the text (Revised Version)—"For the man of God doth not live by bread alone, but by every yellow-boy that cometh out of the pocket of John Bull."

In 1836 Essex made a bargain to pay a tithe rent charge of £250,278, to have in return the monopoly of the corn trade of the district. By the abolition of the Corn Laws Essex lost this monopoly, but still has to pay the same tithe, which exceeds even that of Yorkshire.

Lord Bramwell, dealing in the *Nineteenth Century* with the familiar assertion of Henry George that God made the land for all, asks the pertinent question, "Are the landlords too much for Him?"

GROWTH OF CATHOLICISM IN ENGLAND.

The following figures illustrate Mr. Wheeler's recent article on this subject:

	1845.	1851.	1870.	1890.
Priests	776	958	1727	2811
Churches.....	622	683	1354	1651
Nunneries	8	17	69	231
Religious Houses...	34	53	233	447
Colleges	2	12	20	35

The total number of Catholics in England and Wales is close on 1,500,000.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 23, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, at 7, "Good without God."

March 30, Hall of Science, London.

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A HEARER.—You should bear a little with the infirmity of our Christian opponents. No doubt the speaker wandered a good deal from the point, but he spoke courteously, and it was best to let him use the time in his own way.

H. J. RICHARDSON.—We can quite understand why the Rev. J. J. Goundrig does not mean to "debate with the infidel." He finds discretion the better part of valor, and makes a virtue of necessity.

S. S.—We dealt with the Rev. Sutton Patterson's circular a fortnight ago. Glad to hear you sent him a copy of our letter to the Archbishop. Thanks for the enclosure. Mr. Foote intends to take a brief holiday as soon as he has cleared off his arrears of work.

J. F. HAMPSON.—Cuttings received with thanks.

E. ANDERSON.—See "Sugar Plums." Thanks for your good wishes.

L. C.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

L. STANLEY.—Cuttings are always welcome

W. H. TAYLOR.—We are obliged for your report as to the results of leaving the *Freethinker* in public places. Evidently a great deal of good is done in this way.

J. NEATE.—Mr. Foote acknowledges the "hearty congratulations" of the Bethnal Green Branch.

H. BROOKSBANK, 40 Drewton Street, Bradford, will be glad to hear from any persons wishing to join the National Secular Society in that town.

T. BIRTLEY.—Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* is improving every week. There is a lot of work put into it anyhow. Our compliments and thanks to the Branch.

FREISINNIGER.—The reverend gentleman blows his own trumpet very lustily, but we don't feel inclined to procure him an audience. Shall be glad to receive the document you refer to.

G. DICKINSON.—Always glad of cuttings.

R. FENN, 109 Commercial Road, E., would like to meet or correspond with a Freethinker who understands plain sugar boiling.

BUDDHIST PROPAGATION SOCIETY.—We cannot see our way to insert your meetings in our Guide.

A. HUBBARD.—Thanks for the cuttings. Our circulation is slowly but surely improving.

HARRY BENSON.—You take no "liberty" in writing to us. We are always pleased to be able to assist our readers in their studies. Glad to hear you have found *Darwin on God* so useful. Darwin's *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man* are 7s. 6d. We cannot say where you could get second-hand copies of the works of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. You would find Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* very interesting and serviceable.

JOHN CHICK sends us 7s. 6d. for the "Freethinker" Circulation Fund; 7s. 6d. for the Benevolent Fund; 3s. for the Swedish Prisoner Fund; and 3s. for the John Dell Fund.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—Open Court—Bulletin des Sommaires—Secular Thought—Cornish Telegraph—Freethought—Islington Gazette Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Boston Investigator—Newsagent—Lambert's Monthly—South American Journal—Freidenker—Progressive Thinker—Evening Standard—Echo—Rochester and Chatham Journal—Argonant—Sheldrake's Aldershot and Sandhurst Military Gazette—Fritankaren—Ironclad Age—Freedom—Blackpool Herald—Liberator—La Verité—La Lanterne—L'Estafette.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (March 23) on a new subject, "Good without God."

THE *South Wales Daily News* gave a brief report of Mr. Foote's lectures at Cardiff on Sunday. The morning audience was excellent, and promised well for the day, but the rain poured down spitefully after dinner and interfered with the success of the other two meetings. Those who did brave the weather were very enthusiastic. Freethought is being reorganised in Cardiff, and the movement is fortunate in possessing some active new blood. Mr. F. Morris is a very capable secretary. We look for good things from Cardiff.

THE concluding lecture of the free course at the London Hall of Science was delivered by Mr. Foote to a magnificent audience. Opposition was offered in two speeches by the Rev. C. L. Engstrom, secretary to the Christian Evidence Society. The meeting broke up soon after ten o'clock, but groups remained for sometime discussing. There can be no doubt as to the success of the experiment, and it is gratifying to know that the sale of a few reserved seat tickets and the box collections have nearly covered the expenses.

AT a Council meeting on Friday, March 14, the London Secular Federation decided to have a course of free lectures with discussión at Camberwell on Fridays, April 11, 18, 25 and May 2; also another course at Milton Hall on Tuesdays, April 15, 22, 29 and May 6. It was likewise resolved to have a course of free lectures in the East-end of London. Metropolitan Freethinkers with a little cash to spare might send a subscription in aid of this good work.

STIMULATED by the examples of the L.S.F., the Christian Evidence Society hurriedly arranged for two Thursday evening free lectures at the Hall of Science, the dates being March 20 and 27. Just as hurriedly, of course, the L.S.F., was invited to send representatives to oppose. Arrangements were made at the Council meeting for Mr. J. M. Robertson to oppose Mr. Engstrom on March 20 and Mr. A. B. Moss on March 27.

A PUBLIC debate will take place at the London Hall of Science on Thursday, April 3. The disputants are to be Mr. Robertson and the Rev. J. Tinling. The subject is a curious one at this time a day—"Did Moses write the Pentateuch?"

MR. T. BIRTLEY, of Chester-le-Street, writes as follows:—"I was the first to get the *Freethinker* here. The other night when I inquired of my newsagent I found that he now sells twenty copies weekly. There are other newsagents in the town and district who sell a good quantity. Our Branch posts the weekly contents-sheet in prominent places." This is excellent news, and we should like to hear a similar report from scores of other places. A little judicious pushing on the part of our friends would greatly increase our circulation.

"MR. WHEELER deserves the thanks and support of every Freethinker and Secularist for undertaking the heavy task involved in the production of this volume. When we find orthodox champions of to-day attempting to steal the name of such a man as Darwin as a believer in revelation, it shows how easy it may be for them to confound their opponents with the great names of a generation or two ago, about whom comparatively little is generally known. Mr. Wheeler's work places it in the power of Liberals to answer most of the claims of this sort. The work is the most valuable contribution to Freethought literature of recent years. It is not a mere dry list of names and dates, but contains sufficent facts to substantiate the right to place all the names inserted in the book in the ranks of the Freethought army. Every Freethinker should possess this work."—*Secular Thought*.

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The West Ham Branch inaugurates a new departure this morning (March 23) in the shape of a Children's Service. Secular Hymns will be sung, and Mr. G. Cave-Hill will address the children on "Little Things," which he will illustrate with the microscope. We wish the experiment success, and we shall watch the result with interest.

The Hull Branch had a very successful social gathering on Wednesday, March 12. The proceedings included a tea, concert, and ball, with speeches by Mr. S. Thompson and Mr. N. B. Billany. All who took part in the concert were Secularists, and the financial result was highly gratifying. The Hull Branch will repeat the experiment at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder intend to visit Bristol shortly to establish a Branch of the National Secular Society. Meanwhile Mr. Forder will be glad to hear from any friends in the city who are willing to carry out the local arrangements for a meeting of Freethinkers.

The Newcastle Branch has done good work in starting and promoting the Sunday Music League. The question of Sunday music in the Public Parks is now being made a test for the approaching elections in three of the wards. The League is issuing addresses to the electors, interviewing candidates, pushing the interests of those who are considered sound, and strenuously opposing the return of the other candidates.

The Plymouth, Devonport and Stonehouse Branch of the N. S. S. held a largely attended meeting of members on Sunday evening. It was decided to rent and furnish two large rooms at 100 Union Street. The sum of £4 6s. was collected on the spot, and the members resolved to raise the necessary balance as quickly as possible. The rooms will be used for club purposes as well as for meetings.

Lippincott's Magazine contains a chatty article on the salons of New York, and enumerates certain well-known entertainers of the metropolis who are famous for their success in attracting the intellectual element—now rapidly growing to large dimensions—to their receptions. Among the number the writer includes Colonel Ingersoll. He says: "Many people, too, can testify to the attractiveness of the Sunday evening receptions of Robert Ingersoll, whether it be due to the genial magnetism of the host or to the grace and—one must say it—the beauty of his daughters." The writer also gives a favorable notice of the work of the "Nineteenth Century Club," describing it as "enterprising, aggressive and cosmopolitan."

Colonel Ingersoll denies that he is out with President Harrison. "No; oh, no!" he explains. "I am about like the woman at the revival meeting. She sat there, prim and demure, with her little handkerchief folded up and laying in her lap, when some one came up to her and said: 'Sister, do you love Jesus?' She straightened up a little, and after a minute replied: 'Well, that's a strong expression to use, but I can say this—I've nothing ag'in him."

We are glad to see that a fund of three thousand dollars is being raised to recoup Mr. J. D. Shaw for his loss by the burning of Liberal Hall at Waco, Texas, and to enable him to continue his Freethought monthly, the *Independent Pulpit*. Mr. Shaw, a converted minister, has been a good worker, and his *Pulpit* is an excellent magazine, well deserving of support.

Mrs. E. D. Slenker, who has long conducted the Children's Corner of the *Truthseeker*, is now also editing a new paper called the *Plaindealer*, of Hastings, Michigan.

The Grand Orient of Italian Freemasons, presided over by the Grand Master, Adriano Lemmi, has determined to raise a sum of twenty thousand lire to erect a monument to Mazzini at Rome. The *Tablet* sneeringly says it is fitting that the arch-rebel of modern Italy should go beside the arch-heretic of the Renaissance, Bruno. Catholics evidently do not relish the proposed further "desecration" of the Holy City.

A conference for the organisation of the French Freethought Federation will be held at Paris on April 20.

Despite the counterblast of the Archbishop of Paris and the sentimental objections of M. Réman, cremation is making progress in France. Altogether 735 bodies were cremated at Père la Chaise up to the end of last year. The Cremation Society includes men like Victor Schoelcher, Yves Guyot and Dr. Chassaizu, and these proposed to establish crematories in all the large provincial towns of France.

The Svea Salen, one of the finest halls in Stockholm, was filled on Sunday March 9th, by a gathering of over 1,500 persons who attended to protest against the imprisonment of Mr. V. E. Lennstrand, and to vindicate the right of free speech and free assembly attacked in his person and that of the Socialist leaders in Sweden. The meeting was addressed by Dr. Nils Holst, an eminent geologist, by Dr. Anton Nystrom, author of an able History of Civilisation, and by our good friend Captain Thomson, whose warm attack on the bigots was well received. Many petitions asking for Mr. Lennstrand's release are being forwarded to the King of Sweden. Is that Monarch so under the clericals that he is indifferent to the opinion of civilised Europe and to the most enlightened of his own countrymen?

Fritankaren is now excellently printed, and is a credit to the Freethinkers of Sweden. No. 6 which lies before us gives a report of the election of Mr. Foote to the presidency of the N.S.S., and also notices of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary*, which it describes as a most valuable work.

The Republic of Brazil has not only decreed the separation of Church and State, but has ordered that civil marriage shall in every case precede or succeed the religious ceremony, which is left optional.

The *Transvaal Daily News*, which is sent to us from Johannesberg by Mr. E. B. Rose, shows there is considerable freethought in South Africa. One of its own leaders is entitled "The Sky Pilot Again," and its remarks on that "critter" are pretty severe.

Over a thousand dollars have been already raised for a memorial to Horace Seaver, and it is now proposed that, in addition to a granite monument to be placed over his grave, there shall be a Horace Seaver fund for the support of free lectures in the Paine Memorial Hall, Boston.

The good old *Boston Investigator*, founded by Abner Kneeland and edited for so many years by Horace Seaver, enters upon its sixtieth volume. Under the conduct of Mr. L. K. Washburn, it upholds the cause of Universal Mental Liberty in the same strenuous fashion it has done for so many years.

Freedom publishes a portrait of its editor. It is not well printed, but it serves to show that Mr. Collins has not lost his good looks. The same number of *Freedom* contains a full report of the laying of the foundation stone of the new Secular Hall at Sydney. There was a very large gathering, and Mr. Collins received an ovation. Mr. Symes was over from Melbourne to assist at the ceremony, and met with a most enthusiastic reception. Amongst the other speakers was Mr. Llorando Jones, the last prisoner for blasphemy in the southern hemisphere.

Dr. Carson, the leader of the Liverpool Positivists, who died recently, was buried by Dr. Congreve with the rites of the Church of humanity. Every non-Christian funeral is an eye-opener to the orthodox.

Mr. Bradlaugh is active with his pen. He has lately contributed political articles to some of the magazines, and an article of his appeared in the last number of the *Speaker* on "Judgments of the House of Commons."

AN EASY TIME OF IT.

"It seems to me," observed Jo Cose, "that the recording angel must have a pretty easy time of it now-a-days."

"Why so?" asked his wife.

"Simply because if a man does anything good or bad it gets into the newspapers."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, all the angel has to do is to go over his exchanges with a pair of shears."

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BENIGHTED IRELAND.

In the world of Freethought, as in the world of politics, Ireland "blocks the way" to the utmost limit of her ability. Freethought has invaded every civilised land; but in Celtic Ireland militant Freethought can scarcely be said to have an existence. It is the invariable boast of clergymen of all denominations that infidelity has never made its appearance in their happy hunting ground of disunited and benighted Ireland. The absence of infidelity has left our numerous clerics ample time for abusing each other, and full opportunity for hating each other without interruption, in the name of Christ. The common people, equally with their self-elected "spiritual directors." think that the absence of anything like Atheism is the greatest of blessings, while only the very few think that this so-called blessing is in reality a curse, and these few have hitherto been either unwilling or afraid to openly declare their beliefs, or rather disbeliefs.

The Irishman, educated or ignorant, is a willing mental slave. Paradoxical as it may seem, he is passionately fond of political freedom, while he detests religious freedom, and actually loves his mental slavery. Impulsive and unreasoning, he blindly adheres to the faith of his ancestors, and looks upon it as the greatest of disgraces to depart from it. Argument and reason do not sway him as they do the children of other countries. His poetic Celtic spirit delights in the marvellous and the miraculous, and distorts the most degrading superstitions into the highest forms of truth. The descendant of a race which practised the art of god-making in olden times, and which turned its dead chiefs into deities, by the process of evolution the Irishman's mind has become hopelessly clouded, and from the religious point of view no absurdity and no superstition is too much for him. He wallows in religious ignorance, and, like a pig wallowing in the mire, he delights in it. Old institutions die hard in Ireland—superstition will live there when it has disappeared for ever from every civilised land.

To this mental slavery the misery and the poverty of Ireland can be traced. History and experience tells us so much, at any rate, and teach us that Colonel Ingersoll spoke the truth when he attributed Irish wretchedness to the influence of the priests. For seven hundred years Ireland has been a scene of bickering, of war, and of bloodshed. Her sons have waded knee-deep in blood, all for the sake of the Lord! The steadfast faithfulness and obstinacy of the Irish—for which even as a Freethinker I cannot help having a slight feeling of admiration—kept persecution alive long after it had died out in England. Both sides in the struggle were fanatics; but the manliness and the steadfastness was unquestionably on the side of the Celt. But when persecution died out from pure shame, Ireland found herself so deeply sunk in the mire of religious slavery that the task of throwing off the shackles was hopeless. The priests who supported the people through the struggle in the name of "liberty of conscience," labored for "liberty of conscience" from the tyranny of everybody but their own.

When persecution died the priests were no longer the ardent patriots they were previously. They got what they wanted—liberty to tyrannise over their dupes without interference. That was a liberty they have upheld these hundred years, jealously and successfully. They have practised a milk-and-water patriotism, which has saved them from the reproach of being enemies to their fatherland, and at the same time hindered the people from breaking loose from their control and influence. At the time of the Union they deliberately sold their country to England for a promise of fuller emancipation than they then enjoyed. The significance of this fact has never been insisted on strongly enough. After the Union, when the revolutionary spirit was abroad in Ireland, and when there were fair enough chances of ameliorating the unhappy lot of the country by a fair, stand-up fight, the priests succeeded in killing the manly spirit that had taken possession of the people's hearts. They feared to allow the people to do anything without themselves, knowing very well that if it was seen that things could be done without priestly aid, the day of their tyranny would soon be over. In 1848, when the people had done enough of dying on their hill-sides, in fighting against the power that produced starvation—landlord ascendancy—the priests told them that any of them who shot down soldiers in the projected insurrection would go straight to hell if they fell in the struggle! The poor hungry wretches believed this, and as John Mitchell put it, they went home "to save their paltry old souls" and left the rebel leaders to their fate. In Fenian times the very same thing happened. Every Fenian was excommunicated and promised a very warm place hereafter for daring to love his country better than his priest.

At this day Ireland is as priest-ridden as ever it was. Nobody dares do anything that the priests oppose. The man who opposes the clergy is held up to execration, and ruin awaits him in business. Not long ago I was on a visit to a city in the south of Ireland. I observed a magnificent hotel lying idle, and inquiring the cause, I was informed that the hotel-proprietor was compelled to leave the town for allowing her Catholic daughter to marry a Protestant! The hotel was a favorite resort of Catholics, lay and clerical; and when the Bishop denounced the "mixed marriage" the place was boycotted.

Over three-fourths of Ireland the priest is all-powerful. He can do just as he pleases. His support of all persons seeking office—such as Parliamentary candidates, and candidates for municipal and poor law offices—means success, while his opposition means defeat. To people unaccustomed to priestly tyranny this may seem strange; but it is a very stern fact. People dare not oppose the priest. The man who does is looked upon by ninety-nine out of every hundred Catholics to be a scoundrel and a criminal. Nor is this strange when we know how the priests are regarded by the people. All Catholics must believe that priests have supernatural power, and they do believe it implicitly. I know plenty of Catholics in the country who believe that priests have power to kill their cattle or to destroy their crops, and with this fear before them they would not dream of opposing the "clergy." The priests, by hints and vague threats, endeavor to make the people understand that they possess supernatural power. I know of a bishop who announced from the pulpit that "he shook the dust off his feet" at a local paper, which said some plain things, politically, about him. The people thought that this meant something awful, and ceased buying the contumacious rag. I could fill the *Freethinker* with somewhat similar instances of which I have personal experience.

In the eyes of an Irish Catholic a priest is divinely inspired and infallible. The peasant boy who leaves the plough, ceases making love to his neighbour's daughter, and goes to college, becomes at once a man of great importance, and when he has a few words mumbled over him. and is sprinkled with a mixture of salt and water in the ceremony called "Ordination," he is henceforth an "Inspired" being with a license to lord it over every man and woman who is a Catholic. He sees nothing wrong in acting as slave-master over the minds of his flock, for he himself is a mental slave to the powers of Rome. This does not so much matter, however, while it pays so well to be a "devil dodger." Ireland may be poor, but the priest never knows what want is. During his "holy mission" he lives like a prince, he amasses a fortune, he portions his sisters, his cousins and aunts, he has shares in joint-stock companies, and he dies leaving behind him many legacies to pay for prayers for his soul, even though that soul was supposed to be "inspired"! To give him his due, however, he rarely does anything more scandalous than to get drunk. As to his living he has "gospel authority" to justify his sponging on the toil of others, and it is taught by Rome that it is a "mortal sin" to refuse paying him his "dues."

When I say that Irishmen are mental slaves and the dupes of superstition, and of money grabbing priests, I say nothing that is not perfectly true. I do not say so for the purpose of reviling my countrymen, for I love my country, and some of those mental slaves are my dearest friends, though many of them may have less tolerance for my Atheism than I have for their superstition. I cannot despise them for their benighted condition; but I pity them from the bottom of my heart, and wish for nothing more strongly than to see them emancipated. For the poor slaves I have nothing but compassion while I despise and abhor the surpliced impostors who have managed to keep the country in ignorance and poverty, while the world has been progressing. They preach the utility of poverty, and live in luxury and ease. They preach charity and forgiveness and practise them only when it suits them? They preach equality, and are themselves more implacable tyrants than Russian despots. In short, they pose as ministers of light, while they are in reality messengers of darkness and living obstacles to their unfortunate country's freedom and progress.

J. O'Donovan.

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THE PARSON AND THE ASS:

Or, the Donkey that Praised the Lord.

Time: a sultry
Sabbath noon;
All creation
Seems to swoon.

Scene: a country
House of prayer;
All good people
Gathered there.

Parson preaching,
Doors flung wide—
Man and donkey
Just outside.

Coster stretched on
Load of greens,
Donkey munching
Heap of beans.

Parson's subject:
Balaam's ass,
And the angels
In the pass.

Coster listens,
So does moke;
Plainly heard is
Each word spoke.

Says the parson,
"O, my friends,
Humblest vessels
Serve God's ends.

"Even an ass can
Praise the Lord."
All assent with
Sweet accord.

"Once an ass an
Angel saw."
Coster's donkey
Says "Hee-haw."

"And at once her
Lord she knew.
Oh, that we were
Asses too!"

Coster whistles—
"Think we'll hook";
Sentimental's
Donkey's look.

"Oh that we had
Asses' eyes,"
In his fervor
Parson cries.

"Asses' eyes and
Asses' ears";
Moke outside his
Tail uprears.

Waxing warmer,
Parson bawls,
"Be we asses!"—
Moke hee-haws.

Wildly parson's
Accents ring,
As he shouteth
"Let us sing."

Meeting rises,
Organ peals,
Coster's donkey
Kicks up heels.

Shouts the parson,
"Happy day.
Now, dear brethren —"
Moke does bray.

Parson gasps and
Stands aghast;
Voice is heard to
Say, "Avast!"

Congregation
Shakes with dread;
Hoarse voice roareth,
"Gee woa, Ned."

Alfred Lovett.

TRADITIONS OF PALESTINE.

These gifted Latin monks never do anything by halves. If they were to show you the Brazen Serpent that was elevated in the wilderness, you could depend upon it that they had on hand the pole it was elevated on also, and even the hole it stood in. They have got the "Grotto" of the Annunciation here; and just as convenient to it as one's throat is to his mouth, they have also the Virgin's kitchen, and even her sitting-room, where she and Joseph watched the infant Savior play with Hebrew toys eighteen hundred years ago. All under one roof, and all clean, spacious, comfortable "grottoes." It seems curious that personages intimately connected with the Holy Family always lived in grottoes—in Nazareth, in Bethlehem, in imperial Ephesus—and yet nobody else in their day and generation thought of doing anything of the kind. If they ever did, their grottoes are all gone, and I suppose we ought to wonder at the peculiar marvel of the preservation of these I speak of. When the Virgin fled from Herod's wrath she hid in a grotto in Bethlehem, and the same is there to this day. The slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem was done in a grotto; the Savior was born in a grotto—both are shown to pilgrims yet. It is exceedingly strange that these tremendous events all happened in grottoes—and exceedingly fortunate, likewise, because the strongest houses must crumble to ruin in time, but a grotto in the living rock will last for ever. It is an imposture—this grotto stuff—but it is one that all men ought to thank the Catholics for. Wherever they ferret out a lost locality made holy by some Scriptural event, they straightway build a massive—almost imperishable—Church there, and preserve the memory of that locality for the gratification of future generations. If it had been left to Protestants to do this most worthy work, we would not even know where Jerusalem is to-day, and the man who could go and put his finger on Nazareth would be wise for this world. The world owes the Catholics its goodwill even for the happy rascality of hewing out these bogus grottoes in the rock; for it is infinitely more satisfactory to look at a grotto, where people have faithfully believed for centuries that the Virgin once lived, than to have to imagine a dwelling-place for her somewhere, anywhere, nowhere, loose and at large all over this town of Nazareth. There is too large a scope of country. The imagination cannot work. There is no one particular spot to chain your eye, rivet your interest, and make you think. The memory of the Pilgrims cannot perish while Plymouth Rock remains to us. The old monks are wise. They know how to drive a stake through a pleasant tradition that will hold it to its place for ever.

Mark Twain's "New Pilgrim's Progress."

WILL THE HEATHEN BE SAVED?

Evidently not if we take the words of Scripture. He that believeth not shall be damned. For there is none other name under heaven whereby we must be saved. Christians are slowly becoming too humane to hold this view of the perdition of the heathen, which was held by all Christians in the palmy days of Christianity, and as a consequence missionary fervor is dying. The Rev. Principal Simon preaching at Edinburgh declared that interest in foreign missions was no longer what it should be. It was spoilt by the modern views of "the larger hope." Within the memory of most of them it was customary, almost imperative, for those who advocated missions to lay emphasis on the eternal ruin, the quenchless fires, towards which the heathen were passing every day. Nowadays it was becoming the opinion that all men would ultimately be saved. Principal Simon deprecated the effect this view has on missions. But if the heathen can be saved without Christianity why should it be sent to them at great trouble and expense? This is only giving them a better chance of damnation by rejecting the Blessed Gospel. For they do reject it.

PROUD OF HIS WIFE'S PIETY.

I have a friend who doesn't go to church himself, but sends his wife regularly. I dined with him last Sunday, and he took advantage of the circumstances to display her devotional tendencies before company.

"What was the text, Sue?" he asked.

"Oh, something somewhere in Generations; I've forgotten the chapter and verse. Mrs. Hughes sat right in front of me, wearing the worst looking bonnet I ever saw on a woman's head."

"How did you like the new minister?"

"Oh, he was simply superb! And Kate Selwin was there in a sealskin that never cost a cent less than 100 dols."

"Did he say anything about the new mission fund?"

"No; and the Jones girls were rigged out in their old silks made over. You would have died laughing to have seen them."

"It seems to me you didn't hear much of the sermon"

"The fact is, George, the new minister has a lovely voice; it almost put me to sleep.

A long silence followed, during which George absently helped me to pickles and mustard, while his wife sat looking as demure as a saint at a circus. Suddenly she exclaimed:

"There! I knew I'd forgot to tell you something! The fringe on Mrs. Brown's cape is an inch deeper than mine, and twice as heavy!"

My friend changed the conversation to the last new novel.

Infidel: "Well, what did you have for dinner Christmas?" Baptist: "I had a cold duck."

"Papa, how old was Methuselah when he died?"
"Nine hundred sixty-nine years, Rollo."
"And what was his business?"
"Boy preacher."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 86 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mrs. Thornton Smith, "And yet it Moves."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 11.15, Mr. Heaford, "Intellectual Difficulties of Christianity"; 5.30, Tea and Soiree.

Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 3.15, adjourned members' meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "How I Became a Freethinker."

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Gospel Myths."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Good Without God."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. E. Calvert, "History of the New Testament Canon."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Shams and Delusions of Theology."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11, Mr. S. Standring, "What was the Use of Christ's Coming?"

Old Southgate—Opposite Cherry Tree, 7, Sam Standring, "Satan, God and Man's Best Friend."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, children's service, address by Mr. G. Cave-Hill on "Little Things"; 7, Mr. P. Coppock, A.N.U.C., "Evolution in the Domain of Chemistry."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Miracles of the Bible: Are they True?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Socialist speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "God's Word."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. H. Mutch, "Nature and the Idea of God."

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. William Cassels, "Free Trade."

Huddersfield — Littlewood's Buildings, Upperhead Row, 6.30, special meeting; members' subscriptions are now due.

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—at 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. W. A Newcomb, "Imperial Federation."

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, Mr. G. Vickers, "The Bible and its Authors."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 3, annual meeting of members; 6.30, Mr. Joseph Spencer (of Rochdale), Selection of Humorous and Dramatic Recitals. Free.

Newcastle-on-Tyne — 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, meeting of Sunday Music League; 7.30, monthly business meeting of members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, Mr. Frederick Millar, 11, "Individualism and Property"; 7, "The Politics of Individualism."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, at 3, Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., "The Birth and Death of Worlds"; 7, "How the Rocks which Contain Coal were Formed."

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street; at 7, business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 18, (morning) Pimlico (evening) Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, (afternoon) Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico; 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester. May 4, Birmingham.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S SEVEN SILLY QUESTIONS.

"ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S Seven Questions" is the title of a paragraph in the current number of *The Young Man*, a paper which is proving the certitude of Christian truth, after nearly two thousand years of preaching, by carrying on a symposium on "What is it to be a Christian?" We have interpolated the word "Silly," which is quite accurate, and for which we owe Dr. Farrar no apology, since he does not shrink from applying the description of "stupendous nonsense" to the belief of his opponents.

Our method of criticism shall be honest. We shall give the whole of the paragraph, and then answer the seven silly questions seriatim.

"If you meet with an Atheist, do not let him entangle you into the discussion of side issues. As to many points which he raises, you must make the Rabbi's answer: 'I do not know.' But ask him these seven questions: 1. Ask him, What did matter come from? Can a dead thing create itself? 2. Ask him, Where did motion come from? 3. Ask him, Where life came from save the finger tip of Omnipotence? 4. Ask him, Whence came the exquisite order and design in nature? If one told you that millions of printers' types should fortuitously shape themselves into the divine comedy of Dante, or the plays of Shakespeare, would you not think him a madman? 5. Ask him, Whence came consciousness? 6. Ask him, Who gave you free will? 7. Ask him, Whence came conscience? He who says there is no God, in the face of these questions, talks simply stupendous nonsense."

These questions, be it observed, are put with great deliberation. With regard to many points, not one of which is specified, Dr. Farrar admits that he can only say "I do not know." But on these particular points he is cocksure. His mind is not troubled with a scintillation of doubt. He has no hesitation in saying that those who differ from him are guilty of "stupendous nonsense." It is a matter for regret, however, that he did not answer the questions himself. By so doing he would have saved Christian young men the trouble of hunting up an Atheist, good at answering queries, in order to get the conundrums solved; while, as the case now stands, the Christian young men may go on for ever with a search as weary as that of Diogenes, unless they happen to light on this number of the *Freethinker*.

First (*a*) Question (we leave out "Silly" to avoid repetition): *What did matter come from?*—First prove that matter ever *came*, and we will then discuss what (or where) it came from. Matter exists, and for all that anyone knows to the contrary, it always existed. Its beginning to be and its ceasing to be are alike inconceivable. The question is like the old catch query, "When did you leave off beating your father?" the proper answer to which is, "When did I begin to beat my father?"

First (*b*) Question: *Can a dead thing create itself?*—The question is paradoxical. "Create itself" is a self-contradiction. Creation, however defined, is an act, and an act implies an actor. To create, a thing must first exist; and self-creation is therefore an absurdity. The question is consequently meaningless.

Second Question: *Where did motion come from?*—Another nonsensical question. Motion does not "come" as a special change. Motion is universal and incessant. Molecular movement is constantly going on even in what appear stable masses. The presumption is that this was always so in the past, and will be always so in the future.

Third Question: *Where did life come from save the finger tip of Omnipotence?*—Why not the big toe of Omnipotence? Life is not an entity, but a condition. Its coming from anywhere is therefore nonsensical. A living *thing* might "come," because its position in space can be changed. Then come fresh difficulties. Can any man conceive the finger of an infinite being, or form a mental picture of life, as a something, flowing from the tip of that finger? The question of the origin of life pertains to the science of biology. When biology answers it, as it has answered other perplexed questions, Dr. Farrar will be enlightened. Meanwhile his ignorance is no excuse for his dogmatism.

Fourth (*a*) Question: *Whence came the exquisite order and design in nature?*—This is tautology. Design in nature includes order in nature. And the question invites a Scotch reply. *Is* there design in nature? No one disputes that there is *adaptation*, but this is explained by Natural Selection. The fit, that is the adapted, survives. But the unfit is produced in greater abundance than the fit. Theologians look at the *result* and blink the *process*. Darwin, who studied both, said, "Where one would most expect design, namely, in the structure of a sentient being, the more I think the less I can see proof of design." Dr. Farrar must catch his hare before he cooks it. He must prove design before he requires the Atheist to explain it. Perhaps he will begin with idiots, cripples, deaf mutes, fleas, bugs, lice, eczema, cancers, tumors, and tapeworms.

Fourth (*b*) Question: *Could millions of printers' types fortuitously shape themselves into the works of Dante or Shakespeare?*—No, nor even into the works of Dr. Farrar. But who ever said they could? Why not ask Atheists whether the moon could be made of green cheese. Dr. Farrar is no doubt alluding to what is called Chance. But Atheists do not recognise chance as a cause. Chance is contingency, and contingency is ignorance. The term denotes a condition of our minds, not an operation of external nature.

Fifth Question: *Whence came consciousness?*—This is a very silly or a very fraudulent question. Putting the problem in this way insinuates a theological answer. Consciousness, like life, is not an entity, and did not come from anywhere. The only proper question is, What is the origin of consciousness? This is an extremely difficult and intricate problem. It will be solved, if at all, by the Darwins of physio-psychology, not by the Farrars of the pulpit. The worthy Archdeacon and the Christian young men must wait until their betters have explained the development of consciousness. The supposition that

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they understand it is simply ludicrous. Nor is any theory to be built on the bog of their ignorance.

Sixth Question: *Who gave you free will?*—Ay, who? *Has* man a free will, in the metaphysical sense of the words? Martin Luther replied in the negative. He would have laughed, or snorted, at Dr. Farrar's question. Atheists are all with Martin Luther on this point; although, of course, they reject his theory that God and the Devil are always contending for the rulership of the human will. They hold that the will is determined by natural causes, like everything else in the universe. To ask an Atheist, therefore, who gave him free will, is asking him who gave him what he does not possess.

Seventh Question: *Whence came conscience?*—This, again, is stupidly expressed. Conscience did not "come" from anywhere. Further, before the Atheist answers Dr. Farrar's question, even in an amended form, he requires a definition. What is meant by Conscience? If it means the perception of right and wrong, it is an intellectual faculty, which varies in individuals and societies, some having greater discrimination than others. If it means the recognition of distinct, settled categories of right and wrong, it depends on social and religious training. In a high state of civilisation these categories approximate to the laws of social welfare and disease; in a low state of civilisation they are fantastic and fearfully distorted by superstition. There is hardly a single vice that has not been practised as a virtue under a religious sanction. Finally, if conscience means the feeling of obligation, the sense of "I ought," it is a product of social evolution. It is necessarily generated among gregarious beings, and in the course of time Natural Selection weeds out the individuals in whom it is lacking or deficient. Social types of feeling survive, and the anti-social perish. And this is the whole "mystery" of conscience.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE OLDEST BOOK IN THE WORLD.

MANY people are of opinion that the Bible is the most ancient work in existence. So far, however, from that being the case, the earliest portions of that miscellany of sixty-six documents cannot be traced before the ninth century B.C.—that is, after the date assigned to Homer. Much, indeed, of the writings ascribed to Moses is now considered to date only from the time of Ezra, or later than Herodotus. Beside the earliest sacred classics of China, the Rig Veda of the Hindus, the Babylonian inscriptions, or the Gathas of the Zoroastrian Avesta, the writings ascribed to Moses are quite modern. Even if we allow them the date ascribed to them by Christians, they are modern compared with the holy book of the Egyptians, the Book of the Dead. This is the oldest of *sacred* books. Ancient portions of this Egyptian Bible have been found on tombs dating before 3000 B.C. The earliest preserved papyrus of it, however, only dates from the eighteenth dynasty, or about 1600 B.C. But the work itself is of far greater antiquity, probably preceding the Pyramids. In this work, to which I shall further allude on some future occasion, there is none of that obscenity and bloodshed which disgusts us in the Bible. And Chabas, a writer of the highest authority, tells us—what any reader of the *Records of the Past* may discover for himself—that "None of the Christian virtues is there forgotten—piety, charity, gentleness, chastity, protection of the weak, kind watching over the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its least details."

Putting aside the Book of the Dead as of undetermined date, the actually oldest known manuscript in the world is the Papyrus Prisse,* having been discovered by M. Prisse, who published a fac-simile in 1847. The papyrus, which is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, came from a tomb belonging to the eleventh dynasty, nearly 3000 B.C. It consists of two portions, the brief Book of Kakimna and the Lessons of Ptah-Hotep. The composition of the works, as appears from internal evidence, must be dated earlier, the first portion belonging to the time of King Senefern of the third dynasty and the last portion to that of king Assa of the fifth dynasty. No contemporary records being known, it is not easy to assign exact dates for the works, but it is quite safe to say they were written before 3000 B.C. or 1600 years before the alleged times of Moses. In his Hibbert lecture, M. Le Page Renouf, keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, who we gladly quote as the President of the Society of Biblical Archæology, says: "It is undoubtedly, as Chabas called it in the title of the memorable essay in which its contents were first made known, 'The Most Ancient Book of the Work'; the manuscript at Paris, which contains it was written centuries before the Hebrew law-giver was born, but the author lived as far back as the reign of king Assa Tatkara of the fifth dynasty." He goes on to say of these maxims "They inculcate the study of Wisdom, the duty of parents and superiors, respect for property, the advantages of charitableness, peaceableness and content, of liberality, humility, chastity and sobriety, of truthfulness and justice; and they show the wickedness and folly of disobedience, strife, arrogance and pride, of slothfulness, intemperance, unchastity and other vices." It is only, adds this devout Catholic, who is always a Christian first and a scholar afterwards, "through a lamentable misunderstanding of the text that some scholars have discovered anti-religious, epicurean, or sceptical expressions."

A French translation has been made by M. Philippe Virey, who devoted six years to the elucidation of eighteen pages, and the reader will desire to know something of the contents of the work. That of Kakimna is only a short fragment on civility. It enjoins against gluttony, and contains at least one sentence "Do not harden the hearts of thy children," fully equal to any in the Bible. Compare this with the saying of Solomon—"He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. xiii., 24) and "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," and then say whether the truest wisdom and humanity is not to be found in the more ancient precept of the heathen.

The precepts of Ptah-Hotep give us a fuller view of Egytian life and civilisation. The work shows the mind of one accustomed to a well-ordered society, wherein he respects the authority of those above him, and in return is respected by those beneath. He refers to well-defined classes of society, from the prince to the policeman, and the peasant with well-marked limits to his property. He was not only civilised: he saw the root of the matter, as witness the following:

"If thou art wise, take care of thy house. Love thy wife purely. Feed her, clothe her; these are the cares to give to her body. Caress her, fulfil her desire. Be not brutal; kindness will lead her better than force. Love is her breath. This establishes her in thy house. If thou repellest her, it is an abyss. Open thine arms to her for her arms call her; show her thy love."

Some refinement, too, is shown in this:

"Do not repeat an excess of language. Do not hear it. It is something which has escaped a heated soul. If it is repeated, look, without hearing it, towards the ground; say nothing about it.

"If thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, do not treat him with contempt because thou art not of the same opinion. Do not be provoked with him when he is wrong; away with that! He is fighting against his very self; do not ask him to flatter thy views."

One passage in Ptah-Hotep is very similar to one of the Proverbs ascribed to Solomon. Ptah-Hotep

* There are inscriptions older than this, but no papyri.

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says: "If thou art among persons who are sitting down to eat at the house of one greater than thyself, take what he gives thee, bowing low. Look at what is before thee, bowing profoundly." The wisest of all mankind, according to the Jews, said, "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" (Prov. xxiii., 1, 2). Again we prefer the ancient profane to the modern sacred writer. Temperance people may rejoice to know that in this old work is the maxim "Do not warm thyself in the house where intoxicating liquors are drunk," and may contrast it with the precepts given in Deut. xiv., 26, and Prov. xxxi., 7.

Ptah-Hotep mentions Osiris and a divinity who may be a form of Osiris, yet speaks of God in the singular number, saying in one passage "Love for the work they do brings men near to God." He looks forward to the future of humanity and says: "If thou hast the position of leader prosecuting plans according to thy will, do the best things which after days will remember; so that the word which multiplies flatteries, excites pride and produces vanity, shall not succeed with thee." Among the positive injunctions of Ptah-Hotep are: "Love thy people; Treat dependents well. Return a gentle answer. The gentle man overcometh obstacles. Forget the wrong. Be just. Inspire men with confidence in you. Be kind to all. Be companiable. Be cheerful." Any one who thinks must be certain that a considerable development of morality existed among the people who put up the pyramids. But Christians, who claim a moral monopoly, usually do not think and are unaware that a sufficient refutation of their claims can be found in the oldest known book in the world.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

Spain has been, and still is to a certain extent, a sort of *terra incognita* to the rest of the civilised world. Very scanty indeed is the number of travellers who have penetrated her interior regions with a view of studying them; scantier still the number of those who possess a knowledge of the nature of the Spanish mind. Of Spanish literature, which is extensive and not unworthy of the language, with the exception of the immortal hero of Lepanto—*i.e.*, Cervantes—and some writers of the seventeenth century, hardly anything is known to foreigners, notwithstanding that *littérateurs* like Shack, Ticknor, Baret, Phil. Chasles and numerous other critics have devoted many years of labor to the study of that literature. Of the number of clever and intellectual men that the Peninsula produced, many of whom were highly gifted and possessed of genius, with the exception of the names of a few painters, not a single one has ever crossed the Pyrenees or drifted to the hospitable shores of Albion.

A priest-ridden country like Spain, lost in a fog of fanaticism and childish credulity, could never have offered a peaceful abode to philosophers. It is not astonishing, then, if in her soil no philosophic school arose or took root. The scholastic philosophy alone succeeded in gathering a few disciples, and since its origin in the eighth century up till to-day its influence has only slightly slackened. It would be useless to seek in Spain for that power of abstraction, that boldness of system inherent in Teutonic thought, or for those brilliant essays, full of temerity, which issue at times from the pens of English and French writers. Spain always was too impregnated with the Catholic faith to pass easily to rationalism; and nothing has she abhorred so much (until recently) as doctrines bordering on scepticism or tinged by materialism. Her philosophy has been an *ensemble* of mysticism and spiritualism. A brief perusal of the works of Raymundus Lullus, Vives, Feijoo, Caramuel, and, in the nineteenth century, Balmés and Donoso Cortes, will confirm the above assertion.

Little has been written concerning the intellectual development of Spain. Buckle, in his admirable *History of Civilisation*, consecrates a fair chapter to this subject, but as his book was written quite thirty years ago, and it is in the last quarter of a century that Spain has experienced a complete metamorphosis (which we shall eventually show), the statements in that well-known work cannot be applied to the present state of Spain, and would convey but an unfair—even false—impression of the mental condition of that country.

Spain is no longer that "huge and torpid mass at the further extremity of the continent." She is no longer that fanatic and ignorant country, which baffled for centuries the efforts of heretics to deliver it from the grasp of clericalism. Spain has awakened at last. Confused and ashamed at finding herself the most backward country in Europe, she has laid aside her ancient pride and infatuation, and is working with undaunted enthusiasm towards the realisation of a grand and radical reform. She progresses slowly, we grant; but, to borrow a comparison from Prof. Tyndall, "it is with the steady and irresistible movement of an avalanche." In her task Spain will do well to look forward towards free and brave Old England. Spain will find that by following England's footsteps she will reach the path which leads to honor, glory and prosperity. Let us hope that there always will be an eternal bond of brotherhood and friendship between English and Spanish Freethinkers, so that by mutually assisting each other, they may be able to fight for and advance the cause they both deeply cherish!

Let us briefly examine the causes which prevented Freethought from spreading in the Peninsula. "Spain," wrote an eminent English historian, "seems to have been designated by nature to be the seat and refuge of superstition." Among the most important physical causes of superstition are earthquakes, epidemics and famines. It is curious to remark that the said calamities have not elsewhere been so prominent as in Spain. "When we moreover add," continues Buckle, "that in the Peninsula, including Portugal, earthquakes have been extremely disastrous, and have excited all those superstitious feelings which they naturally provoke, we may form some idea of the insecurity of life, and of the ease with which an artful and ambitious priesthood could turn such insecurity into an engine for the advancement of their own power."

In no country has the Church dominated so widely and for such a length of time as in Spain. Since the middle of the seventh century the clergy have been holding kings in bondage by the confessional, and the people by their *naif* and blind credulity. The clergy were always exempt from charges towards the State, and all their work was merely reduced to absorb public wealth by their benefices, by tithes, taxes on perquisites, and by the encroachments they made on the property of the weak, and by the confiscation of the goods of Jews and heretics. All these sources made the revenues of the clergy swell to the enormous sum of one million yearly. Every attempt to liberate the human mind was smothered in blood. Before a book was allowed to be printed it had to receive the approbation of the Grand Inquisitor. Priests alone were allowed to teach, but in their bigotry and egotism they thought it would be better to leave the people in absolute ignorance. The following examples will show how severely the Inquisition behaved even towards those who formed part of that tribunal:—

Juan de Vergara, the celebrated Hebrew scholar, was imprisoned for having pointed out some mistakes in the translation of the Vulgate. Several learned theologians who were present at the Council of Trent were persecuted because in their discourses they showed a spirit of independence and were suspected of holding heretical opinions. The Benedictine father Virues, preacher to Charles V., was arrested and incarcerated during four years on mere suspicion of favoring Lutheran doctrines. Even the bigoted Charles V. himself was suspected of heresy, and after his death assaults are said to have been committed upon his body. Augustin Cazalla, chaplain of Salamanca, on account of his liberal sermons, was strangled and burnt with all their relatives. Ponce de Leon, a monk by profession, underwent an imprisonment of five years for translating the Song of Solomon. A long list of Protestants, Freemasons and Jews could be added to the above names, who were either burnt or banished on the mere charge of having become obnoxious to the Inquisition.*

F. Malibran.

(*To be concluded.*)

"On human evidence the miracles of St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assiai are as well established as those of the New Testament.—*J. A. Froude*, "Short Studies."

* The reader who wishes for further information on this subject will do well to consult F. D. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, 1877; and E. La Rigaudiere, *Persécutions en Espagne*, 1860.

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ACID DROPS.

Even the *Christian Life*, a Unitarian paper, is sceptical as to Mrs. Humphrey Ward's scheme. It "extremely regrets" the negation of miracle in the basis of the movement. "Had the first teachers of Christianity," it says, "planted themselves on the basis Mrs. Ward proposes, Christianity would not have been heard of out of Palestine." This is true enough. Fiction and miracle were the chief agencies in the spread of Christianity, and they will always be the chief agencies in its maintenance.

This is how Mr. George Barlow tries to satirise Mr. Herbert Spencer.

"God, when he shut heaven's door, took care to lock it,
Glanced round, then set to work upon the sun;
But Spencer drew his latch-key from his pocket,
And entered heaven, and saw the whole thing done.

Hence all our thoughts are changed—a light intenser
Now beams upon the paths creation took.
Had Moses had the help of Herbert Spencer
He would have written a far abler book."

The last line has a sort of cart-wheel melody, but it contains a good deal of truth. Moses may have been skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians. Very likely he was the only Jew of that age who had a day's schooling. But he didn't know much about astronomy, and the nebular theory never dawned on his imagination. He saw some divine (and funny) sights up Mount Sinai, but he never saw the law of gravitation. But the best of the joke is, he didn't write a book at all, so Herbert Spencer couldn't have helped him to write "a far abler" one. Mr. Barlow should not meddle with his betters. Let him stick to his last. He is good enough at passable echoes of Swinburne, but he hasn't brains enough for effective satire.

Parson Hoskyns, rector of Stepney, will not have to defend himself again. Mrs. Besant has decided to abandon her action against him, and entered into an agreement not to bring any fresh action in respect of the same matter. The reverend gentleman is still impenitent, but perhaps he will be a little more scrupulous in future.

Dean Lefroy's tirade against Scepticism, to which we devoted a paragraph last week, is reported at greater length in the *Christian World*. We cull the following choice passages from his "able and eloquent address": "After twenty-five years of close study, I must impress on you my conclusion that the causes of scepticism are more moral than intellectual. People begin to sin, they give up religion, take to drink, impurity and foul language, and then they try to bribe themselves into the belief that there is no Being to whom they are responsible. There is real, honest doubt when men are in conscientious agony, and their whole lives are saddened by their inability to see with the same definiteness that others can see, and for these I have great pity; but your poor, shallow, silly rattlebrain, that strokes his eyebrows and feels insanely for the down on his cheek, for him to talk to me about scepticism is to make me pray not to lose my temper."

If this is the result of Dean Lefroy's "twenty-five years of close study" he must be singularly foolish or he must have worn the spectacles of prejudice. This is the first time we ever heard that sceptics were to be known by their stroking their eyebrows and caressing their nascent beards. So far the Dean's discovery has the merit of novelty. But the part which describes the sceptic as a person who first takes to drink, impurity and foul language, is extremely ancient. It is a Pigottism that any candid investigator would see through in less than "twenty-five years." A few evenings' research would show that it is not the Freethinkers, but a very different class of persons, who congregate in the haunts of drink and lechery. Dean Lefroy has mistaken his friends for his foes.

Is it old age or the dowager duchess? Anyhow Professor Tyndall is not the man he was. His recent appearances at Belfast are in singular contrast to the visit of 1874, when he delivered that famous Address, which was such a splendid *resumé* of the history and philosophy of Evolution. His lectures are now patronised by the clergy who were then his severest critics. But *they* have not changed. The change is in himself.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's organ, the *Methodist Times*, says "We would much rather see a good Conservative who is a Methodist in Parliament than a bad Liberal." The syntax of this sentence is as bad as its sense. What is meant at bottom is this, that the chief question about any man is, Is he a Methodist? Perhaps it should be added, "Does he subscribe to the West-end Mission?"

Dr. Tylor asserts very justly, in his magnificent work on *Primitive Culture*, that at first religion and morality have no connection with each other. This is now admitted in reality by Professor Max Müller, although he paradoxically affirms that religion does influence man's moral nature even if it only tells him to do immoral things! In his tenth Gifford lecture the following passage is worth quoting: "We are told, for instance, that the pre-historic Hebrews killed their first-born in sacrifice to their god. Abraham came very near doing the same thing. Jephtha killed his daughter, and David killed the seven sons of Saul, and kept them hanging in the air all the summer long, to remind his God that Ishbosheth was avenged. If you catch a Yezidee in the act of stealing, he will tell you that murder is to him a religious rite. If you reprove the Todas of the Nilgheri Hills for living in polyandry, they will tell you that this is the very ground-work of their religion. If you reprove the Mormons for living in polygamy, they will remind you that this is the Biblical chart of their faith."

Real Christianity always runs into a contempt for the flesh and a hatred of the world. It expresses the views of Jesus and Paul as to the evil of earthly life and the inconvenience, if not the sinfulness, of all sexual relations. We are not surprised, therefore, at Mr. Dillon's account of Tolstoi's new novel, which is still in manuscript, its publication being prohibited in Russia. "It aims at enforcing the lesson," says the *Christian World*, "which Tolstoi professes to derive from the Gospel, that it is not good to marry, and,. following as a corollary upon this, that the race should be allowed to become extinct." Properly speaking, this is the upshot of every *spiritual* theory, for if the soul is an independent entity the body is only a clog.

The Vicar of Burton-on-Trent desires to be a martyr to the sacred cause of sectarian education. He objects to pay the School Board rate because the School Boards do not teach the dogmas of his church, and says he will only stump up on compulsion, thereby proclaiming his opposition to what the mass of his fellow-countrymen deem a prime element of social welfare. The man of God has been summoned to the police court, and ordered to pay.

In Tasmania, where Mr. Symes was recently mobbed, the spirit of bigotry is aroused, and Mr. Walker, a prominent Freethinker in Launceston, has been charged with blasphemy and committed for trial. A fund has been raised for his defence, and the result will surely be an accession of strength to the Freethought cause.

Archbishop Denison says: "'The New Criticism,' of which Mr. Gore, in the book called *Lux Mundi*, is the apologist, proceeds upon the assumption that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did not know in his time upon earth what is the historic value of the Scriptures (John v., 39-47), but that 'The New Criticism' does know, and is therefore able to accept or to reject."

The Archdeacon is quite right. To discredit Daniel is to discredit Jesus, who referred to him. To deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is to repudiate Jesus, who said that Moses wrote of him, though, of course, Moses did nothing of the kind, even if he was the author of the documents ascribed to him.

Quite a number of sky-pilots are prepared to pitch overboard the Old Testament if they can only save the New. It is necessary to show them the two volumes are bound together. Others, especially the Romanisers, would pitch over the Bible entirely if they could only save the Church and their positions therein. It is necessary to show them that the Old and New Testaments are the pillars of the

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Church, which once destroyed, down comes the entire edifice.

There were "ructions" at the Sunfield Men's Bible Class. A paper was read on "Christ's Religion as the Best National Security," and when question time came Mr. Henry Smith arose and asked, "Seeing that the Sermon on the Mount is the principal teaching of Christ, how is it that Christians don't carry it out?" This innocent question fell like a bombshell, and it was found advisable to decline to have the question answered on the ground that Mr. Smith was not a member; but, after he had left in disgust, one humbug after another protested that he would have had a satisfactory answer if he had only remained.

According to *Modern Society*, the children of a National school at the seaside were being paraded preparatory to a march to church for a Lenten week-day service, and one little fellow whose father does not approve of sectarian teaching, contrived to make his escape and run home, as he had received instructions to do. When he appeared at school next morning he was not merely punished for playing truant, but so severely thrashed by the master, that when he got home his little clothes were covered with blood, and he presented such a woeful appearance that the police, to whom his father took him, asked if the "child had been mauled by a sow?"

A summons was taken out against the master, but the said pedagogue went to the father privately and persuaded him to take compensation in money! It seems to us very strange that any parent should consent to have such a case kept out of court; but it is alleged that the father, who is only a poor fisherman, was afraid that the rector's influence with the local magistrates of the neighborhood would prevent his cause from getting a fair hearing in any case.

Prophet Baxter is superseded. Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops says "The end of the world is now." He has sent us a copy of his vaticination, which has the double advantage of being very ungrammatical and three times as mad as Baxter's. We have read it from left to right, and from right to left, and upside down, and we can't understand it any way. However, it is intelligible on one point. Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops solicits the public to buy his portraits at a shilling each "to help him to bring the reality of the world"—whatever that means. And to show it is all square he sends us one of his counterfeit presentments, taken by Beattie, of Praed Street. It represents a gentleman with a largish mouth, and very small eyes, which seem to behold a lot of things that ordinary people never see. Underneath is a printed slip, enough to horrify the poor photographer, bearing the words—"Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops, First and Seventh Angel, Alpha and Omega, Christ the Second, M.S.S." But surely the "M" is a misprint for A.

Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops writes us a fearful scrawl. Encouraged, perhaps, by some recent references to the N. S. S. motto "We seek for Truth," and regarding it as an open invitation to all the cranks of the universe, he exclaims, "You seek for truth, and the truth is come." He says he has joined the N. S. S.—goodness knows under what name—and declares it is from the platform of the London Hall of Science that he is destined to "open the Fourth Kingdom."

This Christ the Second is apparently a great deal madder than Christ the First. But if the N. S. S. is to take in everybody on the look-out for truth, we don't see how he is to be excluded. Who knows whether he is not what he pretends? According to Mr. Sinnett it is possible for the ego to be reincarnated after a lapse of fifteen hundred years in Devachan. Now Christ the First has been dead—supposing he ever lived—a margin of three centuries over the minimum; and it may be that "Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops"—whose carnal patronymic is Hopkings—is really the Prophet of Nazareth once more on the track. For our part, however, we have no means of solving the problem. It requires those *spiritual* faculties which Madame Blavatsky very truly says we do not possess. We shall therefore have to submit the case to a committee of Theosophists.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Birmingham in his Mid-Lent Pastoral calls for more aspirants to the priesthood. He says the number of students falls short of those needed to supply the vacancies.

The Dean of Windsor says that side by side with the increase of scepticism the world is witnessing an increase of faith. Yes, but the scepticism is developing among the intelligent and the faith among the illiterate.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway has been to Rome and seen the Pope, who he says reminded him of certain Hindu deities he has seen in their temples. Mr. Conway thinks the Church has gained nothing and lost much by its irreconcileable attitude towards the State, and says: "To-day, freedom is even less liable to be harmed by Catholicism than by Protestantism; and apart from political freedom, where is the advantage? Why should I prefer Jehovah to Mary, or the bottomless pit to purgatory?"

Cardinal Parrocchi, the Vicar-General to the Pope, said to Mr. Stead of England, "There is no country that is so near to my heart." He has shown the sincerity of his words by issuing an order "canonically erecting the Confraternity, which has for its end to promote the conversion of England, and apostates and those in danger of apostacy." The order will be under the patronage of "Our Lady of Ransom and the Blessed English Martyrs," and the Church of the English Convent of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God Incarnate in the Via San Sebastiano, Rome, will be a centre for prayers for the conversion of England.

The Papists know well enough that prayers won't do without work, and they are showing more activity than ever. In Poplar, Father Lawless—good name—has instituted processions with a big crucifix, and other Catholic priests are holding services in the bye-lanes and streets of Southwark.

The New York *Press* heads another account of a victim to the faith cure, "Prayer Did Not Save." A child, whose parents are members of the Faith Cure Society, died without medical attendance. The father, who said he put his trust in God only, is to be put on trial for following the injunction of the apostle James.

Richard Davies, one of the Crewe murderers, has written a long letter to a friend. It is full of pious expressions. He is sure the Lord will forgive him, and take him through, and bring him out on the other side to Heaven. He admits that he went "wrong," but he evinces no sense whatever of the enormity of his crime, nor does he give a thought to the father whom he hurried out of life, and who is probably (on Christian principles) burning in Hell. Granted that the father was a wicked, cruel man; still, it would be thought that one who was looking for pardon himself would extend a little sympathy to his sinful father. But no, the father's fate does not occur to the murderer's mind; and it appears that both brothers were without a sense of the gravity of their crime until the death sentence was passed upon them. Yet the mouth of Richard Davies is full of pious expressions, and he spends his time in reading religious books. Could anything show more clearly the selfish character of religion?

Frank Brealey, the murderer of a child at Burton, was apparently afflicted with religious mania. Mrs. Peabody, who struggled with him at the time of the murder, says "he talked with me about heaven, and said he wished he could realise that the Savior was his. He wanted to pray, and sent for the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of All Saints."

"Mr. H. Barratt (Kilburn Liberal) writes us a very indignant letter on the intolerance of a 'noisy few' at his club, who have banished the *Freethinker* from the reading room. He protests against any body of men dictating as to what the members should read. He considers if the Government allows the paper to be sold it cannot be a very dreadful production. Many in the club desire to read it, and are barred by a tyrannical few! We think our friend has cause for complaint, for working men's clubs are not supposed to be young men's Christian societies or Wesleyan chapels. If the members' religious feelings are so keen on the literature of Atheists they are not obliged

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to read the *Freethinker*, even if it lies on the library table. They should be more liberal in their ideas, and if they wish to counteract the evil effects of the *Freethinker* let them supply the *Christian Million* or the *War Cry* as an antidote."—*Club and Institute Journal.*

This is what a working man said, according to the Rev. G. W. McCree:—"Look here, governor, when yon 'ere chapel was full of swells and their wives, we were never asked to come in and take a seat; but when the swells left and went outside London, and the pews were empty, the folks began to send out bills to get us in. Look here, we're wanted now to fill up empty seats—that's it. Yes, that's your dodge, it is. Well, we ain't a-coming, that's all."—London *Echo.*

The newspapers report that a monkey at Bellie, Fochabers, escaped and went to the parish church, where he mounted to the gallery and joined in religious worship. But the restless nature of the animal would not permit him to observe the usual rules, and during the singing of the psalm he walked along the seat rails and grinned at the congregation. He was subsequently captured, and that single Sunday at church will probably have to last him for a lifetime.

Mr. Handel-Cossham, M.P., as an advanced Radical by profession, was very much out of place at the recent annual meeting of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association in Exeter Hall. After a nauseous, canting speech by Sir R. N. Fowler on the awful amount of Sunday labor involved in the opening of museums and art galleries, Mr. Handel-Cossham gave a fine specimen of fluent nonsense. He appears to belong to that Radical school which is sound on popular ideas that have a lumping majority behind them, but utterly bigoted on every open question, and obstructive to every measure of rational freedom until it becomes a big party cry.

Mr. Handel-Cossham is a Home Ruler. We believe he has been so ever since the Liberal party shifted on the Irish question. Well, then, we invite him to answer this question. If it is right for the majority, who don't wish to go to museums and art galleries on Sunday, to close them on the minority, who do wish to go, how is it wrong for the English majority to coerce the Irish minority?

More religious love in Germany! Pastor Stoecker is on the rampage again, breathing out Christian fire and slaughter against the Jews. He has formed a Christian league of merchants who positively refuse to have any business dealings with the Jews. In Saxony, Hesse-Cassel and Wesphalia the Jews are denied the right of acting as jurors.

The death is reported of Noah Drew, another leader of the Jezreelites. He was formerly a prosperous farmer at Michigan, in the United States, with a well-stocked holding of 100 acres, his own freehold. But Jezreel having convinced him that he was one of the 144,000 elect who were to sail up to heaven at the approaching second coming of Chri-t, he converted his farm into hard cash, every penny of which was, by Jezreel's order, handed over to the "treasury." Now Jezreel and his wife are dead, and Noah Drew is dead, but Christ hasn't come; and as the "money's all gone and spent," Noah Drew's widow is left penniless, and charitable persons are trying to find her a passage back to her native country.

Jezreel's little game was exactly like that of Peter and the other Apostles. Both little enterprises traded on the second coming of Christ, and both flourishsd on the property of converts. The Jezreel affair is a dismal "sell," and we should doubtless have a similar tale of the Peter affair if the poor dupes had left their account of it.

An American crank having prophesied the destruction of San Francisco and New York on April 14, a number of infatuated followers are selling off their goods at an alarming sacrifice, and holding daily prayer-meetings to avert the disaster. If the cities are spared it will doubtless be owing to these good men's prayers.

Some time ago the *Christian World* questioned the value of Sunday-schools, and pointed out what an overwhelming majority of our gaol birds have graduated in those institutions. Curiously enough, the same fact is admitted in America. It is not those wicked Freethinkers who fill the prisons, but old Sunday-school scholars. We see that the *Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper in New York, edited by Dr. Buckley, is asking for subscriptions to defray the cost of sending that journal to the inmates of Sing Sing prison; and in doing so it makes the following candid admission: "Of all those fifteen hundred and fifteen men, fifty-five per cent. are nominally Roman Catholics, and forty-five per cent. nominally Protestants. Of the whole number, ninety per cent. went to Sunday-school when boys."

Fifty-five per cent. Catholics, and forty-five per cent. Protestants! As the man in the street says, that is "the whole blooming lot"—one hundred per cent. Not a fractional percentage is left for the vicious, sinful, degraded, hardened, corrupt Freethinkers. Surely the illogicality of these creatures is incredible. According to the most faultless Christian logic they ought to go to gaol, but they don't. The Christians go there instead.

According to the rector of Rettersdon, the largest class of tramps in Essex is recruited from the ranks of broken-down clergymen and schoolmasters with an unmistakable religious snivel. They use Greek and mathematical signs. The Greek Theta, the first letter of Theos ("God") is, it appears, put on the gates of religious people's houses, where the aforesaid religious snivel is of course introduced.

Dr. B. W. Richardson has been seeking to convert the Jews' College Literary Society to teetotalism. He ascribed the vitality of the Jews to their knowing that wine was a mocker. But the Jews as a race, though temperate, are not teetotalers. As with the Christians, wine forms an item of religious service, and that the wines of Palestine were intoxicating there is evidence in the awful examples of Noah and Lot, and indeed in the very passage upon which Dr. Richardson built his discourse. Yet Deutoronomy permits money to be used for "whatsover thy soul lusteth after; for oxen or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth."

Dr. Vaughan, the Catholic Bishop of Salford, has been inveighing against cremation. He points out that the Italian cremation societies are animated by hostility to the Christian religion, and he calls upon the faithful to stand up for the orthodox practice of rotting in the grave. Like a thorough-paced bigot, he congratulates the Manchester Corporation on its refusal to allow of a crematorium in its public cemeteries. That is, the Bishop says "We don't mean to be cremated, and we won't let anybody else be cremated." But as the heretics who wish to be burnt will all burn everlastingly in hell, it is difficult to see why their wish should be interfered with.

One of Dr. Vaughan's remarks was simply silly. After denouncing cremation as though it were a grave danger to Catholicism, he wound up by saying it was but a small fad in England, where only forty-six persons had been cremated in 1889. He forgets the early history of his own Church. After all the miracles of Jesus Christ, including the Resurrection and Ascension, there were only a hundred and twenty Christians all told. Cremation has no supernatural assistance, but it has made greater progress than that.

The Salvation Army has a "Fire Insurance Branch" in the "Property Department." At first the Army only insured against fire in the next world; now it insures against fire in both worlds; but, with a fine financial instinct, it makes the premiums for both payable in the present life.

CERTAINTY OF THE GOSPELS.—We cannot even rely upon the statement as to the age of Jesus at the commencement of his public career, that he was just thirty years old; this is a deduction from the date of registry of Cyrenius, a date adopted for the birth as affording a sort of excuse, far-fetched and improbable enough, for transferring Mary for the nonce from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David, and so getting a fulfilment of a repeated prophecy.—*W. Watkiss Lloyd*, "Christianity in the Cartoons, p. 70.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 23, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, at 7, "Mr. Gladstone's Rock of Ages."

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

P. C.—We cannot waste further space over H. L. Hastings's libels on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll. The man who prints in England what he dares not print in America, namely that Ingersoll got on by "managing swindling whiskey rings," is simply a cowardly liar.

G. BARLOW, 148 Falcon Road, Clapham Junction, has agreed to supply the *Freethinker* retail. He will exhibit a contents-sheet, and try to push the sale of the paper. Readers in the neighborhood will please note the address.

SCRUTATOR.—The document you send us from *Spare Moments*, purporting to be the actual sentence passed upon Jesus Christ, has gone the round of the newspapers. It is a shameless fraud, which every scholar, even within the Church, would treat with scorn. The papers that have inserted the fraudulent rigmarole have only evinced the usual gross ignorance, even on the part of the "educated" people, of the history and evidence of Christianity.

SENEX.—It certainly was a funny mistake. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. We shall be glad to see you if you will write and make an appointment. Or, if you will send your own address, we will make an appointment with you. Your questions are answered as follows:—(1) Yes. It could be arranged at the interview. (2) Yes, contents-sheets shall be sent. (3). It was a slip on the writer's part. Of course the Ober Ammergau mystery play is not acted yearly.

C. TURNER.—The London Secular Federation will do something of the kind before long. A Christian Evidence Class was to have been started at Christmas, but Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler were both too busy to conduct it.

W. CARTER.—You must really pardon us for not going into such a personal matter. Let it suffice that we bear the correspondence in mind.

J. SIMS (Glasgow) endorses the opinion that this journal improves every week. He is greatly pleased with the article on "Benighted Ireland," which expresses what he has experienced as a frequent visitor to the land of St. Patrick during the past forty years.

H. RICHARDSON (Jarrow) sends us £1 1s. for the London Secular Federation's free lecture movement. He advises Freethought lecturers to speak more frequently on the Evolution Theory.

H. C. JACQUES.—Pleased to hear that, as a reader of all kinds of literature, you find our pennyworth the best of the week, and that you push it wherever you can. Sorry to hear, however, that Burton-on-Trent is such a gospel-ridden place. Is the fact due to the fumes of the beer?

J. E. (Newcastle) thinks the whole *Freethinker* is too much for the nerves of the bigots, and recommends the cutting out and pasting up of good Acid Drops and Sugar Plums.

QUIXOTE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

C. D.—Father Burke may have been a Dominican, but the passage Mr. Wheeler quoted was one in which he spoke of Jesuits as if himself of the order.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—R. Mayer, 1s.; W. Grant, 1s. 6d.

THORNTON SMITH.—Many thanks for the extract.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer, London Secular Federation, acknowledges the receipt of a £3 subscription from the Hall of Science Club and Institute.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We have one or two of your pieces in type waiting for space.

W. T. (Preston).—It seems a purely domestic squabble. We "tackled" Mr. Spurgeon in one of our *Letters to the Clergy*, which will shortly be resumed.

ON THE WAR-PATH.—We fear you will never be happy till you go to church.

WALTER MANN, 21 Bermondsey Square, Grange Road, S.E., has opened a second-hand book shop at this address, and means to keep a stock of Freethought literature. He displays a *Freethinker* contents-sheet, and has already had some lively experience of local bigotry. No doubt our friends in the neighborhood will remember Mr. Mann's shop.

RECRUIT writes from a Tyneside town—"About three months ago a fresh newsagent commenced business in this town. In order to help him I told him to supply me with the *Freethinker*. For the first few weeks he only got the one I ordered, but I induced him to get a few more on speculation. He did so and is now selling half a dozen every week. The other evening he said to me, pointing to the *Christian Herald*, 'This paper has gone down fifty per cent. since I began to sell the *Freethinker*.'"

"STUPID AWE."—Judges i., 19, reads: "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Thanks for cuttings.

W. H. J. P.—Nahum i., 7, may be compared with Isaiah xlv., 7, where the Lord says he creates evil. John v., 24, with 1 Tim. vi., 16, "Who only hath immortality." More palpable contradictions may be found in *The Bible Handbook*. Cannot answer the second question.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Echo—Owl—People's Press—Club and Institute Journal—Cosmopolitan—New York Press—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Burton Evening Gazette—Golden Perhaps—Liberty—Western Chronicle—Modern Society—Star—Redditch Indicator—Pudsey District Advertiser—Sussex Daily News—Hull Express—Northern Ensign—Leicester Daily Mercury—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Wesleyan Methodist Magazine—Daily Chronicle.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Considering the unfavorable weather there was a good audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening. The lecture was followed by discussion, in which the Rev. Mr. Brennan took a courteous part. This evening (March 30) Mr. Foote lectures there again. His subject, however, will not be as previously announced. He will discourse on a live topic—"Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Bible," dealing of course with the Liberal leader's article on the Impregnable Rock of Scripture in the April number of *Good Words*. It would be well if Freethinkers would make the lecture known among their orthodox friends.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Chatham was greatly enjoyed by the Freethinkers. Several Christians asked questions, and three offered opposition. The proceedings terminated at ten o'clock, after which the lecturer walked two miles to Strood Station, caught the 10.30 slow train to London Bridge, arrived there at 12, and reached home by the aid of a cab some time before one in the morning. Such is the lazy life of a Freethought lecturer.

The Chatham Society has obtained the freehold of a plot of ground, and is raising £150 to erect an iron structure upon it for a regular meeting-place. As the Society consists almost exclusively of working men and women, the enterprise is a remarkable one, and we wish it a speedy success.

Our next number will contain an article on "Mr. Gladstone and the Bible" from the editor's pen. It would have appeared this week, but we were not favored with an advance copy, and the April number of *Good Words* was not published till Wednesday, the day on which we go to press.

Some friend hath done this. The *Freethinker* is advertised in the *Western Chronicle* as "the raciest weekly pennyworth" and on sale at Mrs. Sevior's, 3 Silver Street, Yeovil. And he said unto them, "Go ye and do likewise."

Our circulation is steadily improving, and before long the editor will be able to stand the staff—the "sub." and the

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office-boy—a supper on the first week's profit. Meanwhile we beg to impress upon some of our friends who can afford it that they might take two copies instead of one, circulating the second copy amongst their friends and acquaintances, or laying it in the way of the British public.

The great meeting at St. James's Hall, convened by the National Sunday League, proves that the Free Sunday movement has made immense progress. What a change since the old days when the League boasted but a few hard workers, most of them Secularists, who fought for its principle against overwhelming odds!

One of the League's Vice-Presidents has offered to pay £3,000 for the expenses of a year's trial of the Sunday opening of museums and art galleries in London. Good! There's money in the movement now. In the old days it was hard to make both ends meet.

The journeyman hatters of London have been polled on the Sunday question. In response to a circular issued by the National Sunday League they have decided in favor of opening museums and art galleries on the "Lord's Day." The numbers were—for Sunday opening, 532; against, 52.

The Yorkshire Secularists are making a forward movement. A lecture by Mr. J. Greeve Fisher, of Leeds, on "Will Atheists go to Hell?" given at the Pudsey Mechanics' Institute, is well reported in the *Pudsey Advertiser*. The meeting was crowded, and there was much opposition, apparently of a farcical character, one worthy asking the lecturer what he made of the death-bed scenes of Christians in which they had seen heaven opened, and of Atheists in which hell appeared as if waiting to receive them. Another gentleman wished to know if the lecturer ever knew a beast dream a dream that came true. Altogether, Pudsey seems to have had an intellectual stir, and to need it.

Captain Robert C. Adams, of Montreal, President of the Canadian Secular Union, has taken action to secure, if possible, the passage of a new Oath and Affirmation Bill in the Dominion Parliament. The text of the Bill allows everyone to swear or affirm at pleasure without any declaration. If it is carried in this form it will be superior to the English Act. But there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip, and the Bill, even if it passes at all, may be altered a good deal in discussion. However, we hope for the best, and we congratulate the Canadian Secular Union on having an energetic President.

The Canadian Secular Union has done another good stroke. Some time ago copies of Paine's *Age of Reason* were impounded at the Custom House as "immoral," and it was decided that the legality of such action should be tested. Mr. J. A. Risser, the Union secretary, ordered a copy of the "immoral" book, and the authorities were duly informed that the parcel would be cleared; but on this occasion, after some fencing correspondence, the books were delivered, and so, as Mr. Risser expresses it, the Government has eaten the leek.

The National Living Society is quite free from the religious sectarianism of the old Vegetarian Society, and should attract the support of vegetarian Freethinkers. Its president is Dr. T. R. Allinson, and the Society's address is 4 Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W.

Mr. J. M. Robertson's debate with the Rev. J. Tinling on "Was the Pentateuch written by Moses?" takes place at the London Hall of Science on Thursday April 10, not April 3, as we wrongly announced in our previous issue.

Puck, of New York, has the pluck to tackle religious humbugs. A recent cartoon depicts wide-mouthed Talmage returning to America with relics from the Holy Land, such as the cradle of Moses, Joseph's coat of many colors, Delilah's shears, nails from the ark, and the jawbone used by Samson. By the way, if Samson had only got hold of the jawbone of Talmage, what havoc he would have played.

The quarrel between Church and State in Italy has become accentuated. The Pope is much incensed at King Humbert having subscribed 1,000 lire for the monument to Mazzini in Rome, and also at the removal of the obligation of students in the royal military colleges and schools to attend church on Sundays.

The Sunday Music League has scored a victory at Newcastle. The candidate it supported in South Saint Andrew's Ward was returned by fifty votes above the Church and Tory candidate. Mr. Scott the chapel candidate, who had the support of the Liberal Association was at bottom of the poll. In the North Saint Andrew's Ward, which is a great Tory stronghold, the League candidate was only beaten by forty-four votes.

Mr. Swinburne Hanham delivered an interesting lecture on Cremation to a large audience at Brixton, the chair being occupied by Dr. Farquharson, M.P. His plea for incineration instead of burial was very favorably received. Mr. Swinburne Hanham's father and mother were both cremated.

There is some sense knocking about in Wisconsin. The State Supreme Court has decided that the reading of the Bible in the public schools is unconstitutional, as certain passages are made the foundation for conflicting creeds, and this is really sectarian instruction. Such a decision is too much for the Glasgow *Evening News*, which devotes a groggy leader to the subject, and goes to the fatuous length of saying that "rejection of the doctrinal teachings of the Bible deprives its ethical precepts of their inherent value." When the writer reflects on this sentence in a sober frame of mind he will probably wonder how anything can be deprived of its *inherent* value.

The *Truthseeker's* cartoon "Some of the Ordinances of God," depicts the Emperor of Russia, surrounded by scenes in Siberian prisons, a women being knouted, and a prisoner shot by a soldier; Liberty lies strangled beneath, and above are the texts "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter ii., 13). "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. xiii., 1.)"

The Swedish Freethinkers have the right spirit. Many branches of the Utilistiska Samfundet, have sent addresses to Mr. Lennstrand in prison, declaring that they will openly testify that they fully agree with him and "will to a man demand the legal and spiritual authorities, the true guardians of superstition and falsehood, shall either punish us with you or else desist from persecuting you." This brave, determined spirit gives assurances of success despite the bigotry of the Swedish royal family.

Swedish Prisoner's Fund.—Per Mr. Bradlaugh, 10s.; E. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; J. Temple, 2s.; Hyde Park Branch, 4s. 7½d.; J. Marsh, 1s.; W. Inches, 1s.; H. Alexander, 1s.; H. Pope, 1s.; J. Spurgin, 6d.; J. C., 1s.; D. Richardson, 6d.; N. Remard, 6d.; H. Gibson, 6d.; The Fitter, 6d.; M. Dawson, 1s.; J. Firth, 6d.; J. Lees, 6d.; W. Boocock, 3d.; W. Sugden, 3d.; J. Howarth, 3d.; T. Dobson, 3d.; W. Ward, 6d.—R. Forder, Secretary.

We are glad to notice that, undeterred by his recent loss by fire, Mr. J. D. Shaw has purchased a new site for the Freethought Hall and *Independent Pulpit* publishing house at Waco, Texas. The *Pulpit* is now in its eight volume, and is as outspoken and well-conducted as ever.

We are pleased to notice that the *Cosmopolitan*, a new Hindu Freethought paper, published at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, devotes some of its attention to preachers of mongrel Hinduism who attempt to make a cross between their old superstitions and the Christian ones.

Mr. Sam. Standring was lecturing at Brighton on Sunday, and on the Saturday evening he addressed a meeting of railway men in the Town Hall. He spoke warmly in favor of shorter hours of labor, and gave the meeting a taste of Freethought sentiment before sitting down amidst enthusiastic applause. Mr. Gill, another sound Secularist and member of the N.S.S., was also a well received speaker. It is mainly through Mr. Gill that the Brighton Town Hall was obtained for such a meeting.

The Battersea Branch's social gathering on Sunday evening was a brilliant success. The hall was well filled, and the services of the ladies and gentlemen who sang and recited

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were highly appreciated. Miss Palmer, Miss Dew, Mrs. Hinton, Mrs. Hubbles, amd Messrs. Martin, Fisher, and Dipper deserve special mention.

The recent free lectures at the London Hall of Science have excited the attention of *The Rock*, which writes as follows:—"Lately at the Hall of Science there have been discussions to which the Christian Evidence Society has sent representatives, and in which the new President of the Secularists, Mr. Foote, has taken part, and these delegates bring back word that large assemblies in which they were the only Christians accorded them respectful hearing."

The *Methodist Magazine* for March is down upon the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes who talks in his cock-and-bull story, *The Atheist Shoemaker*, of such people as "Christian Atheists." Our contemporary says that, "The phrase *Christian Atheist*, whatever else it may be, is the starkest nonsense, the flattest contradiction in terms. And if any one thinks Atheists are to be caught by this 'fulsome flattery,' let him just read the review of the very book in which Mr. Hughes makes this outrageous compliment, in the leading Atheist journal, the *Freethinker*. For Atheists, however hard-hearted, are sometimes hard-headed."

We are passing through the press the second part of Ingersoll's *Why am I an Agnostic?* It will make a sixteen-page pamphlet, and will be ready next week, price twopence. This appears to conclude the essay, but, should a third part appear, we shall reprint it in another pamphlet.

We are also reprinting Ingersoll's remarkably fine address before the State Bar Association of New York. It is entitled *Crimes against Criminals*, and is one of those fine social studies with which Ingersoll now and then shows the world the true way to the millenium. This also will be ready next week. The address is very lengthy, and will make a thirty-two page pamphlet, the price being threepence.

"BEAUTY LIVES WITH KINDNESS."

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

From the "Twentieth Century."

(Concluded from p. 135.)

Men say the social revolution can never be brought about without force of arms. If that is so it is because so many working men are cowards. They are afraid of being called Socialists or Anarchists. They are afraid to speak up to their employers firmly and kindly and say: "In this and in that you do us injury." They are afraid to vote as they think, afraid to attend public meetings, afraid to let it be known that they think they are wronged. They keep silent like cowards and then some day they hope to fly to arms like cowards; for I tell you he is not the brave man who fights for his rights; he is the brave man who lets his wrongs be known and fearlessly trusts to public opinion to see that they are righted. There is many a man brave enough to join a mob who is not brave enough to run the risk of losing his situation by talking for his rights.

I have digressed a little. I was saying that kindness smooths our way in life in a thousand encounters with persons whom we see to-day and are gone to-morrow. And if this is so, how much more happiness-producing is it in those social relations that are permanent.

It is said that marriage is a failure because of the legal restraints that attend it. It is said that because each couple must ask leave of the priest and the politician before they can marry or unmarry, an artificial condition is set up that necessarily produces unhappiness. I suppose this is true as a general statement, although it is something that the average man or woman cannot understand. Persons who think that society could not exist unless we allowed two or three hundred thousand politicians and policemen to rob us for their own support, will naturally think that marriage can never be a pure and holy institution unless the State charges the bridegroom for a license and the priest kisses the bride.

It is quite possible for me to understand that if men were free to make a living as they pleased without asking permission of the people who own the land, the money and the machinery, and if women were equally free so that they were no longer dependent upon men for support, they might be able to make homes for themselves without the intermeddling of persons in black robes or blue uniforms. I believe profoundly in the ability of human beings to take care of themselves if the priests and politicians would only give them a chance.

But it is not my purpose now to discuss the question of whether marriage is a failure or not, or if it is, why it is. All that I wish to do is to point out to you that a good many marriages are failures that need not be, because the husband and wife are not kind to each other. There are thousands upon thousands of married people who would not separate from each other under any conditions or would come together again in a month if they did, who, nevertheless, do not know how to live very happily together because they do not know the magic power of kindness.

The relation of husband and wife is the most intimate possible relation that one person can sustain to another, and for that reason all reserve is apt to be thrown down between the two. Men are apt to cease to be polite to their wives and women are apt to grow careless of what they say to their husbands. Men are inclined to be overbearing and women are inclined to nag. Men are inclined to criticise and women are inclined to suspect. Both are human; both are subject to temptation; both are liable to drift into that unhappy familiarity that breeds contempt; both are apt to say and do unkind things.

I am not called upon to discuss the philosophy or practice of conjugal love. I observe that when public speakers begin to talk about conjugal love they are very apt to commit a sacrilege upon sentiments that should never be put into words, or else they grow maudlin—I might even say mushy—or else they are indelicate. I am not attempting to tell you that you should or how you should love each other. I only wish to impress it upon you that the beauty of married life lives in kindness. If a man is kind to his wife in his thoughts, in his words, in what he does, and if the wife is kind to him, I warrant you love will sit long at their fireside.

And with children—ah, who can be unkind to a child; and to his or her own child above all others? There are some persons—lost to shame—who beat their children. There are women—whom we call the gentler sex—who shut up their children in dark closets, or send them supperless to bed, or who harry them with loud and strident scolding. Clubs and prisons are bad enough when we are dealing with "hardened criminals," but to bring these horrors into the home circles—what palliation can there be for that? Such parents say they have bad children. Not so. Such children have bad parents. There are no bad children.

You say all this is moonshine? You say I am a person with poetic theories, that I am given to vaporings and vagaries. I tell you that I know what can be done with children by kindness; I know a home in which there is no government by physical force or angry words and in which unkindness is almost as rare as snow in June. A home in which the flame of love is fanned by gentleness and self-control, which is a safeguard against evils without its walls and a solace for every annoyance and pain. A home which no sensible man would exchange for a heaven in which it could not be.

And I know not what can be hoped for from people who do not know how to build such homes. Homes in which there is no ruler and no slave; no one to

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fear, no one to obey. Homes in which there are no menials, no masters, no mistresses. Homes in which beauty lives with kindness.

It is idle to say that such homes cannot be made even in this dark age when everything fights against the fireside and tends to spoil the beauty of that real and holy trinity—father, mother and child. Such homes can be made even among the very rich and the very poor—our two most unfortunate classes. The secret of their making is kindness.

No one can doubt the horrid snarl into which our industrial life has got. Look at the disparities of life. Here is an indolent woman, who sleeps nearly all day, and decks herself in diamonds and dissipates nearly all night. There is a woman who takes care of the idle woman's child. She wears a cap and apron to show that she is a menial. And there are other women who wash and scrub and cook. One is the mistress. The others are servants—a noble name unless the service becomes servitude. They all live under the same roof, but they are not one family either in fact or feeling. The mistress is rude, insolent or patronising to the servants. (Not infrequently the most ill-bred person in the household is the mistress.) The servants are sometimes sly, deceitful and dishonest in many other ways.

This is a barbaric state of things. It means that society enables some persons to live without working and compels others to put up with humiliating conditions in order to live at all. It is shameful that it should be so. But it is so and it will be so until society is so arranged that no one can live without earning his or her living, until there shall be no exclusive monopoly of the means of making a living. But meantime how can the shameful state of things be mitigated a little; made bearable? By kindness; only by kindness.

Here is a man who rolls to his office in his carriage, spends a few hours there and then rolls away to his home or his club. And here are a thousand people, men, women and children, working for him, producing three dollars in wealth for every one they get. It is a barbaric state of things which enables one man to pocket two-thirds of the earnings of a thousand men, women and children. But nothing can be done to change that until poor people are allowed to work vacant land wherever they find it and to pass any kind of money that people will take from them. But what can be done meantime by way of apology for the shame of the social arrangement that binds one man to a machine and sets another free from toil? Kindness. This commercial king need not stand so far away from his subjects; he need not steal from them any more than the system compels him to. And they need not hate him nor destroy what he calls his property.

Beauty lives with kindness. I have seen a white master and a black slave who loved and respected each other and between whom there was kindness. It did not make the relation of master and slave less wicked, but it made them both happier under a condition with which neither should have been content. I do not say that we should forget for a moment that social conditions are awfully out of joint. I do not say that we should cease to expose the infamy and when necessary call men and things by their right names with no particular mercy nor kindness toward them as the representatives of what is evil. What I say is that as we touch elbows with people in this world it is better for our own sakes to be good-natured and kind, and when we are thrown with the same persons every day it is positively ill-bred and destructive of the amenities of life and of our own peace of mind not to be kind.

Why poison your happiness with hatreds; with thoughts of retaliation; with bitterness of feeling? Revenge is the weapon of the foolish. Anger is the language of the vulgar. To make another suffer is the trick of a mean nature. To smile when others frown; to laugh when others swear; to extend the hand to one who has injured you; to be as polite to your wife as you were to your sweetheart; to be, at least, as kind to your children as you are to your pet dog—these are marks of beauty, for "beauty lives with kindness."

AN IRISHMAN'S SOUL.

If the average Irishman devoted as much attention to the welfare of his body as he does to what he calls his "soul," it would be better for himself, and a great deal better for his country. Instead, however, of doing anything of the kind, he looks upon the stubborn fact of this world as of no consequence compared with the imaginary world beyond the grave. When I speak of the Irishman in this connection I mean the Catholic Irishman; as the Protestant Irishman, to do him justice, leaves the welfare of his soul almost entirely to his God; does a maximum of business while satisfied with a minimum of worship and prayer; and, fervently hating Pope and Papists, goes down to his grave convinced that he is "safe in the arms of Jesus." The Protestant Irishman, like other Protestants, allows nothing to interfere between God and himself but Christ and the Bible; he does not care a fig about his clergyman, and does not believe that the latter can do much good for his soul, and it is to his credit that he disdains to have his soul fenced round by all sorts of protections and precautions. With the Catholic Irishman it is very different. *He* makes such provisions and takes such elaborate precautions as not only enable him to outwit the Devil, but God himself into the bargain. As a consequence, though Ireland does not turn out much that is remarkable in the manufacturing line, it exports to "kingdom-come" some of the best-cured and most superfine brands of souls that can be produced anywhere.

The trade of soul-curing in Catholic Ireland is carried on with marvellous industry, and it pays better dividends than any other trade on the face of the earth. It supports a body of about 4,000 men, and keeps them well-housed, fat and purse-proud. It is a trade, too, that is never affected by strikes, and but little influenced by bad seasons. How much the 4,000 soul-curers make out of the business cannot possibly be known, but the "wages of sin" must be something enormous. Nobody grudges the big dividends, however, for is not the salvation of "immortal souls" secured in return for the shillings and half-crowns advanced?

How an Irishman's soul is saved should be an interesting study for the seeker after the curious, as well as for the student of human nature. Built on a basis of the most besotted credulity, the business of soul-curing is carried on with the most audacious imposture. Sleek clergymen preach that soul-curing can be practised with as much system, and with as good prospects of certain results, as pig-curing. Their dupes implicitly believe them, and having surrendered their minds to the preachers, they complete the business by surrendering their hard-earned coins as well.

From the cradle to the grave, and even beyond the grave, the Irishman's soul is not neglected for a moment. The two great essential things that must be done for it are—the owner of the soul must never miss mass of a Sunday or holy day, and he must go to confession at least once a year. Otherwise, eternal damnation is the result. Of course there are a multitude of other things necessary; but these are the great fundamental essentials. The Catholic who wilfully misses mass is, as the Americans say, "a gone coon." And if he does not go once a year and confess all his sins to a priest, the case of his soul is hopeless indeed. The penalty for this awful omission is "exclusion from the house of God whilst living and deprivation of Christian burial at death."

Confession and communion are great and infallible medicine for a troubled soul. A man must tell all his sins to a priest, and express himself as being very sorry for them, or sorry that he cannot work up a decent sorrow for them, which is as good a sorrow as any other. The first then "absolves" him as well from the sins he has thought of as from those he happened to forget. Next day the penitent receives the "Blessed Eucharist," a very tiny wafer, which he must believe to be the *real body and blood of Christ.* After this extraordinary piece of pious canibalism is duly executed, the cannibal goes away without a stain on his soul! He is then as innocent as the new-born babe—and remains so? Not a bit of it. Why, if his sins are washed out once why not a

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hundred times?—and thinking thus he goes his way,—often a very crooked, dirty way — and having duly enjoyed his favorite sins he returns to the priest and is made stainless again! This goes on during a man's whole time, and when death stares him in the face, he is not very much in dread of it, if the priest is by to give him nourishment for the long journey he is told is before him. Of course, besides the ceremonies of confession and communion there are a thousand and one other protections raised up to save the soul. Prayers, fasting, and alms-deeds, are said to be excellent things. Praying on beds, praying before images and pictures, praying to saints without number, are also prescribed.

But it is when a man dies that all the fuss is made about his already well-cared for soul. That is, plenty of fuss is made if the man was wealthy and has left rich relatives behind him. For the poor man's soul nothing at all is done. No priest goes and reads a burial service over *his* dead body. No surpliced impostor troubles to offer up masses for *his* soul, or to implore the Virgin Mary and the Saints to intercede with God for him But if the priest is *paid* to read the burial service or to say masses, then the thing will be done willingly, and to all outward appearance piously. And it is taught that the results of these prayers and masses will be something astonishing. There are three departments in the other world, heaven, purgatory and hell. The good Catholic cannot possibly get into hell, for he has been forgiven the crimes that warrant his being sent there. On the other hand, it is not likely that anybody is good enough to get straight to heaven. God is supposed to be very good, but he is not quite so good as to transplant an Irishman from the Bog of Allan straight to heaven. Now, supposing there were only hell and heaven on the other side—in that case prayers would be useless, as out of hell nobody could be fool enough to desire anything better than heaven. So that in such an event there would be no use in praying, and consequently there would be no revenue. A revenue being useful the third department, purgatory, was added on. This is a favorite haunt of dead Irishmen—crowds of them are said to be roasting there comfortably. It is quite as hot as hell, say our celestial geographers, with the one difference, that it is possible and comparatively easy to get out of purgatory. The priests say that *they* have the power to release the imprisoned ones in purgatory, provided they are paid for it. The more they are paid the sooner the prisoners will be released, and without payment there is no release until God thinks it time to bestir himself without being asked. Of course the coin is forthcoming, and the Virgin Mary and St. Patrick and St. Bridget are bombarded with requests until these interesting individuals are moved to go on a deputation to God to ask him to release Paddy Muldoon out of Purgatory, *if he is there.* If Paddy, however, happens to have gone to hell or to heaven, what then? Simply this. Somebody else will be released instead, so that whoever pays the money can be satisfied that some good result will accrue to somebody.

Suppose, now, that 4,000 Irish priests are praying day after day for as many dead Irishmen as they can get paid for; and suppose also that the B. V. M. and her good-natured spouse, followed by a procession of saints, are always ready to intercede on behalf of those prayed for, what a terrible time of it the "old chap" must have, and what a disappointment it must be to him to have to release an Irishman from "frizzling" whom he had sent to have a good long roast in purgatory! For my own part, I fear that the poor wretch is so bothered about it that he is quite sorry he ever gave a "soul" to an Irishman at all.

J. O'Donovan.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mr. T. Pearson, "Commercial Anarchy."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Mr. Magenis, "Spiritualism." Social evening every Tuesday.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 7.30, "The Meaning of Materialism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone on the Impregnable Rock of Scripture."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who Was Jesus, and What Did He Teach?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, musical evening, orchestral band, etc.

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 10.30, committee meeting; 11.30, Mr. Frank Fawcett, "David"; 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Resurrection"; 8.30, music.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. T. Garner, "Modern Irreligion: for Good or Evil?"

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Phantoms and Ghosts of Theology."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. G. Standring, 11, "The Follies and Frauds of Superstition;" 3, "Absurdities of the Church Prayer-Book;" 7, "Heaven and Hell."

Derby—20 Newland Street, 6.30, meeting of members, special business.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. William Cassels, "The Land Question."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, quarterly meeting; subscriptions now due.

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—at 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. E. S. Jones, "A Defence of Atheism." The financial year ends March 31.: subcriptions due.

Manchester — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road. Sunday and Monday, sale of work, open at 3 on Sunday, admission (including tea) 1s., tea at 5; admission after tea 6d.; open on Monday at 6; dancing, admission, 6. Long night, Good Friday.

Newcastle-on-Tyne — Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, at 11, Mrs Annie Besant, "What is Theosophy?"; 3, "Biblical Floods and Others"; 7, "Salvation by Man or Christ"; tea provided at Society's Rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, after the afternoon lecture; tickets, 9d. each.

New Swindow—"Golden Lion," Bridge Street, 7, Mr. Card, "Col. Ingersoll's 'Breaking the Fetters.'"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, at 7, Local, but renowned Professor will give short anecdotal and humorous lecture on "Magic," with marvellous illustrations of the dexterous art.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—March 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, (morning) Pimlico, (evening) Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, (afternoon) Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico; 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

Tolerman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool—April 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester. May 4, Birmingham.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MR. GLADSTONE'S ROCK OF SCRIPTURE.

THERE is something exhilarating in the vivacity which Mr. Gladstone preserves at the age of eighty. His restless energy, his unflagging interest in so many pursuits, if not the signs of a great originality, are indications of a wide sympathy and a strenuous intelligence. Age cannot stale nor custom wither him. His shining personality irradiates the nation at a period of life when most men who linger so long are but the shadows of their former selves. Surely it is a glorious spectacle, which heightens our sense of the dignity of human nature.

The Grand Old Man spent a few days of academic retreat at Oxford before the opening of Parliament, and in the intervals of college sociality he wrote a series of articles on the Bible for *Good Words*. The first appears in the current number of that magazine, and is entitled "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

According to a writer in the *Speaker*, the late Dr. Döllinger placed Mr. Gladstone in the front rank of English theologians. "I do not think," said the great German scholar, "that you have in your Church any theologian superior to him." But this, we fancy, must be taken with a large grain of salt. When one Grand Old Man praises another Grand Old Man, who happens to be his personal friend and admirer, we must allow a liberal margin for the warmth of sentiment. It appears to us, indeed, that Mr. Gladstone does not shine as a theologian. Lord Macaulay chopped up his early work on Church and State very respectfully, but he made mincemeat of it nevertheless. One remembers, too, how his pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees fared at the hands of Cardinal Newman. More recently, his tilt with Ingersoll was no credit to his reputation; in fact, as we think, he hardly grasped the full significance of the points at issue. And his present defence of the inspiration of Scripture shows, in our opinion, an imperfect acquaintance with the subject or a serious misunderstanding of sceptical objections. If Mr. Gladstone is one of the best theologians in England, and this is the best defence he is able to make of the Bible, the orthodox case is utterly hopeless. For our part, we think there are better theologians, but they understand the question too well to risk a battle for their creed.

With admirable and engaging ingenuousness Mr. Gladstone tells us, at the outset, what are his qualifications for the task he has undertaken. He does not understand Hebrew, but that is a trifling disadvantage in the present stage of controversy. There are very few persons who understand Hebrew, and some of them understand nothing else. Nor will the inspiration of Scripture, with the masses of thoughtful people, stand or fall on the discussion of Hebrew texts. In this country they think in English, and must be saved or damned in English. The question will be decided, so far as they are concerned, not on grounds of archæology or minute scholarship, but on the broad grounds of science and common sense. Whitman's advice to every reader is, "Dismiss what affronts your own soul," and men can and will do this while the pundits are wrangling over textual obscurities and subtle problems of syntax and style.

Secondly, Mr. Gladstone believes, what is true, that "there is a very large portion of the community whose opportunities of judgment have been materially smaller than his own." But this is only saying that the one-eyed man will be king among the blind. Thirdly, he has devoted a great part of his leisure during forty years to "the earnest study of prehistoric antiquity and its documents in regard to the Greek race," and here he flings in the perilous statement that "the early Scriptures may in the mass be roughly called contemporary with the Homeric period." In other words, Mr. Gladstone is the author of *Juventis Mundi*, a volume which attests his industry, but is not generally cited by scholars as an authority. Were the truth told, we fancy Mr. Gladstone's political leadership would be called his work, and his Greek studies his recreations. But in any case the most profound study of Greek antiquities, would scarcely confer any special fitness for a judgment on the antiquities of a people so dissimilar as the Jews. The real fact, therefore, is that Mr. Gladstone has the same qualifications, perhaps a little heightened, as ordinary educated Englishmen. He is at the mercy of specialists like the rest of us, and only argues from the obvious results of their labors.

A much less acute man than Mr. Gladstone would see that those obvious results have effectually disposed of the doctrine of plenary inspiration. It is not surprising, therefore, that he warns the Spurgeon-Denison school against their danger. He sums up the difficulties of their position under seven heads. He says "there may possibly have been"—

1. Imperfect comprehension of that which was communicated.
2. Imperfect expression of what had been comprehended.
3. Lapse of memory in oral transmission.
4. Errors of copyists in written transmission.
5. Changes with the lapse of time in the sense of words.
6. Variations arising from renderings into different tongues, especially as between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, which was probably based upon MS. older than the compilers of the Hebrew text could have had at their command.
7. There are three variant chronologies of the Old Testament, according to the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch, and it would be hazardous to claim for any one of them the sanction of a Divine revelation.

"That in some sense," Mr. Gladstone says, "the Holy Scriptures contain something of a human element is clear, as to the New Testament, from diversities of reading, from slight conflicts in the narrative, and from an insignificant number of doubtful cases as to the authenticity of the text." This admission is honest, but is made with considerable discretion. "An insignificant number of doubtful cases" is a very *judicious* expression; while "*slight* conflicts in the narrative" is perhaps a trifle more than judicious. There are three contradictory accounts, for instance, of such an extremely important event as the conversion of Saint Paul; and although the inscription on

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the cross of Christ was written in Greek, as well as in Latin and Hebrew, the Holy Ghost inspired the four evangelists (in Greek) so accurately that they copied it in four different ways. These instances are only a sample of a monstrous mass of "*slight* conflicts." We must further add that "diversities of reading" is a very mild expression of the fact that there are a hundred and fifty thousand various readings of texts in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

This does not exhaust Mr. Gladstone's admissions. He refers, with apparent approval, to Dr. Driver's recent article in the *Contemporary Review*, in which it is shown "with great clearness and ability that the basis" of continental criticism is "sound and undeniable." Then he writes as follows:

"It has long been known, for example, that portions of the historical books of the Old Testament, such as the Books of Chronicles, were of a date very far later than most of the events which they record, and that a portion of the prophecies included in the Book of Isaiah were later than his time. We are now taught that, according to the prevailing judgment of the learned, the form in which the older books of the Old Testament have come down to us does not correspond as a rule with their titles, and is due to later though still, as is largely held, remote periods; and that the law presented to us in the Pentateuch is not an enactment of a single date, but has been formed by a process of growth, and by gradual accretions."

Mr. Gladstone says that these are "disturbing announcements," and they would be far more "disturbing" if he made them as complete as he might find warrant for in the pages of Dr. Driver, Canon Cheyne, and Archdeacon Farrar. Nevertheless, the Grand Old Man does not lose *his* equanimity. He was brought up a believer, he has lived a believer, and he will die a believer. So far from being dismayed, he is in a perfect state of jubilation. The more the old Book is turned about in the kaleidoscope of scientific criticism, the more it shifts into new forms, the better he likes it. If the old arrangement showed it was inspired, the new arrangement shows it still more. He rejoices to think that no "weapon of offence" has "yet been forged" which can impair the "efficiency" of Scripture for "practical purposes." Let destructive criticism do its worst, we "yet may hold firmly, as firmly as of old," to the impregnable rock.

Such words sound like and are a challenge "to accept the Scriptures on the moral and spiritual and historical ground of their characters in themselves, and of the work which they, and the agencies associated with them have done and are doing in the world." But this is the introduction of a fresh argument. For the present at any rate, Mr. Gladstone is bound to argue in the light of Cardinal Newman's aphorism, "A true religion is a religion founded on truth; a false religion is a religion founded on falsehood."

Mr. Gladstone goes even farther. He is ready to be on with the new love as soon as he is off with the old one. He surmises that "this destructive criticism, if entirely made good, would, in the view of an inquiry really searching, comprehensive, and philosophical, leave as its result not less but greater reason for admiring the hidden modes by which the great Artificer works out his designs." In other words, the Lord may have been keeping us in a fog for two thousand years in order to make us appreciate the change when he brings us into the daylight. But this is not the method adopted by human parents towards their children; and any Board School teacher who followed it would be soon amongst the unemployed.

The argument indeed—if it be an argument—is a *pawky* one; for, if Mr. Gladstone thinks the new view of the Bible is likely to *increase* our faith, why does he not accept it unhesitatingly? His attitude is really that of a man who has made up his mind to cling to the Bible in any circumstances, and he is obviously writing for readers who are filled with a similar determination.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

BIBLE QUOTATIONS AND MISQUOTATIONS.

The Bible is a great deal more commenced than read. "He has scripture for it" is the expression of the illiterate, who think everything correct that gets into print. Sky-pilots have so pandered to this superstition that there is nothing the average Christian likes better than a mixture of chopped-up Bible. Everything is right if rivetted with scripture. In sermons and tracts and controversial divinity we find a miscellaneous assortment of texts slung together, with little regard to their original meaning or their proper connection. A minister thinks nothing of making a hash of the Holy Ghost by jumping from the Old to the New Testament, and illustrating the Song of Solomon by the Apocalypse. "It's all equally divine," as the old Covenanter said, who would always read aloud the long list of names in Chronicles and the obscene chapters in Genesis and Leviticus. If the Holy Ghost is really sensitive to blasphemy, we should guess that many a preacher will never have forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the world to come. The Dutch theologian Cocceius held that scripture means whatever it can be made to mean, and this apparently is a common view, though it is not everyone who would carry it as far as the divine who preached against a once fashionable way of dressing the hair from the text, "Top-knot come down," the full passage being, "Let him that is upon the housetop not come down." Bibliolators are not only careless of the meaning of the word of God, they are often careless of the word itself. What is more common than to hear of the place where "there is weeping, *wailing*, and gnashing of teeth"; but in the many texts where weeping and gnashing occur wailing is never mentioned. Only the other day Mr. Foote corrected a ministerial opponent of scepticism, who made the common mistake of quoting "a reason for the *faith* that is in you" instead of "the hope that is in you"; and Sir William Harcourt has recently been taken to task for his misreading from scripture.

A former Bishop of London quoted 1 Tim. iii., 1, as "He that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good *thing*." No doubt he thought £10,000 a year indeed a good thing. We often hear of *Mount* Calvary, though there is nothing whatever in scripture to show the crucifixion took place upon a mount. We hear of "doing your duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call you," as a divine injunction although it is taken from the catechism, and so with such phrases as "God ordains whatsoever comes to pass."

Some misquotations of the Psalms are taken from the Prayer Book, the rendering of which is on the whole superior to that of the authorised version. Such a practice is of course legitimate if one knows what one is doing, which, unless expressed, may usually be doubted. Catholics quote from the Vulgate, and many recognise no other version, but when one quotes Job as saying "Bless God and die," a Protestant is somewhat astonished to find his holy book has "Curse God and die;" and whereas the Catholic quotes the Douay translation of the Vulgate "We shall not all be changed," the authorised version declares "We shall all be changed."

Everyone knows there are thousands of various readings in the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible. In some passages the Septuagint Version reads altogether different from the received text. With regard to the New Testament Dr. Tischendorf states in his introduction to the *Tauchnitz New Testament* (p. xv.): "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them." Dr. Scrivener in his *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament* says

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of the various readings—"If the number of these variations were rightly computed at thirty thousand in Mill's time a century and a half ago, they must at present amount to at least fourfold that quantity." Pretty fair for an infallible revelation.

What a multitude of sermons on the Trinity have been preached from the now admittedly spurious text of the three witnesses (1 John v., 7)! What eloquent discourses have been delivered on false translations! Take the famous text "I know that my redeemer liveth," etc. (Job xix., 25). Compare the Authorised and Revised Versions, then go to the Vulgate, and see what scope there is of making what you please of the blessed word. Just fancy one minister preaching from the text "Thou hast multiplied the nation and not increased the joy" (Is. ix., 3), while another uses the Revised Version and reads "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy." Even punctuation may alter the eternal word of God, as with the passage "The wicked flee [or flea], when no man pursueth but the righteous, is as bold as a lion." The mistakes made by nervous people like the one who said "Christ made the dem to hear and the duff to speak," the blushing corrector of "tot and jittle" to "tit and jottle," or the one who said "Immediately the cock wept and Peter went out and crew bitterly," are appalling to contemplate.

Some preachers have even not scrupled to play on the words of Scripture. An apt quotation, and quite as pertinent as that of the texts of many preachers, was that of Dr. Mountain, who, being asked by George II. who was a fit person to be appointed to the see of Durham, replied, "Hadst thou faith as a grain of mustard seed, thou wouldst say to this mountain [laying his hand on his breast], 'Be removed and be cast into the sea.'" The king, pleased with his joke, gave him the bishopric.* Equally personal was a curate named Joseph who, when preaching before Butler, Duke of Ormonde, chose the text, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him." Another clerical at Bedford used scriptural puns during an election contest. One of the candidales was named Sparrow, and the sky-pilot took for his text, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Fear ye not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." Then there was the gay Mr. Paul, who, preaching a farewell sermon to ladies, founded it upon the passage, "All wept sore, and fell upon Paul's neck and kissed him." One of the best of the punning applications of the scriptures was that which compared the Royal Academicians to lilies, since Solomon in all his glory was not R. A.'d like one of these. This very text, by the way, was chosen by the chaplain of Colney Hatch Assylum the first Sunday after the female patients got their new and gaudy, but old-fashioned, bonnets with pink ribbons and red shawls.

Scripture often gets the credit of many good things to which it is not entitled. "Know thyself," the inscription on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, is often quoted as scripture. So, too, is the old Latin proverb, "A word to the wise is sufficient." Robert Hall once planned a sermon on the text, "In the midst of life we are in death," which occurs in the Church of England Burial Service, and has been traced back to a monk of the tenth century. "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb" is another scriptural saying taken from Laurence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, though it is found earlier in the French Freethinking printer and writer Henry Estienne.

A provincial newspaper, in doing an obituary, says: "We may say of him as the holy scriptures have so beautifully expressed it, 'An honest man is the noblest work of God.'" This stock quotation is from Pope's *Essay on Man*, a poem inspired by Lord Bolingbroke. The text has been improved by Ingersoll into "An honest god is the noblest work of man." "Spare the rod and spoil the child" is another proverb usually ascribed to Solomon, though it is a paraphrase in *Hudibras*, by the Freethinker Butler, of Proverbs xiii., 24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

"A merciful man is merciful to his beast" is an improvement on Proverbs xii., 10, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." How many quote from Paul the sayings, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and "For we are his offspring," unaware that these are quotations made by Paul from older Greek writers with no pretence to inspiration?

J. M. Wheeler.

* A Freethinker gave an apt misquotation of this text: "If thou hadst faith even as a mountain, it could not remove a mustard seed."

TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Executive has sanctioned my scheme for augmenting the Society's income—so seriously reduced by the loss of £60 a year consequent on the cancelling of the bond under which Mr. Bradlaugh paid that sum to the Treasurer in respect of the Thompson Bequest—and has authorised me to draw up and issue a circular on the subject.

My scheme is to open a list of annual subscribers to the Central Fund. Hitherto it has been the custom to subscribe spasmodically in times of excitement, but henceforth an effort must be made to secure regular subscriptions for the regular work of the Society. Members who can afford to do so should feel it incumbent upon them to give a certain sum annually, and the list of donors should be published in the Society's organ, provision being made to print initials or pseudonyms for those who do not wish to be identified.

With an assured, and it is to be hoped an increasing income, the Society will be able to extend its operations, and carry on a more systematic work of propaganda and organisation; while, without something of the kind, the loss already referred to will leave the Society in a worse financial position than it has known for many years.

I have therefore to ask you to give a prompt and generous response to this appeal, and I shall be glad to receive the names and addresses of annual subscribers. Those who can forward the current year's subscription at an early date will help to relieve the Executive of a grave anxiety, and brighten the prospect of the approaching Conference.

I remain, yours faithfully,

G. W. Foote (President).

P.S.—Intending subscribers are requested to state the amount they will give. Those who desire to withhold their names from publicity, should notify to that effect. Cheques and Post Office Orders should be crossed.

A negro, was being baptised, and slipped from the parson's grasp and came near being drowned. He floundered around though, and finally rose up out of the water considerably strangled, and furiously angry, and started ashore at once, spouting water like a whale, and remarking with great asperity, that "one of dese days some gen'leman's niggar gwyne to get killed with jess such dam foolishness as dis!'

Mrs. Shoddy: "What has become of your beau, Belle?' Miss S.: "He has gone to the seaside for his health." Mrs. S.: "He's rich, and I can't see why you shilly-shally with him so long. Why don't you marry him?" Miss S.: "I don't care to marry him. He is a valetudinarian." Mrs. S.: What's that got to do with it? We're no sticklers about religion. It ain't like as if either of you were Catholics and needed a dispensation. You ought to be glad of the chance. If I was in your place I'd marry him if he was a vegetarian."

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LOT.

Tune—"The Rakes of Kildare."

I WILL tell you a story that's perfectly true.
Though I have to confess it's not very new;
It is needless to try to conceal it from you
That I find it narrated by Moses.

Away down in Sodom there dwelt Mr. Lot,
A jolly good fellow and fond of his pot;
A wife and two daughters it seems he had got,
For so 'tis narrated by Moses.

Now so shockingly black grew the sins of this town
That God's anger was kindled. Said he, with a frown,
"With brimstone and fire I will burn the lot down,"
So I find it narrated by Moses.

Two angels he sent to inform Mr. Lot
That it was his intention to make the place hot,
And to tell him he'd better be off like a shot—
That's how 'tis related by Moses.

They arrived at Lot's house the same evening at ten,
And he urged them to enter for fear of the men—
This Sodom, it seems, was a queer sort of den,
For so 'tis narrated by Moses.

He pressed them so hard that they could not refuse,
Then he gave them a supper and plenty of booze;
And they had, we are told, quite a jolly carouse—
So you'll find it narrated by Moses.

When the citizens heard he had strangers within
They surrounded his house and kicked up a great din;
But the visitors smote them all blind for their sin—
So I find it narrated by Moses.

When morning arose they prepared to depart,
Telling Lot it was time he was making a start.
Poor Lot seemed to take the thing sadly to heart,
A fact that's narrated by Moses.

They warned him expressly to look straight ahead,
For whoever looked back would be surely struck dead.
Then they left him with thanks for their supper and bed,
That's what is narrated by Moses.

He then packed up his bundle and cut for his life,
Followed close at his heels by his daughters and wife,
And he cautioned them not to look round on the strife,
So we find it narrated by Moses.

But poor Mrs. Lot, like the rest of her kind,
She could not refrain from just glancing behind—
When, Holy Jerusalem! what do we find
In the story narrated by Moses?

Why, we find that the moment she came to a halt
God converted her into a pillar of salt,
Which seem rather hard for so trifling a fault,
But so 'tis narrated by Moses.

Now what after to Lot and his daughters befell
While up in the hills, I would rather not tell.
If you're anxious to know you'll find it as well
Just to read what's narrated by Moses.

T. CLARK.

Mrs. Ward, in the *Nineteenth Century*, says "The English Life of Christ, which must come, has still to be written, cannot perhaps be written yet." It strikes us that whatever criticism may do in the way of destruction, there will never be any more materials for the life of Christ than there are now, and Mrs. Ward ought to be aware that a book with this very title, *The English Life of Christ*, was published by Thomas Scott. It was, we believe, written by Sir G. W. Cox, though Scott's name was on the title-page; and though it neither satisfies us, nor possibly Mrs. Ward, it contains some good criticism on the Gospel stories.

ACID DROPS.

The "City of Paris," one of the Inman liners, after being almost given up as lost, has turned up badly damaged, but with all her passengers alive and well. They owe their safety to the steady courage of the captain and the heroism of the second engineer, who shut off the steam at the risk of his own life. Before leaving the ship, however, the passengers held a meeting, and returned thanks to Providence. But they also thanked the captain and crew, without whose assistance it would no doubt have been impossible for Providence to save them.

After the tornado in the United States came floods, almost entirely stopping the railway traffic of the Mississippi Valley, literally washing away some places, and depriving thousands of their regular food and ordinary communication with the world. Cyclones and floods are also the order of the day in Australia. Yet parsons continue to preach that all is ordered for the benefit of man.

Saint Joseph's Convent, Milwaukee, has been burnt to the ground. The Brides of Christ within were saved by the firemen, not by their Bridegroom; but one who jumped from the window was fatally injured.

"Mont-Thomas," writing in the *Sunday Chronicle* on a sermon by Dean Oakley on the righteousness of war in certain cases, says "Christianity and bayonets were never intended to mix." Well, they mix remarkably well, and have done so almost ever since J. C. said he came not to send peace but a sword. Even Christian volunteers begin their Easter manœuvres on Good Friday by way of celebrating their blessed Savior's death.

"I solemnly believe," said Dr. Dana Boardman at Washington, "that my Divine Master is summoning earth's nations to a policy of disarmament." What a pity he didn't do it eighteen hundred years ago!

Over 800,000 gallons of whiskey were sent from this country to Africa last year. We had no idea that the missionaries were so numerous on the dark continent.—*Kansas City Times.*

After all the columns of gush over Sister Rose Gertrude it is amusing to read that the Sisters of the Sacred Heart at Molokai won't let her nurse the lepers there because she belongs to the Dominican Sisters. So much for Christian charity.

Miracles happen still—in places where they are believed in. A story was spread in Kangra that a yogi, or Hindu saint, had cut out his tongue, and that the goddess to whom he was consecrated had replaced it. Hindus flocked in crowds to see the wonder. The fact, as declared by the civil surgeon, is that three-sixteenths of an inch was cut off the tip of the tongue, and that, when the wound healed, the yogi was able to speak without difficulty.

Clergymen have hitherto been exempted from taxation in Ontario. But the Government has carried a measure for putting an end to this little privilege. Alas, the poor clergy have fallen on evil times. By and bye some villainous Government will take them at their word, insist on their practising "Blessed be ye poor," and compel them all to live like Goldsmith's vicar, who was "passing rich on forty pounds a year."

A young woman went to St. George's Church, Camberwell, on Sunday evening. After the preacher had held forth for a few minutes she jumped up and exclaimed "Judas Iscariot." Later on she shouted again, and two churchwardens made tracks for her pew, but on their arrival she flourished a knife and screamed "Judas Iscariot." It does not appear whether her observation was addressed to the preacher or to the gentleman who hurried on the Atonement. Perhaps it would be well to explain to her that Judas died more than eighteen centuries ago, and that if she wants to "knife" him she must wait till the Resurrection and find him out in the crowd.

Over at Oakland, in the far West of America, there is a

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blatant crank named Bennett, who goes through the streets on a bicycle, crying out, "Flee to the mountains." Sometimes he stops and harangues a crowd at the street corner. He predicts the destruction of Oakland and San Francisco by an earthquake and a tidal wave, and there are many people foolish enough to believe it will happen on April 14. They meet and arrange plans for saving the faithful; and what with Prophet Bennett, and the Salvation Army, and "holiness bands," the sensible part of Oakland's inhabitants are beginning to wonder whether they can find money enough to build the necessary asylums.

A New York man was fined ten dollars for sleeping in church. We are not told how much the preacher was fined for not keeping him awake.

The Rev. R. F. Horton, to whom Mr. Foote addressed one of his *Letters to the Clergy*, has a short and easy way of getting rid of Bible difficulties. Writing in *The Young Man*—we should say for *very* young men—he declares that the proper answer to an objector who cites the text as to the Lord putting a lying spirit into the mouth of the prophets, is to say simply "We cannot believe it." Very likely not, for yours is a gruel-and-water faith. But why give children a book to read as God's truth when you know it contains a lot of lies?

Nil Desperandum is Spurgeon's motto. He says that "the Lord has still a people left on the face of the earth." P.S.—Apply at the Tabernacle any Sunday morning. Good old Spurgeon!

A man with influenza died,
As many have before,
And then he swiftly upward skied
And knocked at Peter's door.
Before the gate did Peter stand—
"Canst give the sign?" With pride
He gave the *grippe* to Peter's hand,
Then entered by his side.

For a courteous, indeed an unctuous man, the Rev. C. J. Engstrom is capable of strange things in the way of misrepresentation. He was the mildest-mannered man in the world to Mr. Foote's face, but he took the opportunity of saying the other Thursday night, in Mr. Foote's absence, that the *Freethinker* called the Virgin Mary a low, wanton woman. Challenged by Mr. Rowney, however, he was unable to produce his proofs. All he could do was to read a verse from Mr. Mackenzie's clever *jeu d'ésprit* in our Christmas Number. The fact is, we *have* laughed at the story—Mr. Engstrom's story, every parson's story—of Mary's having a child by a ghost; but we have said again and again that the story was a pious concoction; that the Jews, even according to the Gospels, never heard of it; and that Jesus was in all probability the lawful and natural offspring of Joseph and Mary.

It is not we but the Christians who asperse Mary's character. We believe she married Joseph, and had her first baby in the usual course of honest wedlock. But they say she did nothing of the kind. They declare that her husband was no relation to her baby, and affirm that she was visited one night, before her marriage, by an angel. Indeed, some Catholic writers have described him as a handsome young man of five-and twenty. Yet these traducers of poor Mary have the impudence to turn upon *us*, and accuse *us* of calling her a wanton!

The pious ladies of Paris know how to combine religion with pleasure. Last Sunday being Palm Sunday, that is the supposed anniversary of Jesus Christ's ride into Jerusalem, there were high jinks in Paris. The Eiffel Tower was reopened and gaily decorated, and the Spring races were on in the Bois de Boulogne. "Many ladies," says a telegram from Paris, "went straight from the churches to the racecourse."

What humbug the keeping of Lent is! Because J. C. went through the farce of fasting and being tempted, his followers are supposed to mortify the flesh on Lenten fare from Ash Wednesday to Easter Monday. The High Church papers, which insist on this as highly meritorious and look on marriage in Lent as something akin to blasphemy, at the same time advertise a book of "Maigre Cookery," giving 250 recipes of how to mortify the flesh luxuriantly with twenty different sauces, forty different soups, twenty-five ways of dressing fish, and as many of cooking eggs, etc.

Dr. Klein says that according to Jewish Talmudic law, women who do not cover their hair break the law, and may be divorced without compensation. But the Bible allows any man to divorce his wife if she is disagreeable to him. Among the Polish and Russian Jews a custom prevails of cutting off the bride's hair on her nuptial day, thereby compelling her to adopt a wig as a head-covering.

According to the *Jewish Standard*, the Motso bakers of the chosen race sharp their brethren at Passover time by putting but a small supply of unleavened bread on the market and thus keeping up the prices of an article indispensable for Pisach.

Dr. Duncan, the Islington fossil, apparently does not relish our recent observations on himself. In lecturing on "Foes to Fight" he classes "the infidel print" with "the obscene volume." "He should protect himself from infidel publications of all sorts because their tone was always low and their methods always tricky." To class antagonists with the obscene is of course high-toned Christianity. Nothing tricky about that.

Dr. Duncan appears to have information direct from Satan or his angels, for he says, "I say on the testimony of those who know, that the waltz has waltzed thousands of girls into hell." He does not mention the fate of the girls' partners. But dancing-halls, theatres and music-halls are all "Foes to Fight" in the eyes of the doctor—for they are rivals to his own show.

It appears from the second volume of the new series of *Records of the Past*, edited by Professor Sayce, that a standpoint has been found linking the chronology of Egypt with that of Assyria and Babylonia, and proving that the Hebrew Exodus, if it took place at all, cannot have been earlier than 1320 B.C., whereas the usual date given is 1491 B.C.

The Rev. T. Ashcroft, of Manchester, is a popular lecturer on "Spiritualism: a Farce and a Fraud." This thesis, illustrated by a spirit hand—a glove stuffed with cotton wool,— may be correct, but it does not exhaust the question. Spiritism gains adherents by offering a slightly improved theory of a future life to that which launches us suddenly into either heaven or hell.

Was there ever a cruder notion of human nature than that of Jesus Christ dividing all into sheep or goats, the one meriting eternal happiness, the other deserving eternal misery? As a matter of fact, the hair and wool are so mixed only a God could tell t'other from which. Suppose a husband and wife, both with the virtues and the frailties incident to humanity. One, however, weighed in the balance is just on the right side, the other just on the wrong. Orthodoxy says they will be eternally separated; Spiritism denies this, and we cannot wonder that it makes some way with the orthodox, despite its humbug and absurdities.

Are there any real Christians in the world? It looks as though there were not. The Catholics regard the Protestants as heretics, and the Protestants appear to reciprocate the compliment. There was an annual meeting on Monday at Exeter Hall of the "McAll Mission," which is devoted to "evangelical work among Roman Catholics and sceptics." The society's operations are carried on in France, and last year's income was £19,499. It is a very pretty sum, and no doubt affords some decent "pickings" to a number of pious gentlemen.

What a mass of contradictions is the life of England. We are a Christian people, yet we do all sorts of things in defiance of Jesus Christ and all his apostles. For instance, Jesus looked askance at all domestic relations, and Paul teaches that celibacy is preferable to marriage. Yet a Christian judge, Mr. Justice Day, on the verdict of a Christian jury, has just mulcted William Ambler, a farm laborer, in forty shillings damages for breaking his promise to marry

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Rebecca Lorriman, after discovering that she was subject to epileptic fits. For such a woman to marry and procreate is a crime against humanity. Human justice, therefore, would invalidate her claim for damages; while Christian justice—if there be such a thing—would pronounce the "fickle swain" a true follower of Christ.

Professor Blackie gives a diatribe on Atheistic Science in the *British Weekly*, and winds up with a sonnet, which in his view is all that Darwin deserves. The sonnet is a sort of paraphrase of David's polite remark about the fool, and ends with these lines:

> Go to! go to! when two and two make five,
> Men shall greet thee the wisest fool alive.

If this is the only sort of refutation to which they are subject, Darwinian Atheists will go on their way rejoicing.

In a recent paragraph we called H. L. Hastings a "cowardly liar" for libelling Colonel Ingersoll in England. One of his admirers (or, for all we know, himself—the letter being unsigned) sends us two American editions of Hastings' lecture in which the libel appears. One of these American editions, however, bears no imprint, and the other bears the imprint of "Simpsom, printer, Richmond, London." On the whole we have nothing to retract. Hastings seems to have borrowed the libel from that wretched creature Clarke Braden; and, like that wretched creature, he thinks personalities are arguments, and slandering Ingersoll is a good defence of Moses.

We notice that Hastings leaves himself a loophole of escape. He begins his libel on Ingersoll with the saving premise of "it is said." Thus he avoids the necessity of proving what he does not absolutely affirm, while enjoying all the advantage of tickling the prurient ears of his Christian readers. "Cowardly liar" is therefore a happy description of H. L. Hastings. We uttered it in a moment of "inspiration."

The business side of a God business came out in a correspondence in regard to St. George's Church Brighton. Sir Charles Peel, the owner of the chapel, divides with the Rev. Mr. Selwyn, the incumbent, any income in excess of £500. Mr. Selwyn offered £4,000 to get all the extras to himself, but some of the parishioners think £500 the full value and a considerable correspondence has ensued.

James Albert Mason, scriptural reader has been mildly emulating the example of the Lord's favorite patriarchs. James only had two wives, and Jehovah, according to Ezekiel xxiii., 4, had as many, but he, that is James not Jehovah, has been committed for trial at the Liverpool assizes.

Christian Evidence lecturers never tire of citing Sir George Stokes as a scientist who accepts their creed. Well, we hope they derive comfort from his lecture at the Finsbury Polytechnic last Sunday on the soul. He repudiated the immortality of the soul, which he evidently felt himself unable to support by any scientific or philosophical reasoning. Indeed, he relied entirely upon the Bible for his belief in a future life. We are promised a future life in the blessed book; therefore there *will* be a future life; and the "spirit," which Sir G. Stokes knows nothing whatever about, will have some sort of a body, which he also knows nothing about, except that Scripture tells us it will be very different from our present bodies. Here, then, is the scientist, who is cited in support of the Bible, absolutely leaning upon the Bible for every article of his faith.

Mr. Engstrom is a minister of the Church of England, which teaches the "resurrection of the body." Yet Sir G. Stokes calls it an "extravagant and incredible belief." It would be interesting to hear these two Christian Evidencers discussing this point in public.

Puritanism reigns in Boston, and they consequently believe in Solomon's doctrine regarding the use of the rod. In that city 18,000 cases of flogging occurred in the Boston schools in 1889. We think Col. Ingersoll should pay Boston a visit, and try to civilise this centre of "culchah" a little.

At a Conference of Swedish Lutherans, held at Rockford, Illinois, a resolution was presented, thanking God for the prosperity of the past year. The Swedes, however, thought it over in their practical hard-headed fashion. They remembered the failure of their crops and the low prices now obtainable, and concluded that God had not come up to their reasonable expectations. They accordingly negatived the resolution. When the pious Portugese sailors found that prayers to the Virgin did not abate the storm they pitched her statue overboard, and the Swedes seem inclined to act similarly to their God.

We read in the *Hindu* that the Hindu Preaching Society is sending its missionaries to counteract the work of the Christian missionaries. One of them is reported as preaching for six hours at a stretch! He boasts of having preserved many of his countrymen from the awful fate of becoming converts to the Christian superstition. Surely the competition is very amusing. We are inclined to say to Christian and Brahmin, "A plague on both your houses."

The barbers of Bombay, it is said, refuse to shave widows' heads, rightly holding that the custom obliging widows to shave once a week is a barbarity. Native journals have denounced the practice despite the opposition of the Brahmins, the most pious of whom have threatened to cut the hair of the widows if the barbers refuse. This, however, it is said, they could not do without losing caste. Any practice, stupid, barbarous and likely to enforce the subjection of women, has naturally the priests in its favor.

Among the injunctions of Paul are that women shall be veiled, and "if the woman be not covered let her also be shorn" (1 Cor. ix., 6); and "if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him" (v. 14). But no one thinks of paying any more heed to Paul in this matter than to the holy injunction of Leviticus (xix., 27), "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard."

The Rev. Samuel Topham, of 38 Amersham Vale, Deptford, did not gain much by summoning Walter Nicholson for assault. Walter was able to prove that the man of God molested his sweetheart. The holy man's statement that no window was broken was directly contradicted by the police-constable, who said that the prisoner was sober but the prosecutor was under the influence of drink. The next time the rev. gentleman gets razzle-dazzled, molests young females and has his face slapped, he had better hush it up in the sublime interests of the Church of Christ.

How hard it is to get Christians to see that Freethinkers have *convictions*. Here is the Rev. H. Bromby who, addressing a meeting at Oxford Hall, referred to Mr. Bradlaugh as once a Sunday-school teacher in the neighborhood, and expressed a belief that "he might have used his terrible earnestness in a different direction if the clergy had treated him more sympathetically." Nonsense, Mr. Bromby, flat nonsense! Mr. Bradlaugh might have shown a *little* more tenderness to the feelings of your species if you had shown him a little charity, but his assurance of the falsity of your creed is not based on personal grounds. It rests on evidence, which would remain unaltered if the clergy were as charitable as they are bigoted. What an absurdity it is, for instance, to suppose that a kind-hearted clergyman is a bit of solid proof that Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

In Spain the Minister of Public Worship looks after the schools. That is, nominally. Practically, he does nothing of the kind. He has no time to listen to the complaints of the teachers, many of whom are reduced almost to beggary by their salaries being a year overdue. But he has plenty of time for bull fighting, and has accepted the presidency of a Society for promoting that sport. We suggest that the Spaniards should make him Minister of Public Worship and Bull Fighting, and appoint another official to take care of the public schools.

"The New Genesis, or Moses made Scientific" is the announcement of Dr. Joseph Parker's discourse at the City Temple on Good Friday. Holy Moses!

The following announcement appeared recently in one of the papers: "St. James's Church—on Sunday next the afternoon service will commence at half past three and continue until further notice." Perhaps it is not finished yet.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 6, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, at 7. 30, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Wednesday, April 9, Shelley Society, University College, Gower Street, at 8, "The Religious Opinions of Shelley." Free Admission.

Friday, April 11, Secular Hall. 61 New Church Road, Camberwell Road, S.E., at 8 "Freethought and the Bible." Free Admission, and unlimited discussion.

April 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. DUFFIELD (New Plymouth).—Your order and remittance to hand. Both have been handed to Mr. Forder, to whom all such business communications should be addressed.

E. ANDERSON.—Particulars of Beethoven's scepticism are given in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

I. IRELAND.—No doubt, as the worthy deacon declared, a Bible Class which allowed free discussion would make more sceptics than Christians. Fortunately there are some Christian young men who will see through the trick of silence.

S. M. PEACOCK.—It is an old circular, and not worth recurring to. Delighted to hear the good news as to the gentleman you mention. He would be worth having, and we should be proud of having contributed to the result.

T. A. BRUCE.—We should prefer the official statistics to the Archbishop's figures. Someday or other—perhaps before very long—we will look them up. Our view is that the conscription, with its attendant evil of barrack life, must have a bad effect on the *morale* of the French people.

H. P.—You have a legal right, under Mr. Bradlaugh's Act, to affirm instead of swearing in the witness-box. But it is difficult to say whether you should avail yourself of the right. As a government servant, liable to be discharged by a bigoted superior without any cause being assigned, you should weigh the danger before you resolve. There is no special law to prevent a Freethinker from holding a civil office under the crown.

SENEX.—We have not heard from you. Has your letter miscarried?

HUGH IRVING sends us £1 for the Swedish Prisoner Fund.

No. 12.—Pleased to hear you are still pushing our circulation. We missed the Canon Boynes incident, and it is too late to return to it now.

VANINI.—YOU need not go to a church to get married. Give the usual three week's notice to the registrar of your parish. At the expiration of the notice you can get married at the registrar's office, as myriads of people do every year.

J. S.—Good sentiment but not good verse.

J. ROWNEY.—Thanks. You did us a service by challenging Mr. Engstrom's statement.

J. K.—We think you are mistaken. In our opinion Home Rule will be a blow to the Irish priesthood. They will lose their old prestige as patriots, when they no longer oppose the rule of the Protestant Saxon; and when Irishmen have a Parliament of their own, they will no longer be bound together by a common antipathy to an alien government. All their natural differences of interest, sentiment and opinion, will assert themselves, and the break-up of Ireland's stagnation will begin. Protestants will not be tyrannised over by Catholics—not, at least, for any length of time. In the first place the Protestants are too strong; in the second place, the Catholics would have to count with men like Parnell and Davitt; and in the third place, the weight of British influence would be too great. In short, Ireland will learn more from England when the hatred is out of her heart.—The rest of your letter we have read with interest.

J. BURRELL.—If the crank is in the Westminster Branch you had better get rid of him at once and return his subscription

S. STANDRING corrects a mistake in our last issue. The workmen's meeting he addressed in the Brighton Town Hall was not on Saturday but Sunday.

J. ROBINS.—There is nothing of a religious character on the bill you enclose.

B. STEVENS.—We agree with you that the opposition was rather feeble.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—People's Press—Echo—Methodist Recorder—Freidenker—Lucifer—Church Reformer—Dundee Evening Telegraph—Sussex Daily News—Open Court—Portsmouth Evening News—Jewish Standard—Sunday Chronicle—Tocsin—Reading Standard—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Islington Gazette—Chatham and Rochester News—Secular Thought—Star—Daily Graphic—Freethought Record.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

Letters to the Clergy will be resumed next week. The tenth letter will be addressed to the Rev. Dr. Matheson on "The Fear of God." Owing to a press of other matter, the conclusion of "Freethought in Spain" stands over till next week.

Mr. Foote's lecture on Mr. Gladstone's *Good Words* article was listened to by a good audience on Sunday evening at the Hall of Science. The lecture lasted for an hour and a half, and rivetted attention until the end, when the lecturer received a perfect ovation. Two Christians mounted the platform and defended the Bible, the Rev. Mr. Brennan and the eccentric Mr. Mitchell. When they were replied to the meeting broke up, but discussion was carried on in groups on the pavement, Mr. Brennan's voice being distinctly audible in the committee room.

This evening (April 6) Mr. Foote lectures at Milton Hall on a subject suitable to Easter Sunday—"Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Mr. Foote lectures before the Shelley Society next Wednesday evening (April 9) on the poet's Religious Opinions. Any person who wishes to hear the lecture and discussion will be admitted free. Time, 8 o'clock; place, University College, Gower Street.

The London Secular Federation's second course of Free Lectures will begin at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, on Friday, April 11, when Mr. Foote lectures on "Freethought and a Future Life." Mr. Foote will also deliver the fourth lecture of this course. The other lecturers will be Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. G. Standring.

The Federation's third course of Free Lectures will begin at Milton Hall on Tuesday, April 15. Mr. Foote will deliver the first and third lectures, and the second and fourth will be taken by Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. A. B. Moss. As soon as possible a fourth course will be organised in the East-end, where there is such an inadequate propaganda of Freethought among a population of two millions. Freethinkers in the various localities where these Free Lectures are given should make a special effort to bring their Christian friends and acquaintances.

Captain Thomson telegraphed to us on Monday that the King's Court had sentenced Viktor Lennstrand to an additional three months' imprisonment. Thus the cowardly scoundrels pile the penalties upon a young hero who has dared to challenge their superstition and affront their bigotry. The only consolation is that he is brave enough to bear their malice. He has a full measure of that noble spirit which made one of Carlile's shopmen exclaim, when sentenced to three years' imprisonment for selling the *Age of Reason*, "My lord, I have a mind that can bear such a sentence with fortitude."

The Swedish courts imprison Freethinkers, but they cannot destroy Freethought. On the contrary, they strengthen it by kindling the martyr spirit in its champions and exciting

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public admiration of their heroism. The growls of indignation at the infamy are swelling into a roar, and thousands of Swedes are being taught, in the most practical manner, that Christianity is the implacable enemy of liberty. That is worth something; and if Viktor Lennstrand suffers, as he must, it is only by such suffering that Freethought is possible.

Swedish Prisoner's Fund.—Heckmondwike Branch N. S. S., 14s.; W. Hardie, 5s.; Darlington Branch N. S. S., 7s. 6d.; John White, 2s. 6d.; Jas. White, 2s. 6d.; A. White, 2s. 6d.; R. White, 2s.; J. R., 6d.; J. Stapleton, 1s. 6d.; J. Fitzgerald, 2s. 6d.; D. Colville, 2s. 6d.; G. Carter, 2s. 6d.; "Lawret," 2s.; F. Bayle, 2s.; E. Sims, 2s.; E. Meek, 1s.; E. Parker, 6d.—R. Forder, Secretary.

The *Chatham News* gives a long and fair report of Mr. Foote's "able and eloquent" lecture in the Gladstone Hall. Some of the jocularities are included in the report. They will be good reading for the Archbishop of Canterbury and the clergy of his diocese.

Seriously speaking—really now, we are in earnest—it is something to get a bit like this in a "reputable" newspaper: "The Church resisted every reform with might and main, and when at last the reform was carried, the clergy took off their hats and wiped their perspiring brows, and said 'We did it.'"

The Newcastle Sunday Music League's candidate was beaten in West All Saints' Ward by the narrow majority of sixteen, the figures being 403 to 387. According to the local press "The only municipal question apparently upon which the candidates differed was that of Sunday music in the parks." It is obvious therefore, that the bigoted action of the City Council is not supported by any serious majority of the citizens; and it will probably be reversed before very long, as the Sunday Music League intends to press the question at outdoor meetings during the summer.

The Newcastle Branch keeps Good Friday this year after the fashion of the Paris Freethinkers. The celebration takes the form of a tea, concert and dance at the Arcade Assembly Room, Pilgrim Street. The Branch's rooms will be open at 10 in the morning for the convenience of friends from the country. Tickets can be had at Mr. Peter Weston's, newsagent, Newgate Street.

Mr. Clarke, our latest special lecturer, is touring in the north of England this month under the auspices of the North-Eastern Secular Federation. He begins at Hartlepool on April 6, and winds up on the 20th at Newcastle. The intervening dates are taken by Middlesborough, Stockton, Chester-le-Street, South Shields, West Auckland, Darlington, Wallsend, North Shields, Bedlington, and Oxhill.

"I regard the Church as the basic principle of immorality in the world, and the most prolific source of pauperism, of crime, and of injustice to women." This is the testimony of Mrs. Matilda Josyln Gage, one of the leaders of the Women's Rights Movement in America, who has recently presided at a conference at Washington.

The Leicester Secular Society sends us its report for 1889. We have read it through and found it instructive. There is evidently some good work done by the Society. The cricket club, the sick club, and other departments are no doubt useful. So is a Club (with a capital C) where members, not necessarily Secularists, can spend their evenings at cards, billiards, and skittles, or hear a song, or enjoy a glass and a smoke, or read the periodicals of the day. But all these things are more or less provided elsewhere. The chief business of a Secular Society, at any rate at present, is to propagate Secularism, and to assist in this work the late Mr. Josiah Gimson left £100 a year for ten years. Well, we look into the Balance Sheet and find that while the Society's income has increased during the past three years, chiefly through "Sales in the Club," from £710 to £826, the amount expended on lectures, week days and Sundays, has diminished from £43 to £34—just a third of the Gimson bequest. Nor have the lectures, apparently, been of a very definite character. They have been delivered by all sorts of persons on all sorts of subjects. It seems, therefore, that the Leicester Secular Society is far from realising Mr. Gimson's ideal. Instead of extending Freethought we believe it simply lives on the stock accumulated in the old days of vigorous propaganda.

Our remarks are not made in an unfriendly spirit. The Society sent us its report, and we have criticised it honestly. And having done so we venture to offer a piece of advice. A little "respectability" might be exchanged for a little earnest Freethought, and we are confident that the alteration would be welcomed by the rank and file of the Secular party in Leicester, who, we understand, are in the position of being obliged to take what is given them.

It is all very well to say, as the Leicester Secular Society does say, that Secularists need not contest the divine origin of the Bible; but the statement is nonsensical in view of the other statement that Secularists accept no authority but that of Nature. If the Bible is of divine origin Secularism is impossible; and while the divine origin of the Bible is upheld by English law, and inwrought with English thought, it is idle, and in fact ludicrous, to assume these airs of most unphilosophical indifference. After all *ideas* rule the world, and there is a logic of ideas, whether the Leicester Secular Society admits it or not.

George Harrison, the poor fellow who got five years' imprisonment for his share in the Trafalgar Square "riots"—heaven save the mark!—has been released after serving two years and three months of his sentence. He called at our publishing office on Tuesday to thank us for our poor efforts on his behalf. It is a curious thing that the least assistance to his family was rendered by those who were most eager for a second raid on the Square.

Donations are still required for the memorial to Kit Marlowe, the Atheist poet and founder of the English drama, and may be sent to the hon. treasurer, Mr. Sidney Lee, 18 Edwardes Square, Kensington, W.

The department of the Seine spends twenty-six millions of francs in the education of 150,000 children. The French are beginning to find this is a better investment of their money than putting it in fortifications.

Mary A. Ward, authoress of *Robert Elsmere*, calls attention in the *Nineteenth Century* to a new work on *The First Three Gospels; their Origin and Relation* by Mr. J. E. Carpenter. It is written from the Unitarian standpoint, but does much to show the results of criticism upon the Synoptics.

Mrs. Ward says "When we have learnt something of the literary habits which prevailed in the first two Christian centuries and in the two centuries immediately preceding them; when we have understood something of the process of 'dramatic personation' which produced the Book of Daniel about 165 B.C., and led to the composition of the fourth Gospel about 120 A.D., and of the Pastoral Epistles later on in the second century; when we have penetrated something of the force of diffusiveness of the Messianic idea under its two forms of 'The Ideal King,' and 'The Servant of Yahve'; and when, moreover, we have realised the presence throughout the period of those legend-making forces which attend the birth of all religions: then, and then only shall we have grasped the first elements of the Christian problem." This looks a good deal like suggesting that Christianity depended on the forgeries of its propagators and the credulity of its believers.

Paul Janet in the *Revue des deux Mondes*, argues that Chateaubriand was at bottom a sceptic despite his *Génie du Christianisme*.

We are delighted to see that the Russian students are in revolt. Under the pious Czar and the ignorant and besotted clergy of the Holy Greek Church, Russia is in an intolerable position, and every open sign of discontent is cheering to the friends of liberty and progress. It is noteworthy that the Moscow students demand "freedom of instruction and equality of educational rights for the Jews" as well as for the rest of the community.

Secular Thought (Toronto), after recording Mr. Foote's election as President of the N. S. S., says: "This we think a wise selection, as we know of no other man in the old

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country so well qualified for the office." *Freethought* (San Francisco) says: "Conceding that Bradlaugh is the ablest Secularist in England, Mr. Foote certainly holds the second place as an all-round Freethought advocate." Evidently the American Freethinkers do not take a despairing view of the prospects of our party in England.

We opened the little box with wonder. It contained wedding cake. What a curious thing in a newspaper office! But it came from two good Freethinkers who are honeymooning. Miss Hawksley, the President of the Nottingham Branch, has condescended to marry the Secretary, Mr. Atkey. We congratulate him. He is a lucky man, and we believe he has the sense to know it.

Things are going on famously at Reading. The Rev. D. Amos, Unitarian, is demolishing Christianity, and is being feebly replied to by Mr. T. Barber, of Northampton. Mr. Barber's ignorance is almost amazing. For instance, Mr. Amos derided the Josephus passage on Christ as a wretched interpolation, which no scholar accepts as genuine. To this Mr. Barber replies that "the writings of Josephus were never questioned during the first four centuries." What imbecility, to be sure! The fact is, there is not a single Christian writer before Eusebius who ever heard of this Josephus passage. What Mr. Barber has to explain is the silence of all the early Fathers as to a passage which, if it existed, they would have seized on with avidity. We are really tired of giving Mr. Barber elementary lessons in Christian evidences.

Freethought is spreading in the police force. It is also spreading in the navy, one of our war-ships having a large company of Freethinkers on boards. In the army, too, the cause is making headway. Two Branches of the N. S. S. have just been formed at Gibraltar and Barbadoes. The members in the former Branch, for a very good reason, are all passive; but those of the latter are all active. The secretary is Sergeant Westerman of the York and Lancaster regiment. A quantity of Freethought literature has been sent to both places, as well as to Trinidad.

The N. S. S. Branches should make a special effort to secure the success of the approaching Annual Conference. Coming so soon after the General Meeting of February 16, the Conference will be a tax on the party's resources of money and enthusiasm, but it will be a very important gathering, and steps should be taken at once to provide for a full representation.

Freethinkers of any means are earnestly desired to think over the President's circular to the members and friends of the National Secular Society, which appears in another column. Money is indispensable to the Society's work, if it is to be done with any degree of efficiency. New members are being enrolled, and there are signs of fresh activity in many directions. But no enterprises can be engaged in, except spasmodically—and that can only lead to transient results—without an assured income. The N. S. S. ought to have an income of £1,000 a year at least, and although this cannot be realised all at once, it is high time to make a beginning. What is wanted is a list—a gradually growing one—of yearly subscribers; that is, of persons who undertake to give a definite sum annually. Some can afford five or ten guineas, others five or ten shillings; but all should do *something* who can, and do it regularly.

A special meeting of the N.S.S. Executive has been summoned for Thursday evening at the Hall of Science. Every member should attend if possible.

CANON SHUTTLEWORTH EXPLAINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—You have apparently been misled by an inaccurate report of my lecture at the National Liberal Club upon the matter of Church and State. I have already been obliged to publicly disclaim any responsibility for the sentiments and sentences with which this report has credited me; and I will ask you to allow me to say that I cannot accept as mine the position and proposals upon which you comment in last week's issue.—Faithfully yours,

March 28. W. SHUTTLEWORTH.

MRS. BESANT'S RESIGNATION.

MRS. BESANT has definitively resigned her vice-presidency of the National Secular Society, and I presume her membership as well. The reason she assigns is that she could not work in harmony with the new President. Behind this, of course, is the fact that she has become a leader of Theosophy.

Greatly as I deplore the loss of Mrs. Besant I do not feel any shock at her nominal resignation. Her real resignation took place many months ago, when she gave her enthusiasm to the cause of Theosophy, and ceased attending the Executive meetings of the National Secular Society.

In common with the rest of the Executive, I recognise the great services which Mrs. Besant has rendered the Society during her fifteen years' membership. Her eloquence, accomplishments, and high character were invaluable to the movement. And her absence will of course be felt. At this moment the Society is passing under a heavy cloud. I assumed the Presidency, which I did not seek, in a time of adversity. Mr. Bradlaugh's leadership is summarily ended by a break-down of his health, Mrs. Besant goes over to Theosophy and leaves us, and the Society's finances suffer a heavy loss at the same time. Still, I am not discouraged. I believe in the future of the Freethought party. If I fail or fall in the struggle, the party will go on, and ultimately prosper.

Mrs. Besant hopes the Society will not degenerate into a mere sect. But it always was a sect, and it will remain so until its principles triumph. Those principles were drawn up as they now stand with Mrs. Besant's assistance. She was aware that a declaration of adhesion to them was indispenable to membership. In that sense the Society will remain a sect, but I hope in no other sense. And I do not believe I have given any reasonable cause for thinking otherwise.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE NIGHTMARE OF THEOLOGY.

THEOLOGIANS are continually proclaiming their belief in an infinite spirit; and in addition to this infinite spirit pervading the whole of the universe, they profess to believe in an infinite number of infinite spirits, which take possession of human bodies and act upon them in a similar manner to a musician who performs upon an instrument.

But is it not a contradiction in terms to talk of an infinite spirit, and in the same breath to speak of a number of finite spirits—separate and apart from the one infinite spirit? A God who is everywhere, is a God who is everything, and nothing can be conceived as existing apart from him. Yet this infinite spirit existing everywhere throughout all time is alleged to be the creator and governor of the universe. But if God created the universe, where was he when he did it? Either he must have been in the universe or out of it. If he was in the universe, the universe must have been already in existence—and therefore did not need to be created; on the other hand, if he was not in the universe, but was somewhere outside of it—where is that?

Nature seems boundless. Man can set no limits to it. In whatever direction he turns man finds something, and he is driven irresistibly to the conclusion that something is everywhere; that the universe is infinite, limitless. Now if the universe is everywhere, what room is there for an infinite spirit? Is it possible to have two things in the same place at the same time?

Although theologians tell us that it is absolutely necessary that we should believe in Deity, when we seek to understand what is meant by the term, they gravely inform us that we cannot by searching find

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out God; that he is incomprehensible, and yet that the evidence of his existence is so plain that every sensible man must be at once convinced. Obviously this is an attempt to beg the question by sheer audacity. If every sensible man is satisfied with the evidence of the existence of Deity, it must be because the evidence appeals to his senses—in other words, the theologian is wrong in saying that God is incomprehensible—because all sensible men are convinced the moment they bring their minds to bear upon the subject. But is this true? Are there not thousands of intelligent unbelievers? Man takes cognisance of the phenomena of nature, these act upon his senses; but the God of the theologians acts upon none of his senses. God is said to be everywhere. Point to a particular object—say, to a table, a building, or a book—and ask your learned divine, are any of these things God? Go on pointing out objects until you have exhausted everything on the earth of which you have any knowledge. Point to the sun, to the moon, and the myriads of stars in the heavens, and press for an answer—are these things God? and the theologian will be bound to say "No."

Where, then, is the evidence of God's existence? "Oh," reply the theologians, "the evidence of God's existence is to be found in the order prevailing in the universe." What order? Is an earthquake evidence of order? Are volcanoes, famines, diseases, droughts, evidence of order?

The truth is, *per se*, there is neither order nor disorder in the universe. Nature goes right to her end, ruthlessly mowing down whatever happens to be in the way. A thunderbolt falls. In its descent it is just as likely to kill a priest as a publican, a bishop as a sportsman, if they happen to be in the road. A shipload of soldiers are as safe in a storm as a similar number of parsons. Nature has no respect for persons; she is perfectly impartial in all her actions; she treats the Freethinker as kindly as the Christian, and at times she treats them both with equal cruelty. Nature kills us all once, and sometimes by the most cruel and insidious methods it is possible to conceive. Nature starves millions of creatures that are born into the world; others she freezes, burns or drowns; indeed Nature's methods are so cruel that there is scarcely an animal whose existence is not dependent upon the destruction of others. If God is behind Nature, directing her, he is the cause of these horrors. What order, we may ask, can be seen in this?

The fact is, man calls that order which affects him pleasantly, and that disorder which affects him painfully. Much of what we call order is the result of man's intelligence. The gods have given us no assistance. Man has learned by a hard and painful experience how to control the forces of Nature, how to use one force to counteract the effects of another—and thus man creates the very results which the theologian points to triumphantly as evidence of harmony.

Now although the theologian talks of harmony in the universe, he is forced to recognise that there is something in the world, the very antithesis of this very evil; and as he regards his God as the embodiment of all that is good, he cannot ascribe the existence of evil to his Deity; he therefore manufactures another being, more powerful than God who is able to frustrate his purposes at every turn.

But who made the Devil? Either he is co-eternal with God, or must have been created. But as God is the only eternal and uncreated being, the Devil must have been created by God. An eccentric gentleman named McGrigor Allan has been writing to the *Echo* to say that the Devil is a fallen angel. Poor Devil!!! But if the Devil was ever an angel, how came he to fall? Either he must have fallen by the will of Diety or the fall was opposed to God's will. But how can the Devil or anybody else resist the will of an omnipotent being? If the Devil fell by the desire of God then God is the cause of his fall.

Again, if the Devil has fallen, why are not steps taken for his conversion? A story is related of a simple-minded Italian monk, who one day gravely announced to his congregation that by dint of mediation he had discovered a sure way of rendering all men happy. "The Devil," said he, "is the cause of all sin. He it is who tempts men only to have in hell companions of his misery. Let us therefore apply to the Pope, who has the keys of heaven and hell; let us prevail upon him to pray to God, as the head of the whole Church, to consent to a reconciliation with the Devil, to restore him to favor, to reinstate him in his former rank, which cannot fail to put an end to his malicious projects against mankind." Poor, simple-minded monk; he had evidently been bamboozled by his professional brethren, and did not know the value of the Devil to the priesthood. Evidently he was not aware that the Devil was a theological scarecrow, manufactured in an age of ignorance to frighten poor credulous Christians into supporting an incredible creed.

It is nonsense for Christians to talk of man's free will. If God is infinite in power how can man resist his desires? And if an omnipotent God cannot conquer the Devil how can man be expected to triumph over him? The fact is, theology is a nightmare. It is worse than a dream; the effect of a dream wears away with time, especially if the dreamer walks about with his eyes open in the world of fact; but the nightmare of theology clings to one—its effects are felt through generations—and only by a vigorous course of reasoning, and a firm adherence to facts can we gradually eradicate the evil effects of a subtle and poisonous theology from the brain and blood of mankind.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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A NOTE ON EASTER.

The very name of Easter denotes that it is a Pagan festival, and its dependence upon the moon shows that it is an astronomical feast, being, in fact, identical with the Pagan spring feast which celebrated the procreative powers of nature, and, after mourning the death of the sun-god, rejoiced at his resurrection. The early Asiatic Christians celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon, on whatever day of the week it fell; so that if some years they kept Good Friday, at others they kept Good Monday or Wednesday. These Eastern Christians pretended they had the authority of St. John. The Western Churches used to observe the day of the sun after the fourteenth day of the March moon, and they said St. Peter and St. Paul were their authorities. About the year 190, Victor, Bishop of Rome, presumed to excommunicate those Christians who kept Easter in the Eastern fashion. They held, however, to their custom, until the civil power of Constantine established and enforced uniformity. Even after this a difficulty arose when the fourteenth day of the full moon of March fell on a Sunday. The Eastern Church then celebrated it, but the Western Churches deferred it till the Sunday following.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Social evening every Tuesday.

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. J. Fagan, 11.15, "Is there a God?"

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Why I am a Freethinker."

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "What Christianity has done."

East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Miracles of the Bible."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3, Mr. L. Keen, "Christ and Crime."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Easter Day."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Converted Cobbler: a Challenge to the Rev. Hughes Price Hughes."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, Good Friday, soiree: 6, concert; 9, dancing. Sunday, 11-30, a member, "Practical Socialism"; 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Miracles"; 8.30, music.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Secularism."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, Socialist speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, "Theosophic Facts, Fallacies, and False Pretences," by an Orientalist.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. R. S. Bransby, 7, "Shelley."

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. Ritchie (Edinburgh), "Two Visions of Judgment: Byron and Southey."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, A. Hall, a reading, "How Man Makes Gods."

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, Mr. Smith, "Why I am an Agnostic."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—at 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, secular sermon, "Her House is the Way to Hell" (Prov. vii., 26).

Manchester — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road. Good Friday, 6, ball, gentlemen, 1s. 6d., ladies 1s.; Sunday, see Saturday's *Manchester Evening News*.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street. Good Friday, in Arcade Assembly Rooms, Pilgrim Street, a grand conversazione and dance, tickets of Mr. Peter Weston, newsagent, or J. Brown, 86 Durham Street, 1s. 6d. The Society's Rooms will be open for the convenience of strangers on Good Friday at 10 a.m.; tea at 4.30. Sunday, 11, meeting of Sunday Music League.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, at 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, special music and other recitals, etc.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street; at 7, business meeting.

West Pelton—Co-operative Hall, April 9, 7, Mr. Clarke, "The Childhood of Jesus."

A series of Sunday organ recitals will be given at the Albert Hall from April 6th. Tickets can be obtained from Mr. H. Mills, Secretary National Sunday League, 8 Theobald's Road, W.C.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, (morning) Pimlico, (evening) Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, (afternoon) Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico; 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester; 20, Rochdale. May 4, Birmingham.

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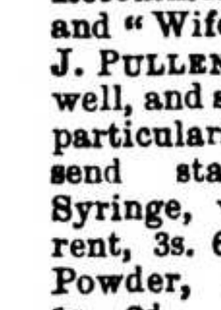

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 15.] SUNDAY, APRIL 13, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE'S ROCK OF SCRIPTURE.

[CONCLUDED.]

MR. GLADSTONE is so far, indeed, from yielding without reserve to the conclusions of destructive criticism, that he warns his readers against an excessive alarm. "Those conclusions," he says, "appear to be in a great measure floating and uncertain, the subject of manifold controversy, and secondly they seem to shift and vary with rapidity in the minds of those who hold them." Then, with the dexterity of the old parliamentary hand, he introduces a lecture by Mr. Margoliouth, the Laudian Professor of Arabic at Oxford, who thinks it possible to reconstruct the Semitic original of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and who is for giving Rabbinical Hebrew a greater antiquity than is usually assigned to it. This would, of course, involve a greater antiquity for Middle and Ancient Hebrew, and by such means the Pentateuch and the "historical" books might be made a century or two older than is allowed in the current chronology. Here, then, says Mr. Gladstone, there is "war, waged on critical grounds, in the critical camp;" and he thinks the spectator will be "the more hardened in his determination not to rush prematurely to final conclusions."

This bit of dexterity is perhaps an effective piece of *ad populum* rhetoric. But is it worthy of Mr. Gladstone? His friend, Professor Max Müller, in the recent volume of Gifford lectures, utters an anticipative protest against this infatuation. "To say that critics disagree among themselves," he remarks, "and that they need not be listened to till they agree, is one of those lazy commonplaces which no true scholar would dare to employ." It is true that Mr. Gladstone does not quite go to this length, but that is where his observations will lead the orthodox reader.

We have called Mr. Gladstone's attitude "infatuation." It is a strong word, but is it not justified? No one doubts that critics disagree. But do they not also agree? Is it not a fact that, in the mass, they move farther and farther from the orthodox position? Certainly they debate many points as they progress, but they keep moving in the same direction; and it is worse than idle for Mr. Gladstone to obscure this fact by directing attention to their discussions along the road. He forgets that perfect harmony is not to be expected. It has not been arrived at in regard to the Greek classics—for instance, Homer—which have been discussed with the greatest freedom, as well as by the keenest intellects, ever since the Renaissance; and how could it be hoped for in regard to the Bible, which has only been scientifically studied during the last half century? Another difficulty is that most of the critics have eaten orthodox bread, and have thus been deterred from free and fearless movement by the severe law of self-preservation.

The word "infatuation," as applied to Mr. Gladstone's attitude, is further justified by a cursory view of the problem which the critics are solving. The Old Testament, if we except the so-called Apocrypha, is the whole extant Jewish literature before the time of Christ. Probably there were hundreds, possibly thousands, of other writings, but they have all perished. The consequence is that comparative Hebrew is a very different study from comparative Greek. All the Jewish books treat of one subject—religion. This dreadfully narrows the field of research. And it is still further narrowed, as well as obscured, by the absence of a mass of *contemporary* writings in any one age, that would throw light upon each other. Thus the study of comparative Hebrew is almost entirely *internal* to the Bible, and its difficulties are immense. Were not the critics testing the foundations of the greatest historic religion, their labors—so recondite, so painful, and so minute—would be a frightful waste of human energy.

Well, these critics, working at such a task, which is not half finished, are not quite harmonious. But with what an ill grace does this come from a politician like Mr. Gladstone! The Irish problem, for intricacy and obscurity, is nothing to the problem of the date and authorship of the Old Testament books. Yet although it has been before Mr. Gladstone ever since he entered parliament; although it has been a burning question during the fifty years of his public life; and although the data for a solution were always at hand; he has only "found salvation" at the eleventh hour. He might reply, of course, that he has always been moving in one direction. But that is precisely what may be said of the body of destructive critics.

The very illustration Mr. Gladstone gives of the "floating and uncertain conclusions" of these gentlemen is damnifying to his argument. Wellhausen, in editing the work of Bleek, accepted "in a great degree the genuineness of the Davidic Psalms contained in the First Book of the Psalter," but he has since abandoned this position, and he "brings down the general body of the Psalms to a date very greatly below that of the Babylonic exile." Now if Wellhausen had first held the Psalms to be modern, and afterwards held them to be ancient, he would have served Mr. Gladstone's purpose. But Wellhausen's movement has been in the opposite direction. Like other Biblical critics, the farther he goes the farther he leaves the orthodox position behind him. Surely the old parliamentary hand must have nodded when he introduced this fatal illustration.

But Mr. Gladstone's girds at the critics are, after all, but reassuring asides to his readers. He does not seriously contest that the Bible must henceforth be regarded in a new light, and he sets himself to the task of showing that the grand old book is still as safe and sound as ever. To this end he calls upon his readers to "look broadly and largely at the subject of Holy Scripture." "I ask them," he repeats, "to look at the subject as they would look at the British Constitution or at the poetry of Shakespeare." But this overlooks the vast difference between revelation and the productions of human genius. We may respect the British Constitution as

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fairly good in the circumstances. We may revere the work of Shakespeare in spite of its imperfections. But does Mr. Gladstone mean that we can adopt such an attitude towards the revelation of God? It is idle to tell us that God's method with us is "one of sufficiency not of perfection"? The Bible is no more sufficient than it is perfect. It may, of course, be sufficient for those who read into it the mental and moral discoveries of later ages. But taken as it stands it is clearly insufficient. Neither slavery nor polygamy, for instance, does it ever mention with the slightest disapproval. We have outgrown both, not by means of the Bible, but in spite of it. On the other hand, the "sacred volume" contains a host of cruel, brutal, and filthy passages, which a wise and good Being would never have inserted in a revelation which he intended for future ages of refinement. This is a truth which Mr. Gladstone perceives, and he attempts to drown it in a torrent of rhetoric.

"Even the moral problems, which may be raised as to particular portions of the volume, and which may not have found any absolute and certain solution, are lost in the comprehensive contemplation of its general strain, its immeasurable loftiness of aim," etc., etc.

What is this, however, but a palpable evasion of the sceptic's argument? Loftiness of aim is obvious in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius. Spinoza, and other great writers; and "immeasurable" is simply a question-begging epithet. Besides, no one contends that the Bible was written for the purpose of teaching immorality. Then, as to "comprehensive contemplation," we suspect it means seeing what you want to see, and missing everything else. A prisoner in the dock, charged with murder, and clearly proved guilty, might demand to be tried by a "comprehensive contemplation" of his whole life, and offer to produce a hundred witnesses to show that on ever so many other days than the one on which he committed the murder he was an honest and respectable citizen. But the plea would not prevent a verdict of Guilty.

It is a pity that Mr. Gladstone did not give a few illustrations of this "broad view" and "comprehensive contemplation." He does, however, deal slightly with the Book of Genesis.

"With regard to the Book of Genesis, the admission which has been made implies nothing adverse to the truth of the traditions it embodies, nothing adverse to their antiquity, nothing which excludes or discredits the idea of their having formed part of a primitive revelation, simultaneous or successive. The forms of expression may have changed yet the substance may remain with an altered literary form, as some scholars have thought (not, I believe rightly) that the diction and modelling of the Homeric Poems is comparatively modern, and yet the matter they embody may belong to a remote antiquity."

Now it is difficult to think that Mr. Gladstone, when he wrote this passage, had the details of the problem in his mind. If the Book of Genesis was written many centuries after the time of Moses by unknown hands, it is certainly open for any person to assert that its statements *may* nevertheless be true. There is no limit to the license of affirmation. But where is the evidence? We venture to say there is not a tittle. On the contrary, there is the strongest *negative* evidence against the assertion. Never once, in the history of the Judges, or the reigns of the early kings, including David and Solomon, is allusion made to the mythology of Genesis, any more than to the Mosaic law. Mr. Gladstone has therefore not only to produce some positive evidence of his "may be," but to dispose of the strong negative evidence to the contrary. For the rest, "traditions" are not revelation, nor is their truth proved by their "antiquity"; and a primitive revelation is an idle dream in the light of Evolution.

Nothing is clearer than that the mythology of Genesis and the chief part of the Mosaic law belong to the post-exile period. The Jews were never an inventive people. They did invent the synagogue, which is the original of the Christian church or chapel; but what else can they claim as theirs? They contributed to Christianity its spirit of fanaticism and its apparatus of the Sunday meeting-place. All the rest was contributed, directly or indirectly, by Babylon, Persia, Egypt, and Greece.

Mr. Gladstone promises, in future articles, to show that the Bible is consistent with science, that it contains nothing offensive to the moral sense, that man's progress through the ages has not been purely natural, and that the Bible stands altogether apart from the other sacred books of the world. He has evidently undertaken "a large order," and we shall be interested in watching its execution.

Meanwhile we can only stand aghast at his concluding statement that "the operations of criticism, properly so called, affecting as they do the literary form of the books, leave the questions of history, miracle, revelation, substantially where they found them." This is equivalent to saying that writings which come into existence hundreds of years after the events they record are as good as contemporary documents. It is like saying that traditions about Julius Cæsar, written down for the first time in the age of Charlemagne, would have the value of Suetonius, the Speeches and Letters of Cicero, and Cæsar's "Commentaries." It is, further, an assumption, which is unspeakably monstrous, that the gossip of centuries is excellent evidence of the truth of a miracle.

We must likewise point out the wild rhetoric of the assertion that "the Bible invites, attracts, and commands the adhesion of mankind." It does not command the adhesion of Mr. Gladstone's first political lieutenant, Mr. John Morley. It does not command the adhesion of 160,000,000 Hindus, 155,000,000 Muhammedans, and 500,000,000 Buddhists. It does command the adhesion—such as it is—of 350,000,000 Christians. And that adhesion is "attracted" by the well-nigh irresistible force of early training, and "invited" by the political and social ostracism—if not the active persecution—of every open dissenter. With such advantages "Jack the Giant Killer" might command the adhesion of mankind.

Towards the close of his article Mr. Gladstone refers to the scepticism or indifference of the working classes. There is an impression that they have largely lost their hold upon the Christian creed. But, while admitting that this is to some extent true, Mr. Gladstone denies that, amongst us, they have "lost respect for the Christian religion, or for its ministers; or that they desire their children to be brought up otherwise than in the knowledge and practice of it." Their perversion simply means that "their positive, distinct acceptance of the articles of the Creed, and their sense of the dignity and value of the Sacred Record, are blunted or effaced." But this is a grandiose way of saying that they are neither Bibliolators nor Christians.

Curiously enough, Mr. Gladstone does not find this scepticism or indifference among the "leisured and better provided classes." Surely he must be basking in a kind of fool's paradise. It may be that his acquaintances are chary of troubling him with heterodox opinions. Even Mr. Morley may eschew Diderot and Voltaire in conversing with his orthodox chief. Yet it is clear that educated society is honeycombed with scepticism. And Mr. Gladstone has an inkling of the fact. Why else should he refer to "the wide disparagement of the Holy Scriptures recently observable in the surface currents of prevalent opinion"?

Mr. Gladstone is struck by the fact that the "poor" who first welcomed Christianity are now so indifferent to it. He says it "affords much matter for meditation." But he has himself unconsciously solved the problem. He remarks that there were few

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obstacles in the way of the poor becoming Christians in the primitive ages. "They had by contrast," he says, "more palpable interests in the promise of the life to come, as compared with the possession of the life that now is." Precisely so. They eagerly embraced the fine promises of Christianity, and, as happiness seemed impossible for them on earth, they welcomed the prospect of it in heaven. Those who mourned and those who hungered were to be comforted and filled—in the sweet by and bye. But the "poor" have found out the trick; and now, instead of yearning for the celestial shadow, they are trying to secure the earthly substance. On the other hand, the wealthy are averse to change. Many of them have as much "faith" as the present writer, but they support Christianity as the strongest conservative agent. They resemble old Lord Eldon, who denied being a pillar of the Church, and exclaimed, "No, I am a buttress, I prop it up outside."

Here we leave Mr. Gladstone standing on his impregnable rock. It has been disintegrated by all sorts of mines and explosives during the past century; Science, scholarship, morality, and common sense have all been busily at work; and, although there is no great outward solution of continuity, and the rock will last Mr. Gladstone's time, the collapse is approaching. Mr. Gladstone hears the rumbling and cracking, or he would not strive to reassure the faithful; and those who are familiar with the agencies at work know that the "impregnable rock" bears within itself all the elements of ruin.

G. W. FOOTE.

SAUL'S SPIRITUAL SEANCE AT ENDOR.

(1 Sam. xxviii.)

"Our own time has revived a group of beliefs and practices which have their roots deep in the very stratum of early philosophy, where witchcraft makes its first appearance. This group of beliefs and practices constitutes what is now commonly known as Spiritualism."—Dr. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol i., p. 128.

The oldest portions of the Old Testament scriptures are imbedded in the Book of Judges and the Books of Samuel. Few, indeed, of these narratives throw more light on the early belief of the Jews than the story of Saul and the witch of Endor. It is hardly necessary to recount the story, which is told with a vigor and simplicity showing its antiquity and genuineness. Saul, who had incurred Samuel's enmity by refusing to slay the king Agag, after the death of the prophet, found troubles come upon him. Alarmed at the strength of his enemies, the Philistines, he "enquired of the Lord." But the Lord was not at home. At any rate, he "answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." The legitimate modes of learning one's fortune being thus shut up, Saul sought in disguise and by night a woman who had an *ob*, or familiar spirit. Now Saul had done his best to suppress witchcraft, having "put away those who had familiar spirits, and the wizards out of the land." So when he said to the witch, "I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit and bring him up whom I shall name unto thee," the woman was afraid, and asked if he laid a snare for her. Saul swore hard and fast he would not hurt her, and it is evident from his question he believed in her powers of necromancy by the aid of the familiar spirit. This alone shows that the Jews, like all uncivilised people, and many who call themselves civilised, believed in ghosts and the possibility of their return, but, as we shall see, it does not imply that they believed in future rewards and punishments. Saul's expectations were not disappointed. He asked to see Samuel, and *up* Samuel came. He asked what she saw, and she said *Elohim*, or as we have it, "gods ascending out of the earth." In this fact that the same word in Hebrew is used for *ghosts* and for *gods*, we have the most important light upon the origin of all theology.

The modern Christian of course believes that Samuel as a holy prophet dwells in heaven above, and may wonder, if he thinks of the narrative at all, why he should be recalled from his abode of bliss and placed under the magic control of this weird, not to say scandalous, female. But Samuel came up, not down from heaven, in accordance, of course, with the old belief that Sheol, or the underworld, was beneath the earth.

Christian commentators have resorted to a deal of shuffling and wriggling to escape the difficulties of this story, and its endorsement of the superstition of witchcraft. The *Speaker's Commentary* suggests that the Witch of Endor was a female ventriloquist, but, disingenuously, does not explain that ventriloquists in ancient times were really supposed to have a spirit rumbling or talking inside of their bodies. As Dr. E. B. Tylor says in that great storehouse of savage beliefs, *Primitive Culture*, "To this day in China one may get an oracular response from a spirit apparently talking out of a medium's stomach, for a fee of about twopence-halfpenny."

Some make out, because Saul at first asked the woman what she saw, that, as at many modern séances, it was only the medium who saw the ghost, and Saul only knew who it was through her, else why should he have asked her what form Samuel had?—which elicited the not very detailed reply of "an old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle"—that is, we suppose, with the ghost of a mantle. She did the seeing and he the hearing. But it says "Saul perceived it was Samuel," and prostrated himself, which he would hardly have done at a description. Indeed the whole narrative is inconsistent with the modern theory of imposture on the part of the witch. Had this been the explanation, the writer should have said so plainly. He should have said her terror was pretended, that the apparition was unreal, and that Saul trembled at the woman's words, whereas it is plainly declared that "he was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel." Moreover, and this is decisive, the spirit utters a prophecy—not an encouraging, but a gloomy one—which was exactly fulfilled.

All this shows the writer was saturated in supernaturalism. He never uses an expression indicating a shadow of a ghost of a doubt of the ghost. He might easily have said, the whole thing was deceit. He does not, for he believed in witchcraft like the priests who ordered "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." One little circumstance shows his sympathy. Samuel says: "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" This is quite in consonance with savage belief that spirits should not be disturbed. Here was Samuel quietly buried in Ramah, some fifty miles off, taking his comfortable nap, may be for milleniums in Sheol, when the old woman's incantations bustle him out of his grave and transport him to Endor. No wonder he felt disquieted and prophesied vengeance to Saul and to his sons, "because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord nor executedest his fierce wrath upon Amalek."*

Matthew Henry and other commentators think that the person who presented himself to Saul was not Samuel, but Satan assuming his appearance. Those who believe in Satan, and that he can transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi., 14), cannot refuse to credit the possibility of this. Folks with that comfortable belief can credit anything. To sensible people it is scarcely necessary to say there is nothing about Satan in the narrative, nor any conceivable reason why he should be credited with a true prophecy. The words uttered are declared to be the words of Samuel.

* The seventeenth verse stupidly reads "The Lord hath done *to him* as he spake by me." The LXX. and Vulgate more sensibly reads *to thee*.

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Much is said of Saul's wickedness, but the only wickedness attributed to him is his mercy in not executing God's fierce wrath. If it was wicked to seek the old woman, it is curious God should grant the object he was seeking, by raising up one of his own holy servants. Why did the Lord employ such an agency? It looks very much like sanctioning necromancy. And further if a spirit returned from the dead to tell Saul he should die and go to Sheol—where Samuel was, for he says "to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be *with me*"—why should not spirits now return to tell us we are immortal? If the witch of Endor could raise spirits why not Lottie Fowler or Mr. Eglinton? Such are the arguments of the spiritists. We venture to think they cannot be answered by the orthodox. To us, however, the fact that the beliefs of the spiritists find their countenance in the beliefs of savages like the early Jews is their sufficent refutation. Spiritism, as Dr. Tylor says, is but a revival of old savage animism.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

BY an unhappy coincidence, all the Branches that nominated Newcastle, Bradford, Huddersfield, and Southampton for the holding of the Conference, omitted to comply with the condition of inquiring whether the Branches in those towns were able and willing to undertake the arrangements. This was discovered almost accidentally. On learning it I desired Mr. Forder to summon a special Executive meeting. But, owing to the Easter holidays, such a meeting could not well be held before Thursday, April 10. In the circumstances, as there was no time to be lost, I deemed it my duty to take immediate action. I therefore wrote to the Manchester Branch, asking whether it would, if required, arrange for the holding of the Conference in its hall. Mr. Hemingway called a committee meeting within forty-eight hours, and the answer was "Yes." Thereupon I ventured to fix the Conference at Manchester, and I have no doubt the Executive will approve of my decision. I am sorry the emergency obliged me to strain my powers, but I could not stand on punctilios in face of a grave danger. I now appeal to the Branches and the individual members of the National Secular Society to make the Conference a success. All resolutions for the Agenda must be sent in before the end of April.

G. W. FOOTE (*President*).

HE LOVED TO STEAL.

An amusing incident occurred in one of our down-East churches a few months ago. The clergyman gave out the hymn:

I love to steal awhile away
From every cumbring care,
And spend the hour of setting day
In humble, grateful prayer.

The regular chorister being absent, the duty devolved upon Deacon M., who commenced "I love to steal," and then broke down. Raising his voice a little higher, he then sung, "I love to steal." As before, he concluded he had got the wrong pitch; and deploring that he had not his "pitch-tuner," he determined to succeed next time. All the old ladies were tittering behind their fans, while the faces of the "young ones" were in a broad grin.

At length, after a desperate cough, he roared out, "I love to steal." The effort was too much, Everyone but the clergyman was laughing. He arose and said: "Seeing our brother's propensities, let us pray." It is needless to add that but few of the congregation heard the prayer.—*Pittsburg Dispatch.*

"I noticed," said old Misfit, as he walked out of church after service, "that the choir made an honest acknowledgment in one of the responses." "Indeed," said Mr. Pewholder, "in what part of the services was that?' "Why, where they all said 'We are miserable singers.'"

ACID DROPS.

Good Friday is the day when, according to Carlyle, Christians celebrate the death of their Redeemer by getting drunk. Anyhow the majority of them, at least in London, do not look very mournful on this dread anniversary. We took a walk round Hampstead on Good Friday afternoon and saw thousands of people—most of whom, we suspect, would have hissed a Freethought speaker—enjoying the brilliant sunshine like Pagans. Concertinas, harps and fiddles were playing, swings were doing a roaring trade, and drums drew attention to various well-patronised shows. The ever-shifting crowds were as merry as the bunting that fluttered on the flag-staff. And over all was the miraculous soft blue sky, high and cloudless, and so stedfast that as you looked up through the dark tree-tops they seemed painted against the firmament. The whole scene was as far removed as possible from the drama of Calvary. And perhaps it was only the peripatetic infidel who remembered the words "By thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion."

Dr. Parker gave Moses a lift on Good Friday morning. As usual he whipped up a big audience by writing a mysterious letter to the press, the *Christian World* being this time the recipient of his oracular communication. According to the Saturday papers, the sermon was directed against the scientific gentlemen who think they can improve on the Mosaic account of the universe. Well now, perhaps Dr. Parker doesn't know it, but hundreds of thousands of schoolboys are able to correct the mistakes of Moses. Dr. Parker may give the old Hebrew a leg-up, but he will never get him over the stile of Evolution.

Canon Liddon, preaching the Easter sermon at St. Paul's, administered a withering rebuke to the scientists who will not recognise God's right to suspend his own laws. But the worthy Canon mistakes the argument. Scientists are quite ready to investigate a good sound miracle; in fact, some of them are yearning for the opportunity; but to use the language of the Rev. Dr. Littledale, the Lord is very reluctant to become the subject of a scientific experiment.

Some of the big London churches had a running service on the double or treble shift system on Good Friday. But the service was mostly musical, and the clergy are cheating themselves into the belief that all the folk who drop in to hear good music are devoted believers.

On Good Friday, they showed at the Church of Notre Dame an alleged scrap of the seamless garment the prophet of Nazareth went about in—a sort of long bathing dress made of camel's hair, measuring five feet in length and four in breadth, with loose short sleeves. No wonder crowds followed him.

The Passion Play in which Sarah Bernhardt was to appear as the Virgin Mary, being prohibited by the Censor, Sarah read the *rôle* at the Winter Circus in Paris on Good Friday. The gifted actress threw all her genius into the reading, but without stage accessories it simply wearied the audience, who were only moved to express their impatience with the mother of Christ and her many sorrows.

It is reported that the Roman Catholics will boycott Sarah Bernhardt when she performs in London. They want to teach her that she must not play with sacred subjects. But the divine Sarah is a very self-willed lady, and we guess she will "gang her ain gate."

Richard Davies was hung on Tuesday morning. His last words were "O Lord, to thee I commend thy spirit, and receive it for Christ's sake." He appears to have been pretty certain that he was going to heaven. Indeed, he set up as a kind of authority on emigration to that locality. He assured his brother George that *he* would never go to heaven unless he corroborated Richard's account of the murder. When we further consider the fine distinction he drew between murdering his father and helping George to do it, we incline to think a first-rate Jesuit was lost in Richard Davies.

The young murderer's last pious letter from prison very much resembles the one previously published. He expects

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to enjoy God's mercy, but not a word of pity escapes him for the probable fate of his father. Whether the murdered man went to hell or not does not seem to have caused the parricide a moment's trouble. Were we not right in saying that such "repentance" is a bit of sublime selfishness? Had it been impossible to prove the murderer's guilt, it is highly probable that he would have wasted little time in remorse; and the whole tone of his "sorrow" only shows that religion invariably appeals to man's innate selfishness.

Opposed as we are to capital punishment, we object to the hanging of Richard Davies. We fail to see, however, why those who would retain the death penalty were so clamorous for a reprieve. Granted that the elder Davies was a wretched, cruel despot; is it not clear that the family had a better remedy than murder? And was not the murder conceived and carried out deliberately, instead of being perpetrated in the heat of passion? The young men were not bound to live with their father. They could have gone and earned their own bread. Mrs. Davies herself could have obtained redress in a magistrate's court. Of course that would have been washing the family linen in public. But is it not washed in public now with a vengeance?

Those who believe that Richard Davies has gone to heaven are very inconsistent in denouncing the Home Secretary. Mr. Matthews did him a good turn by declining to reprieve him. Instead of being miserable in a convict establishment, Richard Davies is drinking his first draughts of deathless felicity in the New Jerusalem. So says theology. But the instinct of human nature is against it. Heaven is a good thing in reserve, but practical philosophy says, "Keep out of it as long as you can."

Dr. J. A. Rentoul, the newly-elected Unionist M.P. for East Down, says that "it was the Bible which taught men to think for themselves." Yes, and just to encourage them it says, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned."

According to Dr. Talmage, Gladstone said to him when in England, "Do you have any of that dreadful Agnosticism in America?" It is barely credible that the Grand Old Man can have asked so silly a question as this after his encounter in the *North American Review* with Colonel Ingersoll. If our great statesman can so readily forget the thrashing he then received from an American Agnostic, he must have one of the happiest memories in the world.

A crazy evangelist, named J. R. Rice and called "the boy preacher," is working out a ten dollar fine for obstructing the streets of Oakland. He did not have the money to pay his fine, and so was very appropriately set at work with hoe and broom cleaning the streets where he had formerly harangued.—*Freethought.*

The Rev. Alex. Grant, pastor of a Winnepeg Church, is reported to have created a great sensation by declaring that "he would not be surprised if at the Judgment, when all is revealed, it was found that the churches had been instrumental in sending more people to hell than to heaven." The suspicion that Satan inserted many things into the Bible casting reflections upon the character of God, is followed by the one that he rigs the churches in the interests of Sheol. We always thought they were on the wrong track.

Two large beams of the parish church of Helpringham, Lincolnshire, fell into the body of the church, smashing the pews and church furniture. Fortunately the Lord's house was empty of people.

Poor little Annie Brightling, aged six, was burnt to death at Welling on Thursday morning. She had been taught that she had a friend in Jesus, and most likely she prayed to him before going to bed. But Jesus did not help his little friend when the house caught fire. Perhaps he was too busy looking after the arrangements for his funeral anniversary.

The leader of a lot of Second Adventists in Georgia is collecting from each of his dupes 5 dols. with which to fly to heaven with. There are nearly four hundred of the sect, and if the leader succeeds in collecting 5 dols. apiece from his entire flock he will have a neat little sum to fly away with himself.

Mr. C. R. Parsons, leader of an adult Bible class at Bristol, claims to have broken up an infidel club there. Is this correct? It is certain that the city where the *Oracle of Reason* was first started ought to show more activity.

Who first doubled the Cape of Good Hope? In this enlightened age the reply of every schoolboy to this query will be, "Why, Vasco de Gama, to be sure." In Portugal, however, a much more ancient navigator has been mentioned. Antonio Vieira (1608—1697), a preacher of great renown at Lisbon, said in one of his sermons: "One man only passed the Cape of Good Hope before the Portuguese. And who was he? and how? *It was Jonah in the whale's belly!* The whale went out of the Mediterranean, because he had no other course; he kept to the west of Africa on the left, scoured along Ethiopia, passed by Arabia, took port in the Euphrates on the shores of Nineveh, and, making his tongue serve as a plank, landed the prophet there." Southey, upon reading this, remarked: "The sermons of Vieira, more than any other compositions in any language, display the strength and weakness of the human mind."

The good old Bible institution is dying in its last citadel. Mr. Woodruff, the leader of the Utah polygamists, has declared that the days of divine revelation are over; and this, coming from a man supposed to be himself inspired, has fallen like a bombshell in the Mormon camp. They expect their leader will go from bad to worse in his heresy, and will shortly "go for" polygamy itself.

Ally Sloper quotes the following from a West Indian newspaper dated April 10, 1820. It was taken from a funeral sermon by a negro preacher, Sam Quaco:—"A man dat bon ob a woman hab not long time to lib. He troble ebery day too much. He grow up like a plantin. He cut down like a banana. Pose de man do bad he get bad. Pose he do good, he go to de place call him Glolio, where Goramity stans upon a top, and Debble on a bottom. Pose he do bad, he go to de place call him Hell, where he mot burn like a peppercon. He call for drink of wara: no man give him a drop of wara to cool him dam-tongue. So breren Goramity bless you all. Amen."

The Birmingham *Daily Gazette* prints a letter from T. H. Aston, a local Christian, who "praises God" for the blows which have recently fallen upon the National Secular Society. This gentleman forgets that Mr. Bradlaugh is still a member of the Society, and that the Freethought party is better organised and more active as this moment than it has been for a considerable time. He also forgets that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is steadily increasing, and that this fact belies all his foolish prognostics.

Mrs. Besant's resignation is of course a blow, but the blow fell before Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation of the Presidency, when she became a leader of Theosophy and ceased attending the Executive meetings. Certainly the Society loses five pounds per month through Mr. Bradlaugh's breakdown, but up to the present the increased receipts have more than compensated for the loss, and new members are being enrolled more rapidly than ever. Mr. Aston is evidently shouting a long while before he is out of the wood.

Mr. Aston flatters himself that he *was* a true prophet with regard to Mrs. Besant. He predicted, what anyone with common gumption could see, that Theosophy would lead her away from Secularism. "Now it appears," he says, "that I was accurate in my estimate, for in the columns of the Spiritualist weekly, *The Two Worlds*, I notice the name of Mrs. Besant included among the 'prospective speakers' at Spiritualist meetings during April. Thus the Atheist platform is abandoned, and we find her in association with a system that is without doubt modern witchcraft, but under a more respectable name."

According to this funny gentleman Mrs. Besant has become a witch. Well, if that be true, why does he "thank God" that she is lost to the N. S. S.?

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The Tithe Bill, which has been pretty well described as a bill to set by the ears landlords, tenants and ratepayers for the benefit of parsons, doesn't satisfy the black parasites after all. They complain that they will no longer have the right to distrain on the land, and that consequently tithes will decrease in value.

That the clergy have long ceased to discharge the functions for which the tithes were originally given is a flagrant fact. Those purposes included the relief of the poor, the repair of the churches, and very often the saying of masses for the dead.

"How to bring a fresh eye to the reading of the Bible" was the title of a recent address in Glasgow by the Rev. Alexander Whyte. Our opinion is that people don't want a fresh eye for the business. All they require is to use their two old ones a little better. To do this they must cast away their theological spectacles.

The contrast between the industry and prosperity of the North of Ireland and the thriftlessness and poverty of the South which has better soil, to which Mr. T. W. Russell calls attention in the *Nineteenth Century*, suggests to us a different conclusion from that of Mr. Russell. His belief is simply that the lack of the law-abiding spirit has frightened capital away. We trace the turbulence, ignorance and absence of enterprise in the South to its devotion to a religion which encourages population and preaches content while fostering disaffection and hatred to those of a different faith.

Mr. W. S. Lilly, the Romanist, fights Herbert Spencer's Agnosticism in the *Nineteenth Century* with the argument of the Atheist. He says the very nature of intelligence forbids such a conception of the Absolute as that which Mr. Spencer presents under the name of the Unknownable. If, as Mr. Spencer insists, our experience is only conditioned, assuredly we are not justified in asserting an unconditioned existence in any form, conceivable or inconceivable. Astute Roman Catholics like Mr. Lilly always seek to make the issue clear. Either their church or atheism. They fancy people will be frightened, and retreat into the church. Those who are logical, however, will simply press forward and accept the issue.

Lord Penzance thinks that to suspend the Rev. George Collins the Vicar of Charlesworth for three months is sufficient punishment for his having been intoxicated, and whilst in that condition having been uproariously riotous. The object of the sentence he observed was that time might be allowed for the recollection of his conduct to subside or pass away.

THE Archbishop of Servia will be declared a bankrupt if Jacob Braun, a banker, of Buda Pesth, to whom his Holiness is indebted to the extent of two hundred thousand florins for losses at the Vienna Board of Trade, is successful in his complaint just made to the Belgrade Court. The Metropolitan, when asked to pay, replied that his office declared him beyond the reach of the law. The Court, however, thinks differently, and has replied that a Metropolitan has no right to become a stock-jobber unless he intends to pay his losses. The Archbishop threatens to excommunicate Judge, jury, and, above all banker Braun.

Mr. Spurgeon's opinion about the new theological movement, typified by Drs. Dods and Bruce, is "that evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, and, by this means, the Prince of Darkness will put the Free Church in chains." All people not Calvinists hold that the so-called Free Church of Scotland is the most slavish body in existence.

IT was in the infant class of the Sunday School. The teacher was trying to bring out the fact that David was a man of varied occupations. There had been smooth sailing until the question was asked, "What do you call a man who plays on a harp?" After a brief pause, a youngster raised his hand and answered, "An Italian!" The teacher and scholars had a good laugh, and a new topic was introduced.

The April number of the *Contemporary* contains a feeble reply by the Rev. Dr. A. Cave to Canon Cheyne and Canon Driver's criticism of the Old Testament. Dr. Cave himself admits that Genesis is a composite work, that "the books from Judges to Kings were produced by the labors of several generations of prophets," and that the Books of Chronicles are compilations of a relatively late date. But he seeks to throw discredit on further results of the Higher Criticism because, forsooth, Kuenen and Wellhausen, Graf and Vatke, Kalisch and Colenso, were not adherents of "supernatural Christianity." He says: "Supernatural Christianity has so many reasons in its favor [trot out a few, please] that any theory which seems to be alien to supernatural Christianity is *ipso facto* rendered suspect—not without justice." Well, supernatural Christianity is rapidly decaying, and perhaps Dr. Cave may live to find that arguments in its favor are "*ipso facto* rendered suspect."

Dr. Cave seeks to throw discredit upon the "Higher Criticism" because conducted by Germans, who, he would lead us to fancy, follow each other like a flock of sheep. But the fact is, the results of research have had to stand against the assaults of established orthodoxy in Germany as well as elsewhere. Besides, Dr. Cave should know that Colenso, Dr. Robertson Smith, Dr. S. Davidson and Canon Driver, are not Germans.

The rector of Bow does not get on well with his churchwardens, one of whom states that the herald of peace in the parish has on Sunday often applied to the inspector of police on duty at Bow Station for two gentlemen in uniform to be at the church on Sunday evening. That application was refused, but the inspector placed a man in plain clothes at the church in case of any disturbance arising. The dispute is, of course, about the holy trinity £ s. d. The parson wants to take up a collection for church expenses, and the churchwardens think the usual offertory is sufficient.

There are "ructions" in North Britain. The Rev. Jacob Primmer, of Dunfermline, is on the war path, and the enemy must look out for their scalps. His heroic soul is stirred to its depths by the attempt to make Roman Catholics eligible to the offices of Lord Chancellor and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Perish the thought that Protestants should lose this glorious monopoly! Primmer is agitating against the infernal conspiracy. He is rousing the nation against "this infamous and revolutionary bill," and he will either save the British Constitution or perish amidst its ruins. Good old Primmer!

Another cyclone in America has demolished Prophetstown, Illinois, and destroyed a number of lives. God, according to Cowper, rides upon a storm; but one would expect him to destroy any place rather than Prophetstown.

The *Christian World* prints an awfully stupid article by "J. B." on "Youth and Religion," in which the writer congratulates England on having two good Christian poets like Browning and Tennyson, while the French poets are "avowed and cynical pagans, rejecting with scorn every religious inspiration, and making the sole object of life to be the gratification of the passions." Fancy a man writing in this way of Victor Hugo and Leconte de Lisle! Why doesn't he learn French before writing about French poets? It would save him from scribbling a deal of nonsense: for, if French poets are irreligious, they don't teach that "the sole object in life is the gratification of the passions."

That religious encyclopædia called the Bible is remarkably lucid, and one of its most perspicuous contributors was a gentleman called Paul. His phrase "Baptism for the dead," for instance, according to the Rev. J. W. Horsley, has had thirty-seven different explanations. But as Paul doesn't say which is the right one, the commentators have no alternative but to knock up thirty-seven more.

More than one religious paper has been fishing for definitions lately. Hundreds of answers to the question, "What is a Christian?" have been gathered. But the very best comes from the Rev. W. J. Woods. It is so good that no other is worth mentioning in the same breath. It is Woods first and the rest nowhere. His definition of a Christian is "a voluntary slave of Christ." There you are, ladies and gentlemen. The thing is done once for all. Nobody need try it again. The definition ought to be printed over every page of the New Testament—"A Christian is a voluntary slave of Christ."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 13, The Circus, Portsmouth; at 11, "Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Bible"; at 3. "Why I am an Atheist"; at 6.30, "An Hour with the Devil.'

Tuesday, April 15, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, at 8, "Freethought and a Future Life." Free admission.

Friday, April 18, Hall, Powis Street, Woolwich, at 8, "Why I am an Atheist."

April 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A. LOVETT.—"At Church" is not up to your usual form.

J. BROWN.—Delighted to hear of the progress the cause is making in Newcastle. We don't wish to outrage your modesty, but very much is due to your own energy and devotion. Mr. Foote is much better, but not quite himself.

F. GILBERT.—*Bible Romances* are on the stocks. We expect to begin their republication next month, and to make a formal announcement next week.

W. SIMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. LITTLETON, 61 Regency Street, S.W., has a few subscribers' letters for the Brompton Hospital, which he will be glad to give to any of our readers requiring the same. He also sends 2s. 6d. for the Free Lectures in London.

E. SIMS.—Thanks for your subscription to the N. S. S. The list of subscribers will be formally opened next week, when all subscriptions and promises will appear up to date. The mediæval list of repairs you send us is a very old one. It appeared in our columns many years ago.

J. O'DONOVAN, the recent accession to our list of contributors, sends a half-yearly subscription to the N. S. S., which he has just joined. He is also forming a Branch in Dublin, which we hope will do good work there.

ONE.—Certainly. Members of the N. S. S. who wish to respond to the appeal for special annual subscriptions, but are not able to send any considerable amount at once, can forward quarterly. Your annual subscription, on this footing, is booked, and we hope it will be followed by many others. The five shilling subscribers are wanted as well as the five guinea ones.

G. F. L.—Cardinal Newman reviewed Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet in a Letter to the Duke of Norfolk. It is reprinted in the second volume of *Difficulties of Anglicans*.

NEANIAS.—Read Mr. Foote's *Philosophy of Secularism*. The Secular Society does not publish any book as a recognised standard. If you cannot purchase the books you require, you could borrow some of them for a small consideration from Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street. Apply personally.

H. MARGERISON assures us that the employees at Price's Candle Factory are under no kind of compulsion to attend the gospel-shop on the premises.

J. COLE.—Will see what can be done.

S. R. STEPHENSON.—Received. The list of annual subscribers will be commenced next week.

SWEDISH PRISONER FUND.—A. Guest, 2s. 6d. Proceed of sale of portrait of Richard Carlile presented by Lot Hill, 10s.

C. KING.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—W. J. Birch, £3.

H. O. THOMAS.—Your cheque has been handed to Mr. Forder, to whom all orders should be addressed. Letters addressed to the Editor are answered through these columns. No such letters as you refer to have reached us.

DR. VOELKEL (Magdeberg).—"The Hibbert Trust" was money left for promoting the study of comparative religion. Many important lectures have been given under its auspices. Messrs. Williams and Norgate, publishers, Henrietta Street, London, will give full information. Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* has been out of print since our fire. Friendly greetings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Freethought Record—Lucifer—Twentieth Century—Echo—Labor Elector—Women's Suffrage Journal—People's Press—Staffordshire Sentinel—Evening News—Star—Bournemouth Guardian—East London Observer—Le Courrier de Londres—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Evening Standard—St. Pancras Gazette.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a larger audience at Milton Hall than could have been expected on Easter Sunday to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" It is hard to believe that no Christians were present, but no one ventured to question the lecturer's review of the evidences of the Resurrection.

Mr. Foote lectures at Portsmouth to-day (April 13) in the Circus. This is a large building which takes a great deal of filling. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the local Freethinkers will do their best to bring some of their orthodox friends to the lectures.

This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of many South London readers before Friday night (April 11) when Mr. Foote opens the course of Free Lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall. We beg to remind them that the presence of Christians at this and the following lectures is earnestly desired, their object being to convert the unconverted. Mr. Foote is followed on April 18 by Mr. J. M. Robertson.

The Milton Hall course of Free Lectures opens next Tuesday evening. We press the same advice upon our North London readers.

The Christian Evidence Society has been invited to send representatives to these Free Lectures, but Mr. Engstrom says he does not think his committee will accept the invitation. In that case the discussion will be open to all comers, and we hope there will be plenty of it.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in its "Paris Day by Day" columns, notices the banquets of Freethinking associations, organised as a counterblast to the rigid fasting and abstinence of the pious, and mentions that at one Good Friday dinner of Unbelievers the bill of fare contained items of consumption labelled, for the occasion, with names of political or semi-political import. Thus there was "Gamelle soup." to remind those who partook of it of the doings and sayings of the young Duc d'Orléans; "Constans sausages," so called after the energetic Minister of the Interior; "Jersey *filets*," to recall General Boulanger; "Freppel nuts," and "Wilsonian *pots de vin*." This banquet was designed, according to its organisers, to celebrate the "Triumph of Tripe over Ecclesiastical Salt-fish."

The Newcastle Branch had a splendid social gethering on Good Friday. The ladies were in strong force, and contributed greatly to the entertainment. These parties are rallying the old Freethinkers to the standard. They had got tired of fighting without a little recreation.

The Rev. Walter Walsh, of Newcastle, is continuing his efforts to convert the Secularists; and as he only helps to swell their ranks, we hope he will persist in his good work. He lectures to-day in the Nelson Street Lecture Hall on "Is there a God?" He is also going to give a course of Sunday evening addresses in the Rye Hill Baptist Chapel, in which he will reconcile Evolution and Christianity. But, although the Secularists are invited, they do not see their way to spending six Sunday evenings in a Baptist chapel where no discussion is permitted.

An effort will be made to revive the old North London Branch of the N. S. S., under the name of the St. Pancras

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Branch. It is hoped this can be done in time to carry on on the open-air station during this summer, beginning early in May. Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from someone in the district who can have a small members' meeting in his house to start the Branch. A public meeting could be held subsequently.

Fair Play, Valley Falls, Kansas, says—"G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker*, has been elected to succeed Charles Bradlaugh as President of the National Secular Society. For thirty years he has been the official and real leader of the English Freethought army. Mr. Foote is his natural successor, the mantle of the great Iconoclast more nearly fitting him than any other of the Freethought captains."

A Coming Man in England.—Mr. Bradlaugh is, to all appearances, a coming man. Mr. Bradlaugh has carefully cultivated the House of Commons. He came in with the reputation of being, among other things, a great platform orator, a very Boanerges of the East-end meeting and the provincial meeting. He has a powerful form and a most tremendous voice. When, after a long struggle, he was at last allowed to take his seat in peace, the House assumed that it was in for frequent and ponderous rhetorical exercitations. Mr. Bradlaugh gave the House nothing of the kind. He never, so far as I know, made a long speech. He always goes straight to the point, and when he has said what he wants to say he always sits down. He is really a very eloquent and powerful speaker, with a remarkably impressive voice, and it must be a temptation to such a man to let himself fully out now and then. But Mr. Bradlaugh is always concise, and the House now knows perfectly well that he at least will never bore his audience. Then he has devoted himself very closely to what we call the "business of the House"—to committees, and private bills, and all that sort of work which your popular orator generally disdains with a lofty disdain—and the House likes a man who looks after its work. Moreover, he is a man of the most winning courtesy of manner. He has disarmed the dislike of all his former political and religious opponents—and he had a good many of them—by his anxiety to oblige, by his willingness to make graceful concessions, by his genial toleration of difference of opinion. He is, I should think, destined before long to be a member of a Liberal Administration, and even of a Liberal Cabinet.—*North American Review*.

Our Swedish friends are carrying on the agitation with energy. Captain Otto Thomson informs us they have published the pamphlet "Why I Attack Christianity," for which Mr. Lennstrand has his last sentence. Captain Thomson and Messrs. Berghell and Mentzer went before the Minister of Justice, demanding that the pamphlet should be prosecuted in order that it might be brought before a jury, and Mr. Mentzer on Sunday March 30, read the lecture to a large audience. The pamphlet will accordingly be prosecuted.

Captain Thomson was spokesman of a deputation which waited on Prince Charles, Duke of Södermanland, who is regent during the king's absence, with a protest against Mr. Lennstrand's imprisonment, to which there were 9,159 signatures—this by no means including all the lists that are out. The Regent, though constrained to speak with reserve, let it be understood he was not favorable to prosecutions for opinion. It is certain our good Swedish friends have a strenuous battle before them, but it is equally certain the issue will be to the advantage of Freethought. Our warmest sympathy goes to Captain Thomson and his brave comrades who are fighting so hard for their imprisoned leader.

The Blair Educational Bill—the object of which was to enforce religious instruction in the public schools of the United States—has been thrown out by the Senate. It had the luring bait of a big appropriation to be distributed among the States in proportion to the density of illiteracy. It is not so easy nowadays to put time backwards. The clock hands may be shifted, but things go forward all the same.

A. K. Fiske, writing in the *Forum*, says: "Men of intellect and education, who are capable of enthusiasm and ardor in the service of mankind, are deterred from seeking to do that service through the Christian ministry. They cannot honorably accept its doctrinal requirements, and will not submit to its mental restrictions."

An important decision has been given by the Supreme Court of the United States in a case in which Roman Catholics who sent their children to the public schools objected to their being read to and taught from King James's Version of the Bible, on the ground that it constitutes sectarian instruction. The Supreme Court upheld this objection, and in its decision said: "Any pupil of ordinary intelligence who listens to the reading of doctrinal portions of the Bible will be more or less instructed thereby in the doctrines of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the eternal punishment of the wicked, the authority of the priesthood, the binding force of the efficacy of the sacraments, and many other conflicting sectarian doctrines." This is correct. Bible reading without comment is a compromise which can suit no party that is in earnest. The only fair solution of the religious difficulty is to let all religion be taught at home.

Some of our vegetarian readers, and perhaps others, will be interested by Dr. Drysdale's *Vegetarian Fallacies*, a pamphlet he has just published through G. Standring. It includes his paper read at the Health Congress last year in Hastings, and an account of the subsequent discussion. Dr. Drysdale believes in eating meat as well as vegetables, and his physiological and chemical arguments deserve attention.

Mr. A. B. Moss has issued through Watts and Co. a handsome little volume on *The Bible and Evolution*. It is by far the best production of Mr. Moss's pen, and we heartily recommend it as an excellent text-book of the subject. The matter is good and the style is bright. The reader is carried along an easy-flowing stream of science, history, ethics, and common sense.

Owing to a continued press of matter, Mr. Foote's letter to the Rev. Dr. Mathieson on "The Fear of God" stands over till next week.

HOME RULE AND ROME RULE.

"We shall take our religion but not our politics from Rome," is the invariable defence advanced by Irish Nationalist politicians to meet the charge made by the Protestants that Home Rule and Rome Rule are synonymous terms. The Protestant minority make their charge in good faith, and the Catholic majority advance their defence in all sincerity. But everything depends upon where the boundary line can be drawn between Roman religion and Irish politics. My own experience tells me that the religion of Rome and the politics of Ireland are so inextricably mixed up that it is impossible to tell where the one ends and the other begins. The Catholics may mean well when they say that they will accept nothing from Rome but religion; but unfortunately for their assertion nobody is so blind as not to see that they are not free agents in the matter. Rome, it is true, may not dictate a political policy for adoption in Ireland; but it can use religion at any time *to forbid* the adoption by Catholic Irishmen of any policy which is not pleasing to the Vatican. Consequently when the Vatican can dogmatically condemn any phase of politics it dislikes, and when it tolerates only the kind of politics agreeable to it, it is obvious that it has the same power over Ireland as if it sought *to compel* Irishmen to adopt any particular line of political conduct. By constituting it a "sin" on the part of Catholics to support any political creed which he may choose to condemn, the Pope has virtually the power to exert a sway over Ireland quite as effectual as if he were an authorised and despotic ruler of the country. Irish Catholics have no option as to what they are to accept, or not accept from Rome, and their favorite formula (as quoted above) is therefore an expression with more sound than sense. From this point of view, the question might be disposed of at once by saying that Home Rule, or no Home Rule, Ireland will be under the sway of Rome so long as the majority of Irishmen remain good Catholics, *but no longer*.

In the event of our getting Home Rule, Rome Rule would doubtless become more powerful, but if my judgment is worth anything, I feel that I can safely predict that after Home Rule is enjoyed for a short time the power of Rome will gradually dwindle away. There are forces at work in Ireland, beneath the surface, that will ultimately make the gentlemen in Roman collars and tall hats a trifle uncomfortable; but having regard to the enormous power of the priesthood, and their great hold on the minds of a naturally

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credulous people, the struggle to shake off the yoke of Rome will be a long and bitter one.

When Home Rule is conceded, one half the battle for Irish freedom will not be won. The right to govern ourselves after our own fashion will be but a shadowy right as long as the influence of Rome holds good. Catholicism is a conglomeration of religion and politics; the religious department being equivalent to mental slavery and superstition, and the political department being essentially Conservative. Catholic politicians who wish to remain in good odor with the Church will not be actuated by what they deem to be good for their country, but by what they consider advantageous for their "souls." This latter they cannot decide for themselves, nor can the Irish priests, except under orders from Rome. What is good or baneful for the "souls" of the Irish politicians will altogether depend upon the prevailing political intrigues at Rome. These intrigues will have reference to England. The Pope has his eye on the land of the Saxon. To have the Saxon on his side is his great ambition at present; for he believes that the countenance of England would further the interests of the Church in more important places than Ireland. Accordingly, Ireland has been reserved, and is destined to be reserved, to act the part of puppet, and to be ready at all times to do what the Pope thinks would please England or further the interests of the Church. This is no mere speculation. Catholics themselves say that the Pope is justified in prosecuting such a policy; and they even confess that it is better that the whole Church should benefit than that the Irish section of it should be allowed to have matters its own way as far as "temporal" interests are concerned. When the Rescript against the Plan of Campaign was issued, many Irishmen growled; but the body of them lay down calmly and said that the welfare of their "souls" demanded that the Pope should be implicitly obeyed. Those who spoke pretty plainly were condemned for their levity; but at the same time the growling in certain quarters was growing so threatening that the Bishops, except one, did not actually enforce the Rescript, fearing, doubtless, that their doing so would endanger the hitherto strong hold which Rome Rule had on Ireland. It will yet be found that that Rescript was the beginning of the end. The end is far off, very far off, but it is nearer than if the Rescript never left the Vatican. In the hearts of the younger men, the insult to their country and the unwarrantable interference with their right of combination, are still rankling; and if Home Rule were granted, this feeling of soreness would make itself felt in the towns, and wherever the Gaelic Athletic Association has influence, for the young men of that body have been the first to resent priestly interference, by insisting on managing their association without priestly aid. Political expediency keeps those who feel inclined to oppose the priests silent for the present; but if Home Rule were once a reality, all necessity for restraint would be abolished, and all with notions of Liberty above the milk-and-water Liberal principals of the Church of Rome, would undoubtedly commence to assert themselves, timidly, perhaps, at first, but gathering strength as time went on, and as abuse, if not persecution, was heaped upon them.

With the advent of Home Rule and the temporary increase of the influence of the Rule of Rome in Ireland, there is no fear that the latter power will exhibit itself in the form of persecution of the minority. The fears that Protestants express of persecution are groundless. It is not the Protestants that Rome Rule will trouble itself to persecute. From motives of policy it would be dangerous to persecute non-Catholics, even if it were not absurdly out of date to attempt anything of the kind. Rome Rule will reserve its malignant forces for those who dare to oppose the political policy of the priests, and opposition to that policy will not come from the Protestants, except in the unlikely event of an attempt being made to endow the Catholic Church. Irish Protestants are generally conservative in politics, and it is quite on the cards that they would willingly join with the creatures of the Catholic priests for the purpose of putting down those who will preach nationalisation of the land, and the establishment of free and undenominational education. As Conservatives, Protestants and good Catholics will combine to "protect property" from the reformers who will want to do something substantial for the long-neglected artizans and farm laborers; and as bigots they will combine to defeat those who will demand free education for the people. Not that there is ever likely to be anything like a feeling of harmony between the Catholics and the Protestants. The bitter spirit of sectarianism will always render friction of some kind inevitable. Protestants under Home Rule will not have the pick of the good positions under the Government, as they have been accustomed to, and this will perhaps make them a trifle cantankerous. The worst that is to be expected is an occasional row between the most bigoted and ignorant on both sides, and a continuance of that mutual hatred, which is kept alive by the clergymen of all sects, and which is only to some extent satisfied by the consoling belief that the opposing party is safe for eternal damnation. For my own part I do not apprehend any religious persecution under the combined Home Rule and Rome Rule; but I do most certainly apprehend that there will be bitter persecution of those who may be bold enough to attack the stick-in-the-mud policies of clericals, solicitous for their own influence and welfare, and for the influence and welfare of their churches.

To sum up. Rome Rule need not be feared as likely to very vastly increase under a Home Rule Parliament. It may flourish undisturbed while the people are rejoicing over their triumph, and while the services of the priests in securing it give them a sort of right to the gratitude of the nation. It will affect the Protestant minority but very slightly, and that not in the direction of persecution. But on the moment that the influence of Rome will oppose itself to Progress, then the fight will commence—not between Catholics and Protestants, but between the genuine Home Rulers and those whose Home Rule principles are mixed with Rome Rule principles. There are a few men ready to start that fight as soon as opportunity offers. Behind them will be ranged a good sprinkling of the younger men, and of the artizans. Once the struggle is under weigh Freethought will spread, and a new life will be infused into Ireland never dreamt of during the days of religious ascendancy. Priestly influence, superstition, and all the paraphernalia of Rome Rule will perhaps require a great deal of mangling, and will die hard. But I hope that I will not have descended into the eternal oblivion of the grave until I see the darkness of religious superstition giving place to the lights of Truth and Reason, which, unhappily for herself, have never yet shed their benign lustre on poor Ireland.

J. O'Donovan.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

(Concluded from p. 147.)

In other countries religious wars and persecutions have only been passing incidents, which have left no trace upon the national character; but this has not been the case with Spain. In England the last two persons burnt for heresy were Legate and Wightman in 1612. In Spain the last victim of the Inquitition perished as late as 1822.* The Inquisition arose as soon as the monarchy was established, and became an auxiliary to its power. During three consecutive centuries it impressed upon the Spanish nation such an indelible stamp of bigoted perfidy and monachal mummery, that in spite of the efforts of the Spanish people they have not quite succeeded in shaking it off. As the church retained her hold over the highest as over the lowest intellects, writers were proud of counting themselves among the ecclesiastical authorities. Thus we find that Lope de Vega and Calderon beecame priests towards the end of their lives. The latter has been justly called by Sismondi "the poet of the Inquisition." Cervantes became a Franciscan monk. Montalvan, Solis the historian, and de Molina, received holy orders. Mariana was a Jesuit. We will not tire the reader by inserting more names, which perhaps he hears for the first time. It suffices to say that in those horrible times everybody of eminence and property took good care to flatter or join the Holy Office.

Beaumarchais puts in the mouth of Figaro the following ironical remarks, which show the sort of liberty enjoyed by the Madrid press in the eighteenth century. "They tell me," says Figaro, "that during my economical retreat [he had been imprisoned] there has been established in Madrid a system of liberty which extends even to that of the press; and that provided I don't mention in my writings anything concerning the authorities, politics, religion or morality, or the people present, or credited corporations, the opera and other spectacles, or lastly concerning any person who keeps to anything, I can print as much as I like about *everything else*, always of course under the supervision of a few censors"!

* In Mexico the custom of burning witches seems not quite to have died out. In 1874 a poor woman was accused of witchcraft and publicly burnt! See Stanford's *Compendium of Geography*, America.

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The above "sweet liberty" was the only one enjoyed by authors and journalists in Spain almost up till now. Is it, then, astonishing if Freethought has not been able to make progress in such a country?

When Tyndall's *Heat as a Mode of Motion* came out, importation and translation of the work into Spain was prohibited. When in '59 the world's gossip was the *Origin of Species*, only one man in Spain (Castelar) wrote a few timid remarks in a review! But things, we are glad to say, have changed in the last twenty-five years, thanks to the unceasing labors and indescribable sufferings of a few enlightened men.

It is not only in the nineteenth century that Freethought existed in Spain. During the period in which that country was governed by the Arabs, nearly 800 years, a Freethinking sect arose. Thus we find Abu Abdallah Muhammad Ibn Masara al Jabali, an upholder of Pantheism and a student of the works of Empedocles and other Greek philosophers. His books were burnt. Died 931. Abu Bakr Ibn Al Tufail, who died at Morocco in 1185, wrote a philosophical romance, *Hai Ebn Thokdan, i.e.*, the Man of Nature. Averroes, the prince of Arabian philosophers, was imprisoned for his heterodoxy. He was born at Cordova 1126. He is too well known for it to be necessary that we should mention much about him. The reader will find all desired information in Rénan's splendid volume. Sabin was born at Murcia about 1218; he corresponded with Frederick II. and replied to his philosophical questions.

The above are the names of the Hispano-Arabic Freethinkers, mentioned in Mr. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*; they are not numerous, but there is no doubt that a greater number must have existed of whom details have been lost. The writer has not been able to consult the valuable dictionary, in four volumes, written in Arabic and Spanish, by Ebn Alkhali Mahomed Ben Abdalla, which is kept in the Escurial; nor the literary history of Ben Mohamed Abu Nasser Alphrath, of Sevilla, which is to be seen in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. A careful perusal of these two works would certainly reveal more names of Freethinkers.

The first Freethinker we meet after the Arabic period is Alfonso X., surnamed the Wise. He learned his scepticism from the Jews and Arabs. He is credited with saying that had he been present at the creation, he could have given "the Old Jew upstairs" a few hints on improvement. Hurtado de Mendoza, who flourished about 1503, was undoubtedly a sceptic at heart, but limited himself to vituperating the conduct of the clergy. His "Lazarillo" and satires were condemned by the Inquisition.

Miguel Servet (1509-1553). One of the martyrs of Freethought; intended for the Church, he left it for law, and finally studied medicine. He certainly contributed largely towards the discovery of the circulation of the blood. His two books, *Trinitatis Erroribus* and *Christianismi Restitutio*, brought him the hatred of both Catholics and Protestants. We all know the infamous conduct of Calvin towards Servetus. The unfortunate Servetus was burnt alive at a slow fire at Genoa on the 25th October, 1553. Bruno has had a statue erected to him on the spot where he was burnt. Why should not Servetus have one also erected to him in his native place, or in the town where he suffered martyrdom? Let us hope that ere long a committee for the proposal of an erection of a statue to Servetus will be formed, so that his effigy, like that of Bruno, may stand out with menacing looks warning the Church of her approaching ruin!

Mendizabal was born at Cadiz 1790. He learnt his scepticism from the English Freethinkers. He subjugated the clerical party, abolished religious orders, and proclaimed their goods as national property. Readers of George Borrow's *The Bible in Spain* will recollect the interview this reverend gentleman had with Mendizabal. Here is the finish of it: "What strange infatuation," continued Mendizabal, "is this which drives you over lands and waters with Bibles in your hands. My good sir, it is not Bibles we want, but rather guns and powder. I have not lived thirteen years in England without forming some acquaintance with the phraseology of your good folks. Now, now, pray go; you see how busy I am. Come again whenever you like, but let it not be within the next three months."

José Marchena (1768-1821) was intended for the Church, but was "converted" by reading the works of French philosophers. He was very active, and translated into Spanish a good many Freethought works.

Pedro Aranda (1718-1799). He imbibed the ideas of the Encyclopædists, and contributed largely to the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain. The Inquisition was completely disarmed by him. Larra (José)1809-1837. Became obnoxious to the Spanish government by the publication of his *Poor Gossip*. The journal was suppressed after its fourteenth number. He translated Lamennais' *Paroles d'un Croyant*, under the title "The Dogma of Free Men." The following saying of his betrays his scepticism: "All the truths of this world can be wrapped in a cigarette paper." Ramon de la Sagra (1798) was less a savant than an economist, but in this science he kept the first place among Spaniards. He published numerous works and was a disciple of Proudhon, whom he greatly admired. It is said, but without foundation, that in later years he modified his opinions.

Espronceda (1810-1842) may be called the Spanish Shelley. Want of space prevents me from doing justice to him, but any one who wishes to become acquainted with the finest lyrics in the Spanish language, let him read "A una Estrella" and "El Pirata."

Garcia-Vao, was born at Manzanares 1862. A young man of great talent and capacity, he was cowardly assassinated four years ago. His *Echoes of a Free Mind* will continue to be read, as well as his satires on the monks.

With Garcia-Vao terminates the list of notable Spanish Freethinkers, who have wandered over "to the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Of living Spanish Freethinkers, materials for their biographies are wanting; besides the Freethought party is very young and feeble still. It is a consolation though to know that such able men as Castelar, Pi-y-Margall, Ruiz Zorrilla, Perez Galdos, Salmeron, Varela, Morayta, Nakens, Miralta, Chies, Pompeyo Gener, Tubino, etc., the best men that Spain has, are most decidedly "on our side."

South America can show also the names of a few Free-Freethinkers. We find general Miranda (1750-1816) who was a friend of Tom Paine. It is said that Miranda made a sceptic of James Mill. Bolivar (Simon) 1783-1830. Lost his belief by reading the works of Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc. Francisco Zarco (1829-1869), a Mexican journalist, propagated liberal ideas in his country and was imprisoned by the reactionaries.

Positivism found an exponent in Lastarria. He is a prolific author, and his *Politicia Positiva* has been translated into French. Rafael Nunez, the Columbian President, is a writer on political questions and in philosophy a follower of Mill, Comte and Spencer. Lastly we come to Guillermo Mata, a Chilian poet, who has been justly called the South American Byron. He was educated in Europe, where he imbibed his Atheistical opinions. He is sixty years old, and as staunch a Freethinker as ever. We have already spoken of the spirit of bigotry and intolerance which has always prevailed in Spain, and of the difficulties Freethinkers had to surmount. Here are the names of some persons who have suffered for their Freethinking ideas:—Dr. Gabarro was sentenced to four years' imprisonment; he fled, and continues in France to edit his anti-clerical journal *La Tronada*. Senor A. de Maglia, who lately paid us a visit, was condemned to six years' imprisonment and a fine of 4,000 francs. Like Gabarro, he has left Spain also. The last prosecution took place only last December. The editor of *Las Dominicales*, Ramon Chies, was condemned for blasphemy to six months' imprisonment and a heavy fine. After a great struggle he was acquitted, to the extreme disgust of the sky-pilots and bigots.

It would be surprising to many to hear the number of Freethought papers published in the Peninsula. We could give their titles, but we shrink from doing so, for fear of tiring the reader. The number of Secular societies and clubs is very extensive; and in no other country are so many civil marriages and secular burials performed as in Spain. A great number of unbaptised children are registered annually. Cremation is also making progress.

It will not be out of place here to mention that translations of the most important scientific and philosophical works have been made lately. Any Madrid bookseller will supply you to-day with a copy in Spanish of the *Origin of Species*, *Force and Matter*, Strauss' and Rénan's *Life of Jesus*, Haeckel's *History of Creation*, Spencer, Maudsley, Comte, Bain, Guyot, Letourneau, Schopenhauer, etc.

Last autumn when the International Congress of Freethinkers took place, Spain sent her delegates; and the next International Congress of Freethinkers will take place this year, and in Madrid! As we see, Spain has entered into a new era. The dawn of a great future has broken over her, and all that is now wanted for the realisation of her dreams

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is the establishment of a Republic. But the moment for sounding the tocsin and marching towards the second Bastille has not yet arrived. The Republican and Freethought parties, as we have said before, are too young and too feeble still. If they want to see their efforts crowned with success, they will do well to wait another ten years at least; so that they may have adequate time to recruit partisans and choose for their leaders wise and experienced men. Men who, with the welfare of their country at heart, and power in their hands, will regenerate the nation, make commerce and industry advance, establish just and wise laws, elevate the position of women, and give the masses a useful and healthy education. Then will Spain be able to take her place again among the great nations, and contribute largely to the welfare of humanity. And if this sublime task is ever accomplished, it will be thanks to that class of unselfish, valiant and honest men, who are proud of belonging to the noble Army of Freethought.

F. MALIBRAN.

ANOTHER NOTE ON EASTER.

Easter has no connection with the mythical Christ. The word is usually derived from Eoster, the Saxon goddess of the East, the dawn, spring and resurrection. She is probably to be identified with Ishtar, the Assyrian goddess of love, fertility and generation. Ishtar corresponded both in name and attributes with the Astarte or Ashtoreth of Phœnicians and Syrians. Like the Greek Aphrodite and the Roman Venus, she was the queen of love and beauty, and presided over all reproduction, of animals and plants as well as of man. The Easter egg symbolises her fecundity and power of initiating new life. Ishtar was fabled to have descended into hell, and to have there been one by one divested of her adornments, but she returned again with all her beauteous attire. This transparent myth of the resurrection of life in spring was recorded on tablets above a thousand years before the Christian era. Jeremiah (vii., 18) alludes to the Jewish women kneading their dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven, a practice they had learnt in Babylonia, and which survives in our Easter buns. The spring festival celebrates the procreative power of nature, the bursting of life from the underworld, and the myth of Ishtar is both more appropriate and poetical than that of Christ.

LUCIANUS.

OBITUARY.—We have to record the death of Rose Florence Coxesedge, daughter of Mr. Coxesedge, of Bath Street, Clerkenwell, and granddaughter of Mr. A. Hilditch. The Secular Funeral Service was read over her remains at Finchley Cemetery on Sunday by Mr. F. Haslam.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Is the Bible True?" Social evening every Tuesday.

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. G. Spiller, 11.15, "The Secular Basis of Morality."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?"

East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Why we Reject Christianity"; 8, Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Resurrection."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Can Christ Atone for the Sins of Men?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. John M. Robertson, "Right and Wrong; or Praise and Blame."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 10.30, committee meeting; 11.30, Mr. Frank Fawcett, "The Exodus from Egypt"; 7, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Jesus and his Beliefs"; 8.30, music, etc.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "What Do Christians Teach?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. C. C. Cattell, "Man's Natural Origin and Great Antiquity."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, Mr. W. Hall, "The House of Lords."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. D. S. Collins, "Why I Believe Jesus Rose from the Dead"; secretary to reply.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street. 11, meeting of Sunday Music League; 2.30, in Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Rev. Walter Walsh, "Is there a God?"; 7.30, fortnightly business meeting of members. April 14, at 7, Mr. J. Clarke lectures in Bigg Market on "Is the Bible Inspired?"

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, at 7, business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—April 13, (morning) Pimlico, (evening) Camberwell; 27, Reading. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, (afternoon) Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico; 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 13, Manchester; 20, Rochdale. May 4, Birmingham.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 16.] SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—X.

"THE FEAR OF GOD."

To the Rev. George Matheson, D.D.

"Primus in orbe deos fecit timor."—PROPERTIUS.

"Almighty Fear, the Fiend-God."—SHELLEY.

SIR,—I propose in this letter to criticise your paper on "The Fear of God" in the April number of *Good Words*. The subject is all-important from a religious point of view. If the fear of God is not the beginning of wisdom, it is at least the beginning of religion. According to the Roman poet it was fear that first created gods in the world, and the same view is expressed by a later English poet whose words I have also cited. I believe it is no less true that fear is generally, if not invariably, commensurate with ignorance. Man trembles before the unknown. His want of knowledge makes him the slave of his imagination. A danger which is understood loses half its terror, while a danger which is shrouded in mystery is so magnified by fancy as to paralyse the faculties. Under this glamor the bravest shrink into cowards. Were a couple of hardened duellists to be ordered to fight a duel in a darkened room, it is doubtful if either would have the courage to begin the engagement. Now savages, among whom religion originates, are always fighting in the dark against the forces of nature. Hence they are frightened in situations in which the civilised man preserves his composure. When, for instance, the lightning flashes and the thunder roars, they crouch in abject terror, precisely as a herd of cows will huddle together in a storm. But the civilised man understands the phenomena, he is acquainted with their causes, he estimates the infinitesimal amount of the danger to himself, and frequently, instead of being alarmed, his whole being dilates with the tempest, and he revels in the enjoyment of a magnificent spectacle.

The difference in this respect between the savage and the civilisee is the difference between ignorance and knowledge, religion and science. The poor victim of superstition—and religion is only the superstition in fashion—is smitten upon his knees or even upon his face. But the votary of science stands erect and unalarmed. The one trembles, the other is equable; the one prays, the other observes; the one worships, the other reflects.

Out of the terror of ignorance sprang the first gods of superstition. Accordingly the earliest cultus is the worship of malignant powers. A benevolent God is the growth of a later age. Even then, however, the ritual of religion bears traces of the older strata of belief and sentiment. While prayer against plague, pestilence, and famine, battle, murder, and sudden death, survives in the Christian liturgy, we have visible evidence that religion retains sufficient relics of its older form to indicate to the student the ideas in which it originated and the essential character of its influence.

You are far from denying the historic or evolutionary truth of this survey. "It is a favorite argument of the sceptic," you say, "that religion is the product of fear. Little does he knew what a compliment he is paying to religion when he makes the statement." I agree with you that the sceptic does not know that he is paying religion a compliment in ascribing its origin to fear, but you are the best judge of what is a compliment to your faith. I do not envy you, and I am reluctant to disturb your enjoyment. I must, however, question the argument you advance to excuse what appears like fatuity. You discover something excellent in fear, although it is a sign of weakness, and it is difficult to see how weakness can be anything but a misfortune. You contend that "fear in its essential nature is something peculiar to man, something which marks out man from the beast of the field." I believe the assertion will astonish those who have any acquaintance with the lower animals. Nothing is more *animal* than the human expression of fear. We differ from the lower orders of life far more in the expression of our joy. And the explanation is obvious. Joy, unless it be excessive, stimulates us; it heightens our vitality, and gives free play to our faculties. But fear represses and disorders. It strikes reason torpid and paralyses the will, it throws us back upon the law of self-preservation, and leaves us to the mere instincts of our animal nature.

But while I dissent from your assertion that fear is in any sense peculiar to man, I equally dissent from your assertion that "man is the least courageous creature in the world." To affirm this of civilised man is absolutely grotesque. He digs into the bowels of the earth for treasure, and climbs the mountains for sport. He faces the mightiest tempests at sea, and in pursuit of all sorts of objects he laughs at the fear of death. He tames even lions and tigers, and makes them leap at his will, standing the while within reach of their terrible claws and fangs. There is nothing he will not attempt if he sets his heart upon it. Physical courage is indeed so cheap, that multitudes of men will join a mercenary army, and stand to be shot at for a shilling a day; and it is pretty well established that the men of all nations will fight courageously if they are properly commanded. Nor is your assertion true of primitive man. With little knowledge, and slender appliances, he subdued the wild wolf and domesticated it into the dog. He captured and tamed the wild buffalo and bred from it the useful ox. He flung himself upon the back of the wild horse and broke the creature's pride. He defended himself against infinitely more powerful animals, and took his life in his hands when he hunted the food for his wife and child. It appears to me that man is the bravest denizen of this planet. He does not fight the lion with his teeth or the elephant with his hands, but this does not show his want of courage, it only shows his possession of sense.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

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WORLDLINESS.

In the cant phrase of the conventicles worldliness is a very heinous sin. There is an absolute incompatibility between devotion to God and attention to the things of this world. Whatever is given to the one is taken from the other. Worldliness is a kind of blasphemy, a disregarding of those interests which God has declared paramount; a setting aside of his authority in favor of other interests. If religion is true, and the eternal destiny of most of us will be unending torment, then

> There's nothing worth a thought beneath,
> But how we may escape the death
> That never never dies.

But if this view is false, and the practical life of men show that they act as though they thought so, an indictment lies against religion for seeking to warp mankind from their most profitable pursuits by bribes of heaven or threats of hell.

If we reckon up simply the cost of religion, the millions spent on ministers, churches, and missions, who does not see that the same sum expended on the tangible amelioration of the lot of humanity in this world would produce far more beneficent results? Take only the annual income of the Established Church of England. The sum would amply suffice for the purposes of free education, or to start co-operative establishments which might solve the questions in dispute between capital and labor.

Then again, consider the loss involved in dedicating one special day to the service of God, a day on which the much needed opportunities of instruction, amusement and healthy recreation are as far as possible denied to the workers in the name of religion. Were but Sunday understood as a day to be devoted to the service of man what a change would be at once effected?

Christianity tends to weaken human interest in temporal and social amelioration by its substitute of bliss hereafter. As in a recent instance parricide may even be a speedy means of arriving at this end. The end itself is so all important that everything must be subordinated to it.

The genuine religionist lives in two worlds at once. He is in the world of struggle, action and progress, but he is of the world above, where all is calm and there is nothing more to be gained. It is true one has to work and eat—at any rate to eat—but these are not his real concerns. Religion places God first, and declares that you cannot serve God and Mammon. No one has expressed more strongly than Jesus the necessity of hating the world and everything in it—father and mother, and wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea and one's own life also—if you would be his disciple (Luke xiv., 26). "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," says the apostle John (1 Ep. ii., 15). Modern Christianity, seeking to compound Christianity with Secularism now the theological dose is found too nauseous if administered alone, leaves out of sight as far as possible the ascetic and monkish principles of Christianity, which it cannot, however, expunge either from its books or from the history of its faith.

Wherever Christianity has been adopted in earnest it has tended to destroy man's interest in temporal and social improvement, and taught him to sacrifice the tangible objects of worldliness to otherworldliness, the equally if not more selfish pursuit of a visionary happiness in another and hypothetical existence. By attracting his desires and diverting his efforts towards another world, it has sought to minimise his attention to this. And this position is a logical one, far more so than that of the gentlemen who sit on two stools and seek to make the best of both worlds. If we are eternal beings, this life is truly an insignificant affair. Heaven and hell dwarf this world into comparative nothingness. Only when we see that all there is of worth in life must be gathered here and now do we see the true importance of daily duties.

The men who have done most good to humanity, like Harvey, Spinoza, Voltaire, Priestley, Paine, Watt, Beethoven, Owen, Goethe, Darwin, Stephenson and Edison, are justly esteemed because they loved the world and the things connected with it. Had they been engrossed with religion and their supposed interests in some other world, they could not have benefited the world as they did. Those who have most busied themselves with God's business, priests and monks and Inquisitors, have invariably been the greatest scourges to humanity. Let us then gladly confess we are worldly, and that this world at once affords sufficient motives for our aspirations and scope for our energies.

J. M. Wheeler.

PRIESTS AND WORKERS.

At a time when the Labor Problem is the great question of the hour, it is interesting to observe the attitude of the Irish priests towards the Irish workers. With that policy and cunning for which they are famous, the Irish priests are endeavoring to keep as much as possible aloof from the labor struggle, or to adopt a position of neutrality if they cannot keep altogether aloof with good grace. To the impartial observer it is perfectly evident that the clergy are in fear and trembling of the consequences that might follow any pronounced interference on their part. They see that their best policy is "to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds." If they sided with the capitalists in labor disputes they might lose their hold of the workers; and, on the other hand, if they sided with the workers, they might lose the big subscriptions and the good dinners which accompany friendship with Catholic employers. Their great aim, therefore, is to effect compromises between masters and men, and to pose as the best friends of both parties, without whose interference strikes and disputes would end in ruin. This is a prudent policy. So long as it can be safely prosecuted there is little fear of their losing their hold of the body of the workers; and so well are they pleased with their own attitude that they are exceedingly jealous of anything likely to disturb it or to create a diversion.

We had a good example of this jealousy in Dublin the other day. Dr. Aveling addressed a mass meeting of the Dublin laborers, with a view to securing their co-operation with the English Laborers Union. Instantly clerical circles were perceptibly perturbed. The organ of the priests, *The Irish Catholic*, issued a solemn warning to the Catholic workers to beware of the friendship of Dr. Aveling and his kind. As to the probable results of such a friendship this pious print went into hysterics, and predicted a reign of ruin and anarchy if men with "a vile hatred of God and religion" were listened to for a moment. Catholic Ireland had Catholic priests, it said in effect, to settle all those labor questions without the aid of these foreign and irreligious interlopers. In issuing its warning *The Irish Catholic* forgot to be logical, as it usually does. It ignored the fact that the Catholic priests do not trouble themselves about the condition of the laborers until the laborers strike, and that then their "friendship" is directed towards cajoling the strikers into accepting terms which are not at all as good as justice demands. As a matter of fact, their policy is a "dog in the manger" sort of policy—they will not befriend the workers themselves, nor will they allow others to befriend them.

The most protracted strike we have had in Ireland this long time was the strike in the bacon trade in Limerick, Cork, and Waterford. In the last-named city the strikers rejected the proffered interference of a priest, and lost much public sympathy by so

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doing, as interested parties raised a cry that the Catholic clergy were thereby insulted! Finally the strike was brought to a close, mainly through the instrumentality of the Bishop of Limerick. The strikers were thereupon preached to, to the effect that in all these labor struggles the workers should look to the clergy, and to the clergy alone, for support. Now, mark the sequel. In the city of Limerick the Catholic clergymen had *refused to pay taxes*, and prosecutions were instituted against them by the Corporation. After the strike had concluded the Corporation passed a resolution exempting from taxation all conventual residences in the city, excluding Protestant and other non-Catholic establishments. So that the friendship of these priestly "friends" of the poor has taken the shape in Limerick of putting on the shoulders of the workers the burden of taxation which the pious idlers have managed to shirk, through the pliant action of a too religious corporation.

The "friendship" of the Irish priests for the Irish workers amounts in the main to this: preaching from the pulpits that "blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"; preaching also that the poor should be contented with their lot, because the scriptures say that "the poor we shall always have with us"; and last, and by no means least, taking from the worker's scanty earnings as many pennies as cajolery and threats can enable them to extract. Of course there are a great many Irishmen who object to this queer kind of "friendship," and who think that the clergyman should do something more than preach the uses and inevitableness of poverty. To meet the objections of such folk there is an article in the April number of *The Lyceum*, a clever magazine edited by a scholarly Jesuit. The article is evidently written with a purpose and is entitled "The Social Mission of the Church." It is to some extent meant as a reply to Mr. Stead's "Letters from the Vatican," or more correctly "The Pope and the New Era." The point of the article is that the Catholic Church was founded for the sake of souls, and not to civilise the world or to promote earthly happiness. "The aim of Christ's public life," we are told, "was wholly spiritual . . . . It was no part of his plan to provide remedies for earthly ills. And yet the political and social condition of his people gave him ample opportunity for doing so, if he would . . . . He would not act the part of a human peacemaker." This Jesuitical opinion of Christ is slightly different from Mr. Stead's idea that Christ was an exalted character and a sort of divine Socialist. The writer further explains, with delightful candor, that it is no concern of the Church whether men are slaves or freemen, learned or ignorant, poor or rich; and that it is none of its concerns either whether women are ennobled, or whether children, the poor, and the suffering are treated with tenderness provided their souls are safe. Far from troubling itself about any such considerations, the Church believes that temporal prosperity and the advance of education react unfavorably on Catholicism, and should be discountenanced rather than promoted for the sake of the welfare of "souls" and of the Church's own interests. These definitions of the Church's relations to social progress, and its attitude towards the social problem, are honestly though brutally candid. They epitomise exactly the *real* motives that are actuating the clergy of Ireland in their attitude towards the workers. The pity of it is that the Irish workers are still too priest-ridden to see through the imposition of teachings which aim at showing that happiness in a "future world" is the only happiness worth seeking for, and that the best way to secure that happiness is to suffer as much as possible here. What is more astonishing in this short-sightedness of the toilers is that very few of them take the fact into account that while the priests preach poverty and humility, they practise the pursuit of all the enjoyments and comforts that this world affords, *and always at the deluded workers' expense.*

J. O'DONOVAN.

SHELLEY'S RELIGION.

ON Wednesday, April 9, the room of the Shelley Society at University College was crowded with an unusually large audience, many of them ladies, intent upon hearing what Mr. Foote had to say upon this question.

Dr. FURNIVALL, upon taking the chair, mentioned that Mr. W. M. Rossetti had expressed his regret at his unavoidable absence. He was quite sure what Mr. Foote had to say on the important subject of Shelley's Religion would be of value as coming from a close student of the poet.

Mr. FOOTE excused himself for not having prepared a paper, because he had never read one in his life, and because he had not time. The subject was one which ought to be discussed first of all by a body of experts, and presuming he was addressing such a body he should take for granted a considerable acquaintance with the prose and verse of the poet. It could not be settled by what Mr. Gladstone called a comprehensive contemplation. It was necessary to look to details, and to remember that Shelley, with his high, strong temperament, was often at the mercy of his moods. In appealing to specific passages, what Mr. Foote proposed to show was that, with just here and there an unimportant break, there was a continuity of his Freethought from his first proclamation of Atheism in "Queen Mab" until the end. He was aware there was a strong consensus of opinion against him. Robert Browning, despite his enormous intellectual power, in matters of religion had scarcely got beyond the theology of the Methodist chapel. He was mistaken as to the forged Shelley letters, and probably equally so in supposing the poet would ever have become a Christian. Mr. Rossetti thought that Shelley could not have been an Atheist because he became a Berkeleyan idealist. But, argued Mr. Foote, Berkeleyan idealism did not lead to a god. If the Materialist was debarred by the relativity of human knowledge from affirming that matter was the cause of all, so was the idealist debarred from ascribing all to mind. Then there was the Rev. Stopford Brooke, who held that Shelley was a Pantheist, but who admitted that in his ordinary moments he was not a Pantheist. The poet, said Mr. Foote, is a personifier. He endows Nature with sentiments derived from himself. Every poet assuredly must be Pantheistic to this extent, that he looks on Nature as in sympathy with himself, the process really being the reverse. But, he contended, in Shelley the philosopher spoke as well as the poet. He would first cite the testimony of Trelawny, who knew him well in his last years. Trelawny said: "The principal fault I have to find is that the Shelleyan writers, being Christians themselves, seem to think that a man of genius cannot be an Atheist, and so they strain their own faculties to disprove what Shelley asserted from the earliest stage of his career to the last day of his life. He ignored all religions as superstitions. Some years ago, one of the most learned of the English bishops questioned me regarding Shelley; he expressed both admiration and astonishment at his learning and writing. I said to the Bishop, 'You know he was an Atheist?' He said 'Yes.' I answered 'It is the key and the distinguishing quality of all he wrote.'" Mr. Foote then gave numerous extracts from both the prose writings and poems of Shelley in support of his contention. He admitted one was apt to find his own views in a favorite poet, but he had said that Shelley was an Atheist before sharing his opinions. His judgment was formed from long acquaintance with the works of a poet he held to be the poet of Atheism, as well as of political and social revolt, a beacon flinging its light across the tossing seas our bark of progress has to travel.

Dr. FURNIVALL, in opening the discussion thought Mr. Foote had done injustice to Browning in describing his theology as that of a Methodist. He did not believe

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in damnation, and said frankly, What is red to me is green to you. Dr. Furnivall thought Shelley objected mainly to the evil done in the name of God. The religious people owed a debt to Shelley because he freed them from their dogmatic superstition. He (Dr. Furnivall) was an Agnostic himself, but he thought there was development in Shelley's writings, and that at the end although he hated all this blasphemous stuff called Christianity, this devil called God, he believed in something more than the immortality of fame.

Mr. SALT thought the most important point was the definition of Atheism. If it meant the denial of a personal God, Shelley was an Atheist; if it meant the denial of any spirit running through the universe, he was not. His Pantheism was the positive side of his religion. He did not believe there was any change in the direction of Shelley becoming Christian, and it was a happy thing that none of the usual death-bed stories could be circulated in regard to him.

Mr. G. BERNARD-SHAW said he was always happy to call himself an Atheist. A personal being was practically the meaning of the word "God." If you make it known you are an Atheist you do people a deal of good by their discovering that you say this and are not struck dead immediately. Your crude Materialist forgets that in many things we are in the metaphysical stage, and when he discovers that consciousness and will are not fully accounted for, plunges back again into Theism. We had a recent example in Mrs. Besant. Mr. Shaw then promoted some hilarity by describing the consternation he had some years ago caused the Shelley Society by declaring that he was, like Shelley, an Atheist, a Socialist, and a Vegetarian.

Mr. MASSINGHAM, of the *Star*, continued the discussion from a Theistic standpoint. He thought Shelley was more favorable to Christianity than Mr. Foote supposed.

Mr. FOOTE, in replying, urged that Shelley as an ideal poet was a personifier when he spoke of the spirit of the universe. Mankind, as a whole, never accepted any god save a personal one. Religion was worship, and Shelley wanted every man to stand erect and free without awe and without worship. He agreed that Shelley developed the poet more and sank the critic. Agnosticism was only a name to cover a respectable form of scepticism. One who rejects a personal God is practically an Atheist.

Mr. Bishop has been contending, in the *English Churchman*, that Jonah's whale was a whale as affirmed by Jesus, that, moreover, whales are occasionally found in the Mediterranean, and that Jonah was not taken down the gullet but remained in the whale's mouth. "All would go well," says Mr. Bishop, "as long as the whale floated on the surface of the sea." A Mr. Carwell points out that this also appeals to faith, and prefers to believe that it was "a large fish with a capacious stomach so formed that Johah—under divine protection—could dwell therein." A sort of chamber fitted up with air tubes, praying cushions, a dining table, and other appurtenances, we presume.

Some correspondents of the *Church Times* call attention to a superstition still to be found in the country in regard to bread baked on Good Friday. It is believed that it will cure stomachic disorders and never grow mouldy. If it does not turn out as expected, there has been some fault in the baking. This is one of the beautiful legacies of superstition left from the ages of faith.

There are two important rival societies for distributing the Bible: the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Trinitarian Bible Society. For about sixty years these societies have been at loggerheads in their claims upon the subscriptions of the faithful, and again the feud has broken out by the Trinitarian Society, circulating among the subscribers to the former, damaging statements in regard to its rival. The British and Foreign Society has retorted that in the attack there is some suppression of the true if not some suggestion of the false. It is altogether a very pretty quarrel as it stands.

THREE JOLLY JUGGLERS.

Tune—"Of a' the airts that wind can blaw."

Of all the writers e'er I read,
I dearly love old Mo,
He spins such rare side-splitting yarns
'Bout I am, Self and Co.
Old Gulliver's tours and 'Rabian Nights
Are nowhere in the race,
And bold Munchausen's wildest flights
Must e'en take second place.

On Pharaoh, the Egyptian king,
They played full many a trick;
They swarmed his land with frogs and lice
Through conjuring with a stick;
O'er all the waters in the land
They stretched their magic rod,
And all the streams at Mo's command
Were straightway turned to blood.

King Pharaoh's jugglers bravely strove
With Aaron to compete,
They turned the waters into blood,
Made snakes and frogs complete;
But when it came to raising lice
They had to yield the stakes,
And Aaron's serpent in a trice
Devoured their wriggling snakes.

Mo cussed the whole of Egypt's stock
From cattle-plague to die;
And locusts brought in multitudes
That darkened all the sky.
And each time Pharaoh's heart grew soft
To let the children go,
Old Moses telegraphed aloft
"We want more tricks to show."

The senior partner of the firm
Then hardened Pharaoh's heart,
And made him swear by all his gods
No Hebrew should depart;
But Moses, after some more tricks,
With all the Jews marched out,
And landed Pharaoh in a fix
Among the Red Sea trout.

T. CLARK.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A NOTE FROM MRS. BESANT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your last issue you think it worth while to quote a statement as to my being a speaker at Spiritualist meetings, from a Mr. Aston, a person notoriously untruthful in his attacks on Freethinkers. The only foundation for the falsehood is the fact that I have given one lecture, showing my reasons for *not* accepting the Spiritualist explanation of certain observed phenomena.

Permit me to add that if the *Freethinker* finds it useful to print Christian falsehoods about me, while I shall regret its policy, I shall trouble it with no further contradictions. I can only hope that no one whose opinion I value will accept as mine the opinions or actions ascribed to me in its columns.

ANNIE BESANT.

[Mrs. Besant makes a mountain of a mole-hill. We certainly did quote from Mr. Aston, but it was in "Acid Drops," and we quoted from him only to ridicule him. We put Mr. Aston's words in quotation marks, and we are only responsible for our own comments. We never said that Mrs. Besant was a Spiritualist, and we don't understand her annoyance. The suggestion that we are in the habit of printing "Christian falsehoods" about her may be left to the judgment of our readers.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

OBITUARY.—Died at Woolwich on the 8th inst., Henry Augustus Leisten. Although a most staunch Secularist, he had not become a member of any Freethought Society, owing to long continued sickness. While preferring a secular burial, he at his parents' desire consented to Christian rites being performed. By his own desire I write this notice for publication in the *Freethinker*.—H. W. Leisten.

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ACID DROPS.

Mr. W. H. Reynolds, the honorary treasurer of the National Secular Society, applied for the use of the large hall of the Hatcham Liberal Club for a Freethought lecture, of course on the usual business terms. Mr. W. Wood, the Club secretary, replied, "I am directed by my committee to inform you that, it being contrary to the rule of the Club to allow discussion on religion, they regret your request cannot be acceded to." Well now, that *is* rich. The Club has actually *itself*, openly, deliberately, officially had lectures by Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant on Theosophy, and these lectures were followed by discussion. Perhaps the committee would say "Oh, Theosophy is not a religion." But that is simply humbug. The real fact, we take it, is this, that a line is drawn between the utter scepticism of the National Secular Society and the views of people who have some sort of a God and some sort of a future life. Any sort will do; but it must be some sort, and then you are respectable. The Hatcham Liberals are too squeamish to let naked Reason enter their Club.

The Hatcham Liberals, however, were very glad to receive aid from Secularists when they were establishing their club. At the very least £40 or £50 was subscribed by Secularists out of the £300 raised on debenture bonds. But the Club is prosperous now, and gratitude, of course, is a lively sense of favors *to come*.

The *Christian World* shies at Richard Davies's pious ejaculations before emigrating to heaven *via* the gallows. "The religious portions of the letter," it says, "seem unspeakably unpleasant. There is not one word of regret or repentance, nothing of humble reliance on an infinitely merciful Judge, but much of an almost self-righteous assurance of salvation." *Not one word of regret or repentance!* That is exactly what *we* said. The young murderer only thought of himself.

Tilehurst Congregation Chapel, Reading, has just held its first anniversary services. It was a great occasion, and the Rev. S. McComb rose to its full height. In a characteristic passage of a sublime discourse, he said that "a certain light in sceptical quarters, by name Mr. Foote, had *footed* down to Reading." This brilliant and original witticism threw the congregation into positive convulsions, and many of them are still suffering from the shock. It is really hard to conceive why this Goliath of Christianity, who wields such powerful and pointed weapons, does not accept the challenge of the poor little David of Secularism.

A lively scene was witnessed at a prayer-meeting in a British church at Springfield, Ohio. Mrs. Mary Higgins and Miss Jerry Taylor, two leading members, became involved in a fuss over some matter, and so far forgot themselves that they engaged in a hair-pulling scuffle before the whole congregation. The belligerent females were separated, and next morning Miss Taylor had Mrs. Higgins arrested, charging her with assault and battery.

St. James's Church, Taxal, Whaley Bridge, has been the scene of a squabble between Parson Evans and his churchwarden, Lieutenant-Colonel Hall. The parson is alleged to have assaulted the churchwarden in the very house of God, during divine service, and it is believed that legal proceedings will follow. Let us pray.

More religious love! This time in Hoyerswerda, a little town in Prussian Silesia. The Protestants attacked the Catholic church, broke all the windows, cut the pictures to pieces, and battered all the holy utensils on the altar. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen!

The German American Christ, who rejoices in the name of Schwenfurth, has been holding a convention of his followers at Rockford, Illinois. He repeated his claims to the Messiahship, and finds quite a number to bear their testimony in his favor.

The Protestant missionaries of Madras allege that in their part of India the Salvation Army "has not been successful." The S.A., they say, "have only labored where other missions have planted themselves." The Army swells its ranks only "from the converts of other churches." They moreover assert that the number of deaths among its agents and of those disabled by sickness is exceptionally large.

The Christian Mission at Highbury is situated at the house of a gentleman who attends to the soles and toes of the populace. The inscriptions on the windows read "Mr. So-and-so, Chiropodist," "This man receiveth sinners," "What think ye of Christ?" "Corns extracted without pain."

The belief in witchcraft still survives in Suffolk, as in many other country places. At an inquest held on a child at Fressingfield, both the father and mother stated they believed the death was due to the witchcraft of the child's step grandmother, who died a few hours before the child. This woman's husband also stated that he was of opinion his late wife had the powers of a witch, but he seems to have let out the real secret when he added that he always tried to do what she wanted in consequence.

Zélie Bourion, the French fasting woman, has been dismissed from the Dordogne hospital. Dr. Lafon saw signs of inanition and would not let the ordeal be prolonged. Some of the Sisters of Charity believe that Zelie is possessed, but the doctors know better.

A serious affray has taken place at Belgaum, India, between Mohammedans and Hindoos. Over a thousand persons were engaged in a religious riot, and three followers of Mohammed and one Hindoo were killed and many more injured.

Religious bigotry came into play during the late riots in Vienna. Only the Jews' shops were plundered, and on the following days such inscriptions as "Christian old clothes shop," "Christian brandy shop," everywhere met the eye. One woman was stoned as a Jewess and narrowly escaped being burnt alive.

No doubt there are some social reasons for the odium incurred by the Jews, but this is everywhere intensified by religious bigotry. The curse of God is supposed to be upon them, and nothing can be too bad to inflict on the race who crucified the blessed Savior.

The Rev. B. J. Snell has been to Jerusalem and seen the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where rival Christians have to be kept in order by the "infidels." Mr. Snell says, "It is not lovely to see how Christians of different Churches worship under one roof, and that roof, by all their accepted signs, the most sacred roof in the world. They would fight again, as they have fought before, wildly, like beasts, but that the precaution is taken of having a hundred stacks of arms in the courtyard, with Mussulman soldiers behind the stacks. Soldiers swarm in all quarters of the church, soldiers stand on guard before every shrine, soldiers clear the space before every procession—Moslem soldiers, to restrain these Christians from actions marked by zeal without knowledge." Mr. Snell adds that even "the howling dervishes of Cairo manage without soldiers."

Hugh Price Hughes has begun a series of addresses at St. James's Hall on "Why am I a Christian?" Why not begin a series on "Why am I a Liar?" It would draw.

The Wesleyan Methodists, who are certainly the most active of the dissenting sects, only claim 423,701 members in Great Britain. This is not a very grand show after one hundred and fifty years' active propaganda, with the Lord of Hosts to back them up.

The Methodists are not to have the monopoly of the "forward" movement. The Presbyterians in London, most of whom are Scotch, have sounded the pibroch, and there has been a gathering of the clans. Bawbees have been shelled out, and the Rev. John McNeill has been commissioned to hold the fort on Sunday afternoons at the Central Hall, Holborn, a building capable of seating about 4,000 people.

We intended to address one of our "Letters to the Clergy" to the Rev. John McNeill, but after reading two or three of his sermons we found nothing to write about.

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Such poverty of matter is really extraordinary in a man of such reputation.

A leader writer in the *Daily News*, we believe Mr. Andrew Lang, tells us that "In Loch Leven when the trout do not rise to fly, they are trolled for with angels, or even with the natural minnow, so hard are the hearts of the Caledonian race." We are not great on Scotch angling, but we never thought they were so hard hearted as to use angels for trolling.

A correspondent of the *Christian World* inveighs against the Victoria authorities, not only for excluding the Bible from public schools, but for keeping the very name of Christ out of the school books. We are glad to hear the gentleman has such a grievance. It is good to see the Christians wailing because they cannot tyrannise over their neighbors and their neighbors' children.

The Rev. Stewart Headlam states in the *Church Reformer* that the London School Board, besides establishing and endowing that Protestantism which makes the "Bible and the Bible only" its religion, also in one little corner of its domain has established and endowed the Jewish religion. In about half-a-dozen schools, several Jewish teachers are specially appointed: special religious instruction is arranged for: the holidays are given at the suggestion of the chief Rabbi, and alteration in the ordinary school session is allowed on Fridays: and those members of the Board, who are most particular about insisting on what they call the training of teachers, which means a residence at one of the Training Colleges, appoint without a murmur "untrained" Jewish teachers.

The Rev. Walter Walsh's lecture at Newcastle on "Is there a God?" drew a big house. His friends cheered his points, but, according to the *Leader*, he did not make "much impression upon the Secularists." Judging from the report, the Secularists must have wondered how any rational man could expect to convince his opponents by such flimsy arguments. It says much for their patience that they gave him a courteous hearing. When a Theist invites Atheists to hear him, and then tells them that a belief in God is natural to man, he is wasting their time as well as his own. The belief is not natural to *them*, and they want it proved by other arguments than one which represents them as monstrosities.

Dr. Pressensé, a French Protestant, is among the prophets. "The final utterance of our Latin races," he says, "shall neither be Atheism nor Ultramontism." We should offer him ten to one it will be one or the other, and the odds are in favor of Atheism, for the brain of France is becoming more and more irreligious.

Cannon Liddon says, "Disprove the Resurrection, and Christianity will fade away into thin air as a graceful but discredited illusion." We say it is the Christian's duty to *prove* the Resurrection. It has never been proved yet, and all the evidence it can boast would be laughed at in any court of law. Is there any Christian champion willing to discuss the Resurrection with a leading Freethinker?

The Rev. Alfred Rowland, who delivered the Merchants' Lecture last week, said it was the duty of the legislature to enforce the day of rest by closing every place but churches and chapels. But why not have a complete day of rest? Why not stop Mr. Rowland's tongue from wagging on the Sabbath? It might be a great loss to the world, but the world would survive it.

Archdeacon Denison is now joined by the Bishop of Lichfield. This right reverend father in God protests against *Lux Mundi*, the new High Church volume which, written by Oxford clergymen, admits some of the best established conclusions of German criticism. The Bishop of Lichfield and other protestors regard this as a scandal, as in a certain sense it is, for men who cannot preach the doctrines of their Church should go out of it. Even if they contracted to prove that the moon is made of green cheese, they should go on preaching it, or else throw up their positions and salaries.

According to the *Temps* the tiger is almost a divinity in Annam. Pagodas have been consecrated to him, and he has had conferred upon him titles of nobility. Such is the influence of fear on superstitious minds. Yet the law of self-preservation asserts itself, and the people try to kill the tigers who are as numerous as themselves. They entice them into pits and then destroy them.

"I have often," said General Gordon, executed men, but never without the direct sanction of the Almighty. I placed the Bible on my knees, and I prayed that if he saw fit to reverse my sentence he would signify it to me. On no single occasion was my decision reversed." Of course not. What God tells a man is what he tells himself. Now, however, Gordon is himself "executed" by the Madhi, who is quite sure that he likewise obeyed the will of God in dispatching the "infidel."

Several of the religious papers are angry with Sir George Stokes for denying that the doctrine of immortality is part of the Christian faith, and do not understand how bishops who recite the creed that they believe in the life everlasting and declare that Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light can endorse him. But we suppose Sir G. Stokes and the bishops he cites in his favor want to get away from the absurdities of the resurrection of the body.

Of course J. C. didn't bring life and immortality to life. Apart from the fact that we are as much in the dark about it as ever, the Egyptians notoriously taught the doctrine of immortality ages before Moses forgot to learn that doctrine, together with all the wisdom of the Egyptians.

It is curious that while many Theists like Mr. Francis Newman give up the immortality of the soul, there are also a few spiritists—we believe Hudson Tuttle, St. George Stock and George Barlow of the number—who believe in the immortality of the soul while denying the existence of any personal God.

The High Church papers rejoice that more churches than ever went in for elaborate ritual at Easter. The Low Church *English Churchman* calls the Ritualistic churches "Flower Shows and Music Halls." Yet this is what attracts. It won't do to rely on the Blessed Trinity nowadays.

Dr. Lightfoot, the late Bishop of Durham, left by his will £23,622 17s. 9d.—not so much for the bishop of a wealthy see, but pretty good for a follower of the meek and lowly, who had not where to lay his head.

Earl Compton brings forward in Parliament a bill to prevent the appropriation of seats in church, and to practically make all seats free. Does the Church hope to stave off disestablishment by becoming democratic? It will find in the long run that the democracy mean not only to have the seats but the churches.

According to the Brazil correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, the Brazilians hail with joy the establishment of religious equality. They have long been disgusted with the character of the priesthood. He says "Some of the most active politicians here are known to be sons of priests." Celibacy is too often only a cloak for immorality.

This is equally the case in England and Ireland, if we can credit the revelations just published by Miss Cusack, who was formerly known as "The Nun of Kenmare," in her work *Life inside the Church of Rome*. The lady had full experience of what she tells, and she affirms that the Roman Catholic priests are not only unchaste, but drunken and unscrupulous.

The latest figures given of the tithe rent charge are those for 1887. The sum amounts to £4,054,403, more than enough to defray the cost of free education.

He who would follow Christ must share Christ's experiences, says Dr. Marcus Dods. Prof. Succi, the fasting man, seems to be acting on this motto, which we hope won't lead to any one being crucified.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 20, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.; at 7, "Is the Bible Fit for Children?"

April 27, Hall of Science.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

E. WALLER.—Mr. Touzeau Parris has not written any account of his conversion to Freethought for our columns. We should be glad if he would do so. We recently announced a lecture by Mr. Parris on this subject which is perhaps what your friend refers to.

J. C. H.—Hardly up to the mark, and scarcely in our way.

H. BORLAND (Dum Dum)—Thanks for the "hearty congratulations" of your little band of Freethinkers. We believe the characters you refer to are meant for Shelley and Byron.

W. WESTERMAN.—Glad to hear from you as, in a sense, one of our converts. Your letter is extremely interesting. It is evident that Christianity has not made a paradise of the West Indies.

H. S. FRIZELLE.—Mr. Forder will write you. We hope there will be a good Branch in Dublin.

J. HARRIS.—Newsagents often tell lies to hide their bigotry. They can all supply the *Freethinker* if they wish to. There are, as you say, many small towns in which our propaganda might be introduced. Something is being attempted in the South.

B. W.—A Branch that has no copies of the Freethought papers on sale at its lectures is neglecting its duty. There is no excuse with respect to the *Freethinker*, which is supplied on sale or return.

MR. FORDER desires us to say that his name was placed on the *Freethought Record* without any communication with him before it was printed and issued.

J. S.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. J. FIELD is just joining the National Secular Society with six of his friends. Many other readers of the *Freethinker* have written us to a similar effect during the last week or two. Our correspondent sends a subscription, at the same time, in response to our appeal.

S. A. GIMSON.—Your letter arrived too late for this week's *Freethinker*. It shall appear in our next.

W. T. LEEKEY.—The reverend gentleman is like many of his cloth, a keen and unscrupulous advertiser.

G. HALL. (Chester-le-Street)—We are pleased to hear good reports of Mr. J. Clarke's work in your district.

C.—We have always understood that Florence Nightingale was a professed Christian, but unsound on the dogma of future punishment.

W. CABELL.—It was a slip. Lenten fare only lasts from Ash Wednesday to Easter Saturday.

E. BOYS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. H. COWSHILL.—It makes no difference.

E. BUCKLE.—We prefer light, satirical or comic verse. Serious verse is judged by a higher standard. Glad to hear you have gained us some fresh subscribers.

J. KEAST.—Thanks. See reply to J. A. Williams.

H. NICHOLSON.—Temperate, well-reasoned letters in the local press do the cause a great deal of good. You do right in leaving the Christians a monopoly of personalities.

C. JUNGE.—We are obliged. It may be useful.

TOLEMAN GARNER notifies Branches that he is booked right through the summer season.

J. DEAN.—Ten shillings is a handsome yearly subscription from a shop assistant. We hope your example will prove contagious.

J. READ suggests that we should open a column for brief accounts by Freethinkers of how they were converted from Christianity, as a reply to the Hugh Price Hughes species. We will think it over.

W. K.—Thanks for the cuttings. The Bishop of Liverpool may well judge Christianity by its *fruits*. It yields him a very handsome salary, which he would never earn in any honest occupation.

J. W. RUSH.—A great deal too long for our columns. The matter shall be laid before the Federation or the Organization Committee.

J. A. WILLIAMS (Bristol).—We thought it was an idle boast. Mr. Parsons seems to have a fertile imagination. With more brains he might be a poet.

A. SPENCER.—Mr. Wilks is in error or he has inadvertently misled you. The *Freethinker* is always sent out from our office on sale or return.

T. CRISFIELD.—Sorry to hear the Brighton Branch is doing so badly. No doubt such a town is very hard to work. We print your address for communications and subscriptions—8 Rose Hill Terrace. Could you get a good hall if Mr. Foote paid you a visit?

A. GUEST.—Shall appear.

BIRCH, newsagent, 25 Queen's Road, Peckham, supplies this journal and other Freethought publications.

PERSHORE STREET, Birmingham.—Your name was mutilated in opening your letter. The Society at Baskerville Hall will be pleased to see you. Ask for the secretary, and introduce yourself.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Birmingham Daily Gazette—Reading Observer—Consett Guardian—Rochdale Observer—Open Court—Evening Standard—Liberal Thinker—Washington Critic—Hull Daily News—Secular Thought—Nation—Scarborough News—Newcastle Daily Leader—Weekly Times and Echo—Kettering Observer—Lyceum—Chatham and Rochester News—Referee.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

Mr. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to make up the recent loss of income, and to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
D. Baker	10	0	0	A. J. Field	0	10	0
W. H. S.	1	0	0	J. Dean, Jr.	0	10	0
E. Truelove	1	0	0	Hubert Richardson	1	0	0
G. R.	1	0	0	Alexander White	0	10	0
W. H. Morrish	1	0	0	S. R. Stephenson	1	1	0
Mrs. Stevens	0	5	0	E. Sims	1	0	0
A. C. G.	0	0	6	One (quarterly)	0	1	3

It is to be hoped that this first list will soon be followed by a second. Members of the N. S. S., or unattached friends of the movement, should bestir themselves. Let the President and his colleagues on the Executive be supplied, as they should be, with the sinews of war, and they will carry on the battle of Freethought with vigor, and they hope with success.

G. W. FOOTE.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.

(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.

(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's lectures at Portsmouth on Sunday were well attended. The advertising was exceptionally thorough, and the result was a considerable increase in the audiences. The afternoon lecture on "Why I am an Atheist," brought two opponents on the platform. The first was a very self-complacent gentleman, apparently an amateur local preacher, who declared with a smug smile that he was going to heaven, and talked generally as if he were taking part in an experience meeting. The second was the well-known Mr. Millet. This gentleman began by blowing his own trumpet. After giving himself a first-rate character, he proceeded to do a little forgery. He read out curious Theistic declarations from Darwin, Spencer and other writers. "Will you give me the references, please?" asked Mr. Foote. No, Millet couldn't; he had the passages copied out, and that was all. But he did, unfortunately, bring with him a copy of Mill's *Three Essays on Religion*, and from this volume he triumphantly read out a sentence to the effect that man's mind must have come from an infinite mind. Now Mr. Foote knew this was a fraud, so he asked Mr. Millet for the loan of the book. It was granted, and Mr. Foote showed the audience that the noble Millet had deliberately left out three words, "it is said," from the middle of the sentence, in which Mill merely stated an argument which he immediately rebutted. The Christian sat convicted and ashamed, but far from repentant. He was only angry at being found out. He came again in the evening and tried to create disorder, but failed ignominiously. Happily there was another and a better representative of Christianity. Major-General Synge spoke for ten minutes like a gentleman, and was suitably answered.

Two young men came down to Portsmouth from Poole, a distance of over fifty miles, which they covered on bicycles. They arrived in time to hear the fag end of the morning lecture, and, after hearing the afternoon lecture and the discussion, they mounted their machines to ride back to Poole.

The Portsmouth Branch is organising some summer excursions, and the experiment might be imitated by other Branches. These excursions are thoroughly enjoyed, and they yield a profit to the Branch funds.

The many friends of that Portsmouth veteran, Mr. J. Brumage, will be glad to hear that he is nearly recovered from his recent illness, and is beginning to look his old self again.

The special Executive meeting of the National Secular Society, held at the Hall of Science on Thursday, April 10, unanimously endorsed the President's action in fixing the Conference at Manchester, and decided to keep the Agenda open for resolutions until the end of the month. The matter is now in the hands of the party, and we hope no effort will be spared to make the Conference a representative one. Even Glasgow and Edinburgh could send delegates to Manchester. Distance will be no difficulty to the Branches included in the North Eastern Secular Federation. Yorkshire and Lancashire should be represented strongly. The Midlands, including Birmingham—from which we hope to see Mr. Daniel Baker—will also be able to send delegates at a moderate expense. London, of course, will remember that it owes the provinces a debt of courtesy. The South of England ought to be represented by Plymouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Reading. We should also like to see delegates from Grimsby in the East, and Cardiff in the West. Then there is Ireland. The Belfast Branch ought to be represented, and it would be very pleasant to see a delegate from the Dublin Branch, which is just being established.

Since the last Conference was held at Manchester, in 1873, during Mr. Foote's imprisonment, the Manchester Secularists have obtained a hall of their own. It was once a chapel and is now turned to a better use. No doubt this will attract Freethinkers from other localities, who will be able to talk with the Manchester friends and find out how the thing was done.

Mr. Foote will have some important proposals to make as to the future organisation of the party. New conditions call for new measures, and it is well that such proposals should be thoroughly discussed before being adopted.

Freethinkers residing in Battersea, Wandsworth, or Clapham should at once join the Battersea Branch of the N. S. S.; its meeting place is at present at the Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, Battersea Park, but the members hope soon to take a larger hall. This Branch intends conducting a vigorous campaign during the outdoor season. All the work as well as the expense now falls on the shoulders of a few earnest men. Freethinkers should rally round and help in the good cause.

Mr. Foote's lectures on the Religious Views of Shelley will be written out by and bye for publication. Many friends have expressed a wish to have it in print.

We have just printed and sent to the binders a remarkable work by a great German Atheist, Ludwig Feuerbach. It is rather tough reading, being as full of thought as an egg is full of meat, but every serious Freethinker should read it carefully. It is entitled *The Essence of Religion*. Feuerbach uses the psychological method, and shows how religion springs up and developes in the mind of pre-scientific man; that is, he goes to the root of the whole matter.

"The *Freethinker*, of London, England, edited by that able writer, G. W. Foote, ought to have a very large circulation in this country. We advise each of our readers to send a five-cent silver piece for a sample copy. No number is worth less than five times that sum."—*Freethinker's Magazine* (Buffalo).

In a review of Professor Robertson Smith's *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* in the *Westminster Review* for April, Mr. Walter Lloyd says: "Whatever transmutations the practice and idea of sacrifice have undergone, they are traced back originally to essentially heathen and idolatrous customs. These were at first common to the Israelites and all the Semitic tribes; they underwent various modifications in the course of time, were essentially altered in Judaism after the exile, and a whole mass of ideas which had become associated with them were most disastrously carried over into Christianity by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and finally adopted in scholastic and Calvinistic theology."

The Chatham Secular Society challenges the local clergy in the advertisement pages of the *News*. If any minister o' Christ is willing to debate "What has Christianity Done?" the Society will put forward Mr. Foote as a representative. Up to the present the Secretary has not been deluged with replies.

We had the pleasure of listening to the debate between Mr. J. M. Robertson and the Rev. J. Tinling. The reverend gentleman did far better than we expected. Mr. Engstrom publicly threw him over as incompetent, but in our judgment he could give Mr. Engstrom points as a debater. He was overweighted with a very bad case, but he pressed his own strongest points, and said as little as possible about his opponent's strong points, which is a degree of dexterity to which Mr. Engstrom has never to our knowledge attained.

Mr. Robertson did excellently. He was quick and adroit, and never at a loss for a neat reply. Since we first heard him speak in public he has wonderfully improved. He is acquiring a good platform style, and by and bye, when he conquers his tendency to too rapid speech, makes his points with greater deliberation, and crowns his arguments with a forceful peroration, there is no reason why he should not take a high position on the Freethought platform. Oratory, of course, is an art. A man must have a faculty for it to succeed, but the faculty must be cultivated, and that involves long and varied practice. Mr. Robertson has the ability, the knowledge and the earnestness. We hope he will persevere in his effort to master the art of public speech, and thus make his fine gifts of the utmost service to the cause he loves.

Some day or other Freethought will attract more men of Mr. Robertson's stamp. If young men would only be content with simplicity of living, and work hard in our party until their merits were recognised, they would find the battle worth fighting. Other terms are at present out of the question. The knight of Freethought must be content to forego the world's prizes. He must work hard, read and think much, and feel a passion for the cause; and eventually he will find

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in influence and respect a better reward than Bumble and Mrs. Grundy can offer.

It is sometimes said that Brahmanism is not a missionary religion, though Sir A. Lyall has given evidence that at the present day it is converting aboriginal tribes Christianity has not got hold of. A paragraph now reports that in one Hindoo meeting held in Benares, India, over 3,000 dols. were subscribed for missionary purposes in Australia.

A Brahman of high rank had visited that country and noted the intemperance there prevailing, and he believed the best way to save these poor Christian drunkards would be to convert them to Brahmanism. Several Brahmans of rank have declared themselves willing to go as missionaries, and translations of suitable passages from Hindoo religious books have been begun.

The Report of the debate in Parliament upon Mr. Acland's resolution in favor of Free Education, when 163 voted in favor of the principle and 223 against, is now published by the Hansard Publishing Union, Limited.

The Freethought Record is a penny monthly, started in the interest, apparently, of the Yorkshire Secular Federation. Its editor is J. Greeves Fisher, and it sub-editor John Grange. We wish it every success, and it shows signs of life. But the editorial announcement is rather wide. It is hardly the duty of Freethought (at present) to take up spelling reform, or to advocate everything on the extreme lines of Mr. Fisher. We hope he will pardon us for saying that Freethought is a speciality, and that while every Freethinker has a right to advocate, in his individual capacity, a thousand real or imaginary reforms, it is a grave impropriety to urge them as if they were a part of our propaganda.

Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, the popular authoress of *Under Which Lord?* has been studying the Irish Question in Ireland. She makes the following remarks on the influence of the priesthood: "The Church uses up its influence for everything but the practical purposes of work-a-day life. It teaches obedience to its ordinances, but not civic virtues. It encourages boys and girls to marry at an age when they neither understand the responsibilities of life nor can support a family; but in its regard for the sacrament it forgets the pauperisation of the nation. It enforces chastity, but it winks at murder; it demands money for masses for the souls of the dead, but it leaves on one side the homes and bodies of the living; it breeds a race of paupers to drag the country lower and lower into the depths of poverty, and thinks it has done a meritorious work, and one that calls for praise because of the paucity of numbers in the percentage of illegitimate births."

We learn from the *Liberator* that a Freethought paper has been issued at Brisbane, Queensland, with the very Australian title of the *Stockwhip*. It is, we gather, conducted by Mr. Wallace Nelson, formerly of Sheffield. We expect the *Stockwhip* will make the orthodox smart.

A few years ago, says an exchange, Ingersoll was passing through Cincinnati, and at his hotel he was accosted by a working man, who addressed him as follows: "Mr. Ingersoll, I am a poor, hard-working man, having a family to support, and I want a favor." "Well," said Robert, "what can I do for you?" "I want to call a brand of my cigars after you, 'and permission to use your photograph," answered the man. 'Certainly, my man, and I will give you a motto, if you desire." "I would thank you if you would," responded the man. Colonel Ingersoll gave it to him as follows: "We shall smoke in this world, but not in the next." Some months afterward, while passing through Cincinnati, Colonel Ingersoll was informed that the man made 9,000 dols. off the brand of cigars in less than a year.

An American judge of Philadelphia decided that a witness need not kiss the Bible. The lawyer having objected to a lady's evidence on this ground, Judge Arundel said "I am not surprised that this witness did not kiss the book. I would not do it either—a dirty book like that. This custom is a relic of idolatry, and the sooner it is abolished the better it will be. I don't think this witness objected to kissing the book because she intended to lie, but because it is a dirty book. I respect her regard for her person and her health." Such straws show the way the wind blows. Secular considerations take precedence of theological customs.

The charge of blasphemy brought against Mr. Walker of Lancaster, Tasmania, has been abandoned, and he is now charged with using language calculated to promote a breach of the peace. This shows that even in that backward spot they are afraid they cannot obtain a conviction for blasphemy.

Dr. Remigius Stölzle, Professor of Philosophy at Würzburg, has discovered some MSS. by Giordano Bruno in the library at Augsburg. They are commentaries on Aristolelian works and will be published with Bruno's complete works by Signor Tocco.

Mr. J. D. Shaw has purchased a corner lot in Waco, Texas, and proposes to rebuild a Freethought Hall and establish an Independent Pulpit Publishing House. We wish him success.

DID MOSES WRITE THE PENTATEUCH?

THE debate on this subject between Mr. J. M. Robertson and the Rev. Mr. Tinling, which took place at the Hall of Science on Thursday, April 10, was fully as lively as could be expected, and was very well attended. The debate arose out of a challenge thrown down by Mr. Tinling, who attended on behalf of the Christian Evidence Society at a lecture on "Freethought and the Bible" delivered by Mr. Robertson on behalf of the London Secular Federation.

The chair was taken by the Rev. Mr. Matthews, who exhorted the hearers to recognise all the facts and preserve an unbiased judgment.

Mr. ROBERTSON, in his opening speech, alluded to the tendency, even of Church scholarship, to give up the Mosaic authorship of the five books placed first in our Bible. In confirmation he cited Canon Driver, the Rev. Stanley Leathes, Dr. S. Davidson, and the Rev. Mr. Oxford. On the face of it only certain parts pretend to have come from Moses. There were others he could not have written. In the time of the Second Temple the Sadducees held that Moses only wrote the Ten Commandments. Even Jerome thought Ezra might have written the law. For the orthodox side there was only tradition, and to show what that was worth Mr. Robertson mentioned that the Rabbis in the Talmud held that Moses wrote the book of Job. Tradition was of no critical value. He then referred to 2 Kings xxii., which tells how the book of law was found in the reign of King Josiah. This was the first mention of any such work, and there was no reason to believe that it was known in the days of Hezekiah, Solomon or David. Go further back to the Book of Judges, within measurable distance of the Mosaic period, and there was no trace of the law. They offered up sacrifice at local shrines in direct opposition to it, and the historic writers never say they broke the law. The law ascribed to Moses set up a vast sacerdotal system, a large tabernacle with much upholstery, elaborate service and 22,000 Levites. How could all this have been set up in the wilderness and then utterly disappear? In Judges we found no king, no high priest, no sacerdotalism, no organised nation, but half-civilised tribes, who occasionally united under leaders of ability like Gideon. In Samuel the centre of worship, a little ark on a cart, was put in the hands of a private person. Judges showed there could have been no such numbers as stated in Exodus, 600,000 fighting men, or a nation of two and a half millions in a wilderness, without water, living on manna, killing an enormous number of lambs a male lamb of the first year for every family, implying two million sheep, who would need 400,000 acres of grazing ground. For the tabernacle there was metal work; yet in the reign of Saul there was no smith in Israel, and Solomon had to send abroad for workmen to build his temple. Mr. Robertson dwelt on the preposterous details of the Jews' forty years in the wilderness, and contended that everything could be explained by the books having been composed by the priests after their return from the captivity, when the hierarchy in the place of the king controlled Israel after a small remnant of the people returned from Babylon.

Mr. TINLING thanked Mr. Robertson for his courtesy in opening the debate, although the challenge had been given by Mr. Tinling. He devoted most of his half-hour to showing that the critics disagreed among themselves. Disregarding Spinoza, he said criticism had been going on since 1753, and reviewing it, we were struck with the disagreement of the critics. All allowed that Deuteronomy was the great battle-

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ground. Wellhausen contends the Book of Deuteronomy was written first, and Leviticus after, but one of these great scholars, Dr. Bleek, held it certain that Deuteronomy was written to supplement the Levitical law. Professor Rawlinson wrote thirty years ago that there were twenty different theories, each more complicated than the last, as to the origin of the Pentateuch, so you may guess how many there are to-day. Some said the Book of the Covenant was written by a Jehovist, others by an Elohist. One says one thing and another, another. One said the Jehovist was first. "No, no," say the other critics, "the Elohist was first." Why? Because their theories required it. Wellhausen, the apostle of the new school, thinks he can trace three documents and three editions. Ewald says there are seven. Others say it is a mass of fragments. You will find them flatly contradicting each other with equal scholarship. Those are facts. Delitzsch, the great Hebrew scholar who has just died, says the style of Deuteronomy marks it as unique and in one mould, but d'Eichthal says Deuteronomy was a lot of fragments. We don't know where they are or what they will say next. If you take one you must sacrifice all the rest. Wellhausen had come at last to the opinion that only on the ground of antiquities could the matter be settled. If we could get on the ground on antiquities he had strong hopes Mr. Robertson would be on his side. Where were these books to be put? In the time of Ezra, said the critics. Why? Because they cannot be put any lower. They don't fit anywhere but in the time of Moses. There are things in the time of Ezra not in Leviticus. The time of Ezra was the beginning of the synagogue, an opposite movement to the Levitical system, which centralised all at the capital. He held that the historical books and the Psalms were full of the law. But the critics say the passages are late or interpolated. Why? Because it conflicts with their theories. The Psalms was chokeful of the law of the Lord, so they would have that none of the Psalms were written by David. But the superscriptions at the head of the Psalms was part and parcel of the Psalms themselves. Then there was Jesus Christ, who said "if they do not believe in Moses, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead." After his crucifixion he again referred to Moses. (Laughter.) If the critics are divided into two camps he thought that with parties so balanced they might allow a little weight to that man Jesus, if they thought him a man, who was at any rate in touch with Judaism and nearer the scene. The evidence was flowing in that Moses was the writer of these books. In the book of Judges he found much reference to the law. The vows were binding, as is the case of Jephthah; there was circumcision, clean and unclean meats, the Nazarite as in Samson, burnt and peace offerings and trumpets. One of the boldest critics, Hartmann, said the arranger of Judges was well acquainted with the Pentateuch. In many passages in the historical books the prophets showed they were seeking to bring the people back to the same God and the same system of his servant Moses. Applause.)

Mr Robertson complained that Mr. Tinling had devoted only a tenth part of his speech to meeting his arguments. His long discourse on the critics, mostly those of from twenty to fifty years ago, only showed they disagreed as to how the documents were put together. All agreed that Moses did not write them. Even Ewald, who was largely orthodox, admitted this. Mr. Tinling said Jesus Christ lived nearer the scene, but he did not deal with his statement that the Sadducees of the second temple, who were still nearer and who were the most critical of the Jews, held that Moses only wrote the Decalogue. Mr. Tinling said there were thirty theories. There were at the start, but he should be aware that there was now a large consensus of opinion agreeing with the views of Keunen and Wellhausen. They had profited by the labors of their predecessors, and human sagacity was getting at the truth despite the forgery of the books. Mr. Robertson then alluded to the fact of the Jews being said to have shekels of the sanctuary in the wilderness. Did they coin the money or steal it from the Egyptians? In the time of Solomon they paid in corn and oil. He also mentioned other difficulties his opponent had not taken up. The references to the law of the Lord was to the old cultus not the Mosaic law, which expression never occurred until Malachi. He denied that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and equally that David wrote the Psalms. As to the superscription being part of the original there were no Hebrew MSS. of the middle ages. The synagogue movement only had regard to meetings on Sabbath, and was not antagonistic to the movement which made Jerusalem the one central temple of Judaism. The items referred to in Judges were all common to other Semitic faiths besides Judaism.

Mr. Tinling, after citing Hartmann the second time as saying that the man who *wrote* (A voice: "arranged") Judges was acquainted with the Pentateuch, said Moses foresaw the Jews would have a king. There was not only the Hebrew version, but that of the Samaritans, and the translation of the Greek Jews. Here were three versions all bearing testimony to the Mosaic authorship. This was scarcely ever denied within the first four centuries of the Christian era, and then those few who said Moses did not write the books did not want his authority over them. All the Greek and Latin writers admitted Moses as the author, and he argued if the ages of the past had handed down a tradition, unless you had proofs to the contrary, you ought to accept it as a matter of course. Consider what the law was—the most burdensome ever given. Will any sane man believe that this burdensome law was imposed on the Jews when it meant tithing three times a year? The language was just what would be expected of Moses. If he did write, it was just the kind of book we might expect. Even the critics acknowledged there were archaic fragments. Note the simplicity of Genesis, the difference between Genesis and Exodus—they represent different epochs. After Exodus the books assume the character of a journal written down hastily at the places where they encamped. The Egypt of the Ramassides so corresponded with that of Moses that Egyptologists read them side by side with the monuments and find them exactly correct.

Mr. Robertson denied the alleged correspondences with Egyptian monuments, and pointed out some particulars of the Jewish religion copied from the Egyptians, such as the breastplate of priests, the cherubs on side of the ark, bells and pomegranites, etc. Such correspondences as existed depended on the stability of Oriental life. The life of the Bedouin Arab to-day corresponded with that in the time of Abraham. Mr. Robertson further pointed out that the account of Moses in the bullrushes was similar to a myth in regard to Horus, and that the two mid-wives for the whole nation of Jews were really the Egyptian goddesses who presided over births. He then proceeded with his general argument that the story of the Jews in the wilderness involved a constant miracle, and that no trace of the Mosaic laws could be discovered before the time of Josiah. How could the tabernacle system have existed in the wilderness, and then totally disappear? He did not deny that the books preserved certain legends and customs, but the further you went back in the historical books there was the less correspondence with the priestly code. Only a few of the Jews came back from Babylon, and those the most fanatical under priestly leaders. They had an easy task. It was easy to set up the tithing system by appealing to old custom among a fanatical people. In regard to the Jubilee, Kalisch admitted there was no proof the Jubilee was ever kept. None of the kings obeyed the law. Deuteronomy said that when they came to the land they should set up a king, but Samuel, the servant of the Lord, was angry when they sought to do this. He reminded Mr. Tinling that he had not dealt with the difficulties in regard to the Jews in the wilderness.

Mr. Tinling said he believed it was an epoch in which the Creator did work miracles for the establishment of his religion. In regard to the large flocks and herds, herbage formerly grew where now none was found. We read of Moses feeding his flocks in the wilderness. Where did they get them from? They were instructed to ask for them from the Egyptians. He did not see anything wonderful in their having coins. They were led by a man who had been trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians. Mr. Tinling then in his last speech introduced much new matter, citing Mr. Stuart Poole, Sir Wm. Dawson, and Professor Palmer, to show that the accounts of Egypt and of the topography of the wilderness were correct. He concluded by observing that the matter was a most important one. If we see the connection between this question and that of Jesus and the apostles nothing could be more important. If the books ascribed to Moses were fraudulent the foundations of Christianity were vain, but if they came from God it also was divine.

A vote of thanks to the chair concluded the proceedings.

Mrs. Smith: "What do you suppose makes the new minister so undersized? He looks as if he hadn't got his growth." Mrs. Bascom: "I donno, but I kind o' suspect he was brought up on the Shorter Catechism."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. F. Millar, "The Evolution of Religious Ideas."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Park Gates, 11.15, a lecture. Social evening every Tuesday.

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. R. Rossetti will lecture at 11.15.

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Protestantism."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 5.30, tea and soiree.

East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "The Beliefs of Jesus."

Edmonton—Opposite the "Angel," 3, Mr. L. Keen, "The Last Scene."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. S. Standring, "The Westminster Confession of Faith."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Is the Bible Fit for Children?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Faith and Freethought."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. Herbert Burrows, "Three Aspects of Freethought: Social, Political, and Moral."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Looking after Number One."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Is Deity Conceivable?"

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Mr. F. Haslam, "Why I Remain a Freethinker."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Socialist speakers.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "And Yet it Moves."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. A. B. Moss, 11, "Man's Place in Nature"; 3, "Apostles of Freethought"; 7, "Inspired Nonsense."

Chester-le-Street—At the house of Mrs. McLean, 6.30, special members' meeting, business very important.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. McCluskey, "The Single Tax Fallacy Reviewed."

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. H. Porter, "Christ's Parables."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 11.30, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Gowland, "Individual and Social Evolution."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, humorous and dramatic recitals by Mr. and Mrs. E. C. White. Free. Dancing class on Wednesday at 8.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Mr. J. Clarke, 11, "The Power of Fear"; 3, "The Religion of the Future"; 7, "Anthropomorphism, or the Human Character of Gods." Tea provided in the Society's rooms after afternoon lecture.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, 11, "Popular Medical Questions: Alcohol, Vegetarianism, and Vaccination"; 7, "Overpopulation and its Remedies."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Lush, "Vegetarianism, a False Ism"; several prominent vegetarians likely to attend, and good discussion will follow.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. W. Heaford, 11, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"; 3, "Christianity and Civilisation not Friends but Foes"; 7, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, at 7, Captain W. B. Duncan, "Theosophy."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — April 20, Birmingham; 27, Reading. May 4 (moroing), Westminster (evening), Woolwich; 11 (morning), Camberwell; 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25 (afternoon), Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 22 (evening), Woolwich; 29 (morning), Bethnal Green. July 6 (morning), Hyde Park; 13 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 27 (morning), Mile End Waste.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 27, Hull; 28, Grimsby. May 4, Nottingham.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 27, Hyde Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 20, Rochdale. May 4, Birmingham.

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The Freethinker

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—X.

"THE FEAR OF GOD."

To the Rev. George Matheson, D.D.

[CONCLUDED.]

BUT if your comparative psychology of man and the lower animals is inaccurate, courtesy forbids me to describe your psychology of man by himself. Claiming fear as something particularly human, you proceed to affirm that it does not spring from experience. You assert that a castigated dog dreads the whip or stick, but "in a human soul fear precedes memory." "Did you ever ask yourself," you enquire, "why a child dreads the dark?" You ask again, "What is the reason that the infant so often cries when lifted by a stranger?" And these common facts supply you with "evidence that there is present in the breast of man from the very beginning a feeling of futurity, a presentiment of to-morrow, a putting forth of invisible hands beyond the present hour."

Surely no one but a theologian, whose trade is mystery, would found a prophetic argument on such a natural basis. The fanciful part of your explanation vanishes when the real explanation is supplied. There is no doubt whatever that fear precedes experience. But this is explained by natural selection and the law of heredity. In the long struggle for existence, through which evolution has operated, a confiding disposition would have made its possessor an easy victim to its enemies. It was inevitable that suspicion should be inbred. The rule of safety—and only those who obeyed it stood a chance of surviving and continuing the species—was to regard every other being as a foe until it proved itself a friend. And this was, and is, the law of savage and barbarous societies, as it must have been the law of primitive men. We see a philological proof of this is Latin, in which *hostis* means both stranger and enemy. And in our own language, to take the proof by the opposite handle, the words *kindred* and *kindness* come from the same root. Evolution shows us that fear has been at once an effect of the struggle for existence and a necessary element of preservation, and heredity explains its manifestation in a child antecedent to experience. Nor is there any mystery in the instinct being more active in the dark than in the light, for the danger is then greatest and the instinct most useful. To the Evolutionist, therefore, it is perfectly obvious that the civilised men and women—to say nothing of babies—who are timid in the dark, are under a psychological law of *mortmain*, being ruled by their ancestors from whom their instincts were inherited.

Thus a few sentences have exploded the "mystery" on which you base the doctrine that "human fear is a divine thing," an evidence of unseen spiritual powers, and a presentiment of futurity; and the foundation being gone, the superstructure might be left to its fate.

You perceive that as men slowly but surely become more civilised—and, I may add, more moral—fear loses its intensity, and its power of appeal to the coward and slave within us. With the growth of orderly society, in which life, liberty, and property are secured; and the development of science, by which our control of natural forces is continually strengthened; men become more confident and self-reliant. And theology has to undergo a corresponding change. This is why you argue that the threat of penalties is addressed to man's moral infancy, and that it changes into the law of holiness as he advances to moral maturity. But in doing this you betray the baseness and the falsity of your faith. You are obliged to justify the "divine" guidance of the human race by appealing to principles which are at once fallacious and degrading. "You can only teach a child love," you assert, "through the revelation of fear." Now if this has any relevance to your argument it means that punishment is the first stage of moral discipline. I deny this. I say it is a legacy of folly and brutality from the savage past. Repression is not education. Morality is a question of balance, and the balance is only effected by developing the intellect and the social feelings. Policemen may prevent burglary, but they will not make burglars moral. Prisons may deter from crime, but they do not foster virtue. Stimulate the good, and the powers of life will flow in that direction, while the evil atrophies from disuse. When punishment makes men moral, strait-waistcoats will make them sane.

When this truth is understood the whole system of supernatural ethics is seen to be false and mischievous. The fear of God appears as a relic of ignorance and barbarity, which priestcraft employs for its sinister ends. Heaven is a bribe for fools and Hell is a threat for slaves. Moral causation and the science of character take the place of these fictions, and man walks the path of progress in the sunlight of truth.

Let me say, in conclusion, that when you talk of the punishment which follows the transgression of moral laws and the violation of our ideals as "the judgment of God," and the honorable man's dread of wrong-doing as "the fear of God," you are pursuing the old method of theological mystification. Evolution explains conscience as easily as it explains fear. Conscience is the product of social training, and is unintelligible in solitude, where fear might be supreme. On the other hand, it is certain that fear of the gods had at first no connection with morality. Nor has it any real connection now; for virtue is not the dread of a tribunal, but a spontaneous effort flowing from the natural affections of a sympathetic heart. Such is the view, and I think a dignified one, which I take as a Secularist. But your theological system of ethics is very different. It begins, apparently with a child's mistrust of strangers and dread of the dark, and it ends with the fear of a God who is at once witness, judge and executioner. Whether you know it or not, you are worshipping an idol, and you are far behind the grand old Pagan who said that virtue is its own reward.

G. W. FOOTE.

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THE FEAR OF DEATH.

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth if the spirit of man ascendeth upward; and if the spirit of beasts descendeth downward. Wherefore I perceive there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work; for that is his portion: for who shall show him what shall be after him?—ECCLESIASTES III. (Jewish Translation.)

AMONG the sources of religion I place the dread of death and the fear of the dead. The latter has been held by Herbert Spencer to account for the worship of all gods, who were originally ghosts. But the fear of death, with which the fear of the dead is intimately connected, goes deeper. It is in fact bound up with the instinct of self-preservation which pervades all life. It persists even when the belief in ghosts has vanished, and it remains a trump card in the service of superstition.

Fear of death may be analysed into various elements. One may dislike leaving accustomed things, or dread loved ones being left to the tender mercies of the world; one may be afraid of the unknown, or shudder at annihilation, or be afraid of physical pain in dying, or dread torture in another world.

Against the reluctance to quit life it is little use to argue. The shadow cast by love of life must remain, and the more intense the light the darker the shadow. That death is common to all does not lessen the blow. If we love life we must shun death, and as Sir T. Browne says, "the habit of living indisposeth for dying." Yet who would live on when he had become a burden. All must depart, and in truth it is not death but only premature death that is to be deplored.

The sorrow at leaving loved ones no words can assuage. Yet could we by attention to this world secure that they are provided for, one of the keenest anxieties of the thought of death might be removed.

Death, it has been said, is an untried experiment, and all dread the unknown. To the materialist, who deems it the end-all, it can have no terror, while the Theist may justly say with the wise heathen, Marcus Antoninus, "He who fears death either fears the loss of sensation, or a different kind of sensation. But if thou shalt have no sensation, neither wilt thou feel any harm, and if thou shalt acquire another kind of sensation thou wilt be a different being."

Fear of annihilation is hardly worth mentioning, despite the statesman who said he would rather go to hell than be annihilated. To dread a dreamless night is indeed to be frightened at nothing. Lucretius asks—

> What horror see'st thou in that quiet state,
> What bugbear dreams to fright thy after fate?
> No ghost, no goblin, that still passage keep,
> But all is there serene in that eternal sleep.

There is also the fear, not of death, but of being buried alive. So much are our customs matters of sentiment that it is possible this fear may be yet as powerful an incentive in favor of cremation as its many recommendations.

When crematories are substituted for cemetries and sensible solemnity for the senseless parade of funerals, some of the terrors of death will depart.

Many dread dying rather than death. Bacon says, "I do not believe that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death." Here science avails. Its anodynes and anæsthetics diminish pain, and it has shown the so-called "death agony" is no more a conscious state than the rigidity which follows. A child in birth undergoes an ordeal, which if conscious, would be more trying than the most painful death. Most die as unconsciously as they are born. Physicians notice that fear of death departs with the dying. The nearer the end the less the apprehension. Hunter when dying said, "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die." "I thought that dying had been more difficult," said that gay sinner Louis XIV. Montaigne having met with an accident which was supposed fatal, said on restoration, "I thought that life hung only on my lips, and I closed my eyes to aid me in expelling it, and I had sincere pleasure in the thought that I was passing away." Walter Savage Landor in extreme old age wrote:

> Death stands above me whispering low,
> I know not what into my ear,
> Of his strange language all I know
> Is, there is not a word of fear.

Christians claim that the King of Terrors can only be calmly encountered by aid of their faith. Yet a Japanese will disembowel himself on small provocation. Contempt of life is found in the most uncivilised races. The Tchuktes, a native fishing tribe of north-east Siberia, will deliberately drown themselves to save the cargo for the survivors. This is putting life on a strictly politico-economical basis. In truth Christianity has vastly enhanced the terrors of death. If it is true the odds are that to any given person death is the entrance to eternal torture. To anyone who realised this, the mere uncertainty as to whether one's loved ones were doomed to heaven or to hell must be appalling.

It is noticeable that in Bacon's well-known essay on Death, all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from Pagans. If they had less respect for the lives of others they also held their own at the service of the State. Cæsar deemed a sudden death the best, and Sir Thomas Browne says: "Were I of Cæsar's religion I should be of his desires, and wish rather to go off at one blow, than to be sawed to pieces by the grating tortures of a disease." But Christianity added a new terror to sudden death; the thought of being cut off in the midst of sin "unhouseled, unaneled." The Church of England prays against sudden death, which the Pagan was apt to pray for. The idea so strikingly illustrated when Hamlet refrains from killing the King while in prayer because:

> To take him in the purging of his soul
> When he is fit and seasoned for his passage,

is to send his father's murderer to heaven, is at bottom as absurd as that a parricide goes straight to heaven *via* the gallows, simply because he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. But both are part and parcel of the great budget of Christian absurdity.

Religion has found its account is investing death with all that is hideous. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come" have been its cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." By appeals to fear and imagination it has made a terror of that which should be accepted with perfect serenity; and in proportion as men relinquish superstition and study the facts of nature, they discover that the creed that makes death a bugbear is as false as it is foolish.

J. M. WHEELER.

A QUESTION FOR ARIANS.

Can God the Father annihilate the Son and the Holy Ghost? This question, in the mouths of Freethinkers, would be flat blasphemy. In Charles Butler's historical account of the Confessions of Faith he shows how this question triumphantly overthrew Dr. Samuel Clarke at the court of Queen Caroline, the consort of George I., who desired a conference between Dr. Clarke and Dr. Harwarden, a celebrated Roman Catholic divine. Dr. Clarke first stated his view of the supremacy of the Father. Dr. Harwarden said the only reply which he would make was asking a single question, which he desired should be answered by the affirmative or negative monosyllable. To this Dr. Clarke assented. Then said Dr. Harwarden, "I ask, can God the Father annihilate the Son and the Holy Ghost? Answer me, yes or no." Dr. Clarke continued for some time in deep thought, and then said, "It was a question which he had never considered." Butler points out that had he answered Yes, he would have made the Son and the Holy Ghost to be "mere creatures. If he answered No, he admitted them to be absolutely Gods."

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"CONVERTING" AN ATHEIST.

Nobody who has not been a Catholic himself can thoroughly appreciate the difficulties and unpleasantnesses that have to be encountered in the mental transit from Catholicism to Freethought. From the very nature of his faith the Catholic has to free himself from a more intense mental slavery than the followers of any other religious persuasion, and his self-emancipation is accordingly the more difficult. If he has been carefully trained it becomes almost a second nature with him to believe implicitly what he is taught, and to reject unreservedly the promptings of his mind to think for himself. But there is more than this to deter him. His religion tells him that his conduct should be regulated by fear of the consequences in another world than this; and the continuance of such a frame of mind makes him more subject to fear of consequences in this world than would be the case with a man of more robust moral principles. To be regarded as a renegade of the most disgraceful character; to be looked upon even by one's nearest and dearest friends as the owner of "a lost soul," and a person sure of eternal damnation; to be avoided as one possessed of a devil, and to be constantly reminded by looks and words that the mere suggestion of Atheism causes deep pain to those particularly dear—all these considerations are likely to daunt the timid Freethinker, and to make even the boldest pause before declaring publicly that God and religion are shams and frauds, and that it is in Reason, and in Reason alone, that the mind, true to itself, can find refuge and rest. Once, however, that the first great step is taken; once the long-practised habits are cast aside; and once the mind is made up to follow the course which it believes to be the true one; then difficulties that appeared to be insurmountable glide gradually away, and unpleasantnesses are compensated by pleasures that were not even supposed to exist. The contentment which the acceptance of Atheism produces in the mind is a pleasure in itself, and an enduring one; but it is of a less substantial pleasure I am about to speak at present, namely, the pleasure to be derived from the efforts towards "conversion," which the ex-Catholic is bound to experience.

Undergoing the process of "conversion" is capital sport. To meet men who imagine they have "a mission" in the direction of plucking "a brand from the burning," and who are deeply imbued with the notion that they can expel the devil that has taken possession of the Atheist's heart, affords excellent amusement to the good-humored sceptic who is able to turn opportunities to advantage for attacking superstition and ridiculing the pretensions and the absurdities of priests and their dogmas. Ever since I accepted Atheism, numerous acquaintances have thought it their duty to "convert" me, and have done me the honor to inform me that it is my own perverseness rather than the weakness of their case that has led to their being unsuccessful.

As well as I remember, the first man who took my "conversion" in hand was a person deeply versed in theology, who was intimately connected with the Jesuit clergymen in Dublin, and who had managed to accumulate a splendid collection of medals with alleged miraculous qualities. The first step he took towards my "conversion" was to place in my hands a book called *Mistakes of Modern Infidels*, by a Father Northgraves, a Canadian priest. Colonel Ingersoll was the modern infidel whose mistakes were pointed out. My friend told me that this was the best and most complete refutation of Ingersoll that ever appeared. Afterwards I was able to tell him that if that was the case the other "refutations" were poor affairs indeed. But at the time I contented myself with inquiring whether he had read Ingersoll. He replied in the negative; and when I remarked that his opinion as to the completeness of the "refutation" might have more weight if he had read Ingersoll's writings, he looked a trifle out of humor. However, I read the book, and am glad to say it did me good. It saved me the necessity of looking at a comic paper for at least a week. It was a lengthy book, and might with advantage to the writer have been boiled down to a page or two. The drift of the whole volume was that as there was a God, miracles were possible, and therefore took place. This, mixed with abuse of infidels in general, was the substance of the great "refutation." When returning the work to the "converter" I gave him my opinion accordingly. He was disappointed, and went into the matter of the authenticity of miracles at great length. I inquired how it could be accounted for that, if God performed all those miracles nearly two thousand years ago, he thought it well "to shut up shop" all the time since. At this point he lost his temper, and saying that he could not allow his ears to be polluted by such language, he went his way and has not interfered with me since.

The next person who took steps to convert me was more astute. He took to praying for my conversion, and good Catholic though he is, he has discovered by now that his praying was a sad waste of time and energy. He also went and consulted a clergyman as to the best steps that could be taken to bring me back to the "true faith." That clergyman was a wise man. His opinion was that once a Catholic disbelieved in any article of faith he was a hopeless case and a good candidate for hell, to which he should be allowed to go undisturbed.

Then there turned up the man who expected that God would surely exert himself in expelling the devil if I did what he prescribed. First, I was to wear a "scapular" round my neck, though it was not necessary that I should regard it as of any more consequence than an ordinary piece of tape. I declined, and informed him that though tape had its uses, still I did not think it was yet endowed with the power to compel me to believe in a God. Next day he appeared again, this time armed so well with antidotes to Atheism that he expected me to fall an easy prey. He produced a certificate to the effect that he had enrolled me as a member of the "Apostleship of Prayer" in the "Holy League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." The result of this enrolment is that I am now, according to the certificate, "prayed for every day by millions of fellow-members, including an immense number of holy religionists." Poor God! And all this hubbub about *me*, a wretched Atheist! I felt flattered; but as no effect has yet been produced, I have commenced to fear that either "the millions of fellow-members" have neglected to pray properly, or that God has turned a deaf ear to them (which is shabby on that gentleman's part) and is determined to reserve me for a hot corner in hell. This conduct of God's is the more unaccountable when we learn what he has done for other folk. In a monthly periodical called the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*—given to me together with the certificate I have mentioned—are recorded some surprising things done in answer to the prayers of members of the body *to which I belong*. I read that a Dublin girl who wanted a letter from her brother lit "a candle in honor of the Sacred Heart" (at the cost of a penny). The letter turned up a fortnight later! A Kerryman lost a great sum of money; he promised the "Sacred Heart" that if he got the money he would publish the fact; and the honor of publicity was so much coveted by the Heart, that the money was found next day! Wonderful! A school-teacher was to have an examination of her children. She, too, promised to publish the fact if the Sacred Heart managed to prevent her pupils from saying that five and five were eleven, or that "of" was a "noun"; and the Sacred Heart did

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what was wanted, and was duly honored by having the fact published. But in my perverseness these astounding instances of the efficacy of prayer only made me smile at the credulity of my fellow-men. In addition to all this my friend brought two medals with which to convert me. He asserted that if I wore those medals "something" would happen, very likely in the direction of preventing me from organising a Branch of the National Secular Society, at which I am now engaged. He pressed me very hard to wear the medals; but he declined to enter into any arguments, though I managed to have a few jokes at his poor God's expense. This gentleman threatens that he is going to have another and yet another trial with the Devil, which he believes has possession of me. As it is, I am having a high old time of it; and the foolish efforts being made for "converting" me are only helping to convince me the more that religion is the hugest fraud this world has ever seen.

J. O'Donovan.

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

The parson of the village one day was walking out,
With senses all alert and eyes sharp cast about
To claim obeisance meek from every passing lout.
He had not travelled far on this eventful day,
When Jake, the local sweep, came trudging by the way,
With face so sad that plain it seemed grief heavy on him lay.
"Good morning, Jake," says parson, "what makes you look so sad?"
"Oh, sir," says Jake, "behold in me a man 'most driven mad,
And all by th' other rival sweep, the nasty dirty cad.
The chimneys of the village he cleans so very nice;
He's handy too, to every call he comes just in a trice,
And does the work, quite up to par, at half the usual price;
And here you see a ruined man, with business gone to pot.
I'll sweep no more; with what I've saved I'll be the village sot,
And in the workhouse sure I'll die. Oh, what a sad, sad lot."
"Cheer up, poor Jake," the parson said; "'tis but a chastening rod,
All of us meet with troubles keen as through this life we plod.
Now brace your heart, your courage rouse, and put your trust in God.
Don't fail each morning when you rise, nor yet at end of day,
To ask kind Jesus, friend of all, your troubles to allay;
Rest sure your grief will disappear if fervently you pray."

. . . . . .

Again, when just two weeks had passed, Jake and the parson met;
The former looked quite blithe and gay, 'twas plain he'd ceased to fret.
That luck had fallen in his way you might quite safely bet.
"I'm glad," says parson, "now to see that God's been kind to you.
'The Rock of Ages' never fails, God's word is always true;
But how this change has come about come quickly tell me, do."
"O reverend sir," said humble Jake, "I prayed, and prayed, and prayed;
My bitter troubles, one and all, before the Lord I laid,
And praying, sure, 'tis plain to see, is quite a paying trade.
You know that rival sweep came here to steal away my bread,
But thanks to you, my parson kind, God's power upheld my head.
When I'd been praying just a week, *the dirty cuss dropped dead.*"

A. Lewis.

A young man about to be married asks for the prayers of the congregation, was the announcement made at a prayer meeting lately.

There is a railway crossing near the depot in Adrian, Mich, has a big sign up with these words painted on, "Prepare to meet thy God."

Minister: "So you saw some boys fishing on the Sabbath my young man. Did you do anything to discourage them?" Small Boy: "Yes, Sir; I stole their bait."

"My dear friend," said a minister at the bed of a sick man, "I want to call your attention to the blessed consolation which religion brings in hours of suffering and danger to those—" "I'm much obliged to you," interposed the grateful patient, "but you are too late." "Too late?" "Yes, sir my physician says that the crisis is past, and all danger is over."

ACID DROPS.

"We teach in the Highlands, from Sabbath to Sabbath, this doctrine, that unbelief is the greatest of all sin." So writes the Rev. (?) W. Mackinnon in the *Methodist Times*, and he justifies himself from Scriptures. Yes, unbelievers will be damned. Not the least doubt about it. And what is an unbeliever? Why, a man who doesn't believe what I believe. And who am I, sir? The preacher, sir, the preacher. And what is a preacher?—But here *we* must answer. A preacher is a man who gets a living by talking dogmatic nonsense, and shouting "Damned be he who first cries, Hold, enough!"

The Bishop of Lichfield is a knowing one. He knows a hawk from a handsaw when the wind is southerly—that is, when it affects the interests of Holy Mother Church. In his recent Charge he expresses a wish that discussions, like those in *Lux Mundi*, as to the date and authorship of the Scriptures, could be carried on in Latin. This would keep the truth among scholars, and allow the clergy to go on hoaxing the multitude with good profitable lies.

The Rev. John McNeill, "the Scotch Spurgeon," seems to be a poor imitation of the Tabernacle orator. The *Daily News*, reporting his services at the Central Hall, Holborn, says his comments were "at times humorous, though by no means strikingly original." His "wit" was displayed in giving out the line of a hymn "within these sacred walls" as "within these Holborn walls." He seems to know that he must play down to a popular audience. A promising circus clown appears to have been spoilt in the Scotch Spurgeon.

It has frequently been remarked that Revivalism and Forward Movements are only reshufflings of the same old pack of cards. One sect makes a special effort and snatches a few members from another sect. Some time ago the Rev. J. Llewellyn Davies declared that the Salvation Army in Marylebone made no converts, but simply drew the most excitable people away from Church. This was denied by "Commissioner" Railton in the *Times*, but the clergyman challenged him, of course in vain, to produce the drunkards and other sinners reclaimed in that district. Now the Presbyterians, following the Methodists, who followed the Salvation Army, are making a big effort to catch souls for Christ in the Central Hall, Holborn, the net being wielded by the Rev. J. McNeill. On the first Sunday afternoon more than two thousand people assembled. But who were they? The loose fish of the Holborn and Clerkenwell slums? Nothing of the kind. According to the *Christian World* "the audience was a highly respectable one, being evidently very largely made up of the church-going element."

Dr. Parker, who is a bit of a showman himself, draws the line at these enterprises, and his remarks bear out what we have written. Speaking on Monday as president of the Congregational Union, he said, "He would express his strong distrust of the occupation of theatres and halls on Sunday afternoons. In some cases they were only traps for catching ordinary seatholders. The most of the attendants were Sunday-school teachers, or stated adherents, or lovers of novelty, who laugh at any jokes the preacher might be foolish enough to provide. For his part, he would rather open the British Museum on a Sunday afternoon than establish a religious joking saloon or an ecclesiastical circus." This seems a pretty straight thrust at the Scottish Spurgeon. If the Rev. J. McNeill replies it will be a lively time for the profane.

The *National Advance* gives circulation to a lie headed "Beecher and Ingersoll." The story goes that Beecher compared the Colonel to a man who knocked the crutches from under a cripple. Both Beecher and Ingersoll have denied the story. They were, indeed, good friends till the day of Beecher's death, which they could hardly have been if there was any truth in the tale, which is thought so good by the *National Advance* that it has awarded a guinea prize "for the best religious anecdote" to Mrs. M. J. Hawley, who sends it from Leeds. When lies against infidels are worth a guinea each there is not likely to be any dearth of them.

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The good old lady who runs the *Spectator* says "a propagandist Atheism is impossible, if not unthinkable." Do not be alarmed, dear Mrs. Hutton, if we whisper that a propagandist Atheism is actually on foot in every country of the civilised world.

A rating case which will affect most places of worship was decided this week at the Highgate Police-court. The Hornsey Local Board sought to recover rates for the road in front of the Ferme Park Baptist Chapel, and it being proved that the chapel was used for concerts, meetings, etc., the Bench decided that the chapel trustees were liable.

Here are the returns of the persons present at each service held during the month of March at the four Billingsgate churches: The average for St. Dunstan's-in-the-East is 49, of whom 21 were officials and their families. St. George's, Botolph Lane, only attracted 47 persons, of whom 21 were there as a matter of duty. St. Mary-at-Hill had an average of 22 officials and a congregation of 17. St. Margaret Pattens, with a staff averaging 38, managed to attract an average attendance of 111, but only by means of two performances of the "Stabat Mater" and a distribution of palm leaves. The churches provide 1,750 sittings.

The other day Mrs. Wolf, the young wife of John Wolf, a German living near Monticello, stole up behind her husband and crying, "God has ordered me to kill you, John," felled him with a club. He disarmed and quieted her, but after a few hours she stole to the woods with a babe, and though she was retaken the babe has not been found.

Jacob Andersen hanged himself in New York city recently while crazed by the belief that he was pursued by devils. The same belief, in a mitigated form, is harming many millions in varying degrees.

The Rev. Edward Cadogan, Rural Dean and Rector of Wicken, North Hants, committed suicide last week by shooting himself. There is no reason for supposing that he was an Atheist.

Lieut. Roundell committed suicide by drowning himself in the Severn. He was a son of Bishop Wordsworth and a relative of the Bishop of Lincoln. More facts for Talmage!

A bad accident happened at a "dipping" ceremony near the Baptist Church, at Springfield, Ohio, on Sunday. A crowd of two thousand persons watched the cleansing of sinners from a bridge, which suddenly gave way, the result being that five were killed and many seriously injured. Is this to be taken as a sign that Providence disapproves of adult baptism?

A person advertises in the *Times* for the loan of £350 to bring out "a deeply religious and highly moral novel in three volumes." Here is a chance for a pious capitalist!

The Rev. Samuel Evans, M.A., rector of Taxal, goes in for muscular Christianity. He had a dispute with Colonel Edward Hall, J.P., one of the churchwardens, relative to fixing a notice on the church door. The man of God ordered the colonel to leave the church on Sunday, and as he refused, took him by the collar of the coat and struck him a violent blow on his cheek with his clenched fist. Colonel Hale said he felt for some days as if he had a mustard plaster on his face. The reverend gentleman was bound over to keep the peace and to pay the costs of the proceedings.

"Be not afraid" was the text of a minister of Nonconformist chapel on the high road between Barnes and Mortlake. A bear, who had escaped from the custody of a travelling showman, entered the chapel, and the congregation forgot the discourse of their pastor. Fortunately Bruin's owner followed him shortly and succeeded in removing him from the holy edifice.

The Hindoos are greatly agitated because one of their temples has been demolished by orders of a government official. The residence of a God is of course holy ground and taboo like Jehovah's ark. To save a bother, the official has been sent to another district, and government has ordered the rebuilding of the temple.

An English Catholic pilgrimage has started for the holy land with the blessing of Cardinal Manning on their heads. We should not care if the Catholics displayed their activity by going to Jericho and staying there.

"This is a smart story, but slightly profane, I regret. A suave, clerical member of our School Board, it seems, was examining a small class of boys during a short visit to a certain school. It is uncertain what special point regarding humanity he wished to bring out, or if he only asked the question thoughtlessly, when he said, with a bland smile, 'And who do you think I am, my little man?' The small boy thus addressed seemed rather nonplussed, for he suspected some allegorical answer was expected instead of a merely mortal cognomen. Whatever strange fancy passed through the little man's mind as he timidly gazed up at the great one cannot be ascertained, but as a timid answer to the question he whisperingly answered the one word, 'God!' And the great man smiled as he patted the small boy encouragingly on the head, saying, 'Not *quite*, my boy; not *quite*.' This story was certified as true by the narrator, but it is open to question, I think."—*Glasgow Evening News*.

Canon Hole has been proposing an inquiry into the administration of the Church of England Working Men's Society, which is accused of carelessness, extravagance, and mismanagement. The C.E.W.M.S. is deeply in debt, and it is very doubtful if an investigation of its affairs will lead to a removal of the burden.

The Convocation of York has issued its solemn protest against the recent Divorce Bill passed by the colony of Victoria, on the ground that it is opposed to the express words of J. C. The world goes on all the same, and will hardly now be stopped any more by the teachings of J. C. than by the legislation of Moses.

The great question of bags *v.* plates for the collection in churches has agitated more than one Easter vestry. The parsons find their offerings getting scantier, and advocate an open collection, while the parishioners prefer to follow the injunction of Jesus and give their alms in secret. The parsons, who know that religion is mainly a matter of show, think that with a plate collection they may shame their auditors into giving what they would otherwise withhold.

The Rev. A. A. Lyne, of Westgate, does not wish that any of the attractions of that watering-place shall compete with his own show. At a public meeting of the inhabitants he moved that any band engaged to play in Westgate during the summer season should be engaged with a proviso that they were not to give any performances on Sunday. The resolution was seconded by the Rev. T. Blandford, but was lost. It was then moved by a layman that only sacred music should be played, but an amendment adding the words "or classical" should be added was carried.

The distinction between sacred and profane music is pure nonsense. On what ground can Beethoven's pious songs be considered sacred and his sonatas profane? The only distinction is between superior and inferior music, and what we suppose is meant by "classical" is that the bandmaster shall rather select from Mozart and Wagner than from Dan Godfrey.

A sect of Faith Healers at South Woodford believe in the literal truth of the saying of J. C. that those who believe in him shall never die. One of the prominent ladies of the movement, according to the *Woodford Times*, makes periodical visits to Claybury Hill, Woodford Bridge, in the belief that she will be "caught up," and wafted into heaven or interstellar space. It seems the devil and the law of gravitation are one and the same. Those who, like J. C., overcome the Devil, levitate *à la* Elijah. But alas! the devil and the law of gravitation are too strong even for the faith-healers, who are said to be building a temple at Claybury, pending the time of their ascension to the New Jerusalem.

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The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is said, has received a native letter from Central Africa. There is some difficulty about the translation, one version reading, Please send us more rum and less religion; another version asks for more religion and less rum; a third wants more rum and more religion; and a fourth neither religion nor rum. It has been sent back to Africa to get some missionary there to properly translate the strange document.

Dr. Parker says of Joseph Cook, "Twelve children and twelve months' affliction would complete his education." As it would take Joseph at least twelve years or so to get the twelve children, he has a poor prospect of becoming a finished theologian. He could get the twelve months' affliction by listening to Dr. Parker.

Hobbes said that words are the counters of wise men and the money of fools, and the truth of the observation is often exemplified. At Northampton, for instance, the Rev. T. Gasquoine has been arguing that "brotherhood implied fatherhood." So it does in the strict, prosaic sense of the word; but in the wider, ideal sense of the word it does nothing of the kind. Men are brothers, not through the fatherhood of God, which has set them quarreling and fighting, but through their common nature, common wants, common hopes, common aspirations, and mutual helpfulness.

The parsons are always boasting of their "charity," but the *Christian World* declares that "the last person who should have anything to do with a public charity is a parish clergyman," and it gives the case of one of these gentry who stopped the loaf of a poor woman eighty years of age because she put her nose inside a Wesleyan chapel. The "fatherhood of God" doesn't seem to have led to much "brotherhood" in this instance.

Professor Max Müller is very mildly heretical, but his Gifford lectures have been stirring up the righteous, godly folk in Glasgow. The concluding lecture of the second course excited particular indignation, and the Rev. John Hunter has been attacked for allowing it to be redelivered in Trinity Church. Puir auld Scotland!

The *British Weekly* says, "It is a hopeful sign that the *Freethinker* has found it expedient to discontinue the frightful illustrations which used to appear on the first page." We beg to inform our contemporary that we dropped the illustrations partly because we had worked the Bible through, and partly because we could not afford them when we enlarged the *Freethinker*.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's references to Mr. Foote, in his interesting reminiscences in the Newcastle *Weekly Chronicle*, have roused the ire of a correspondent who signs himself "Gyronny," which is perhaps a misprint for "Gowrongy." This gentleman wants to know if Mr. Holyoake is aware of the awful blasphemies which Mr. Foote published in the *Freethinker*. Well, we guess Mr. Holyoake knows a good deal more about "blasphemy" than "Gyronny" can teach him. Mr. Holyoake knew the brave old "blasphemers"—such as Carlile, Southwell, Hetherington and Paterson—of forty and fifty years ago, and he was himself imprisoned for the fictitious crime which Christians manufactured to get rid of their opponents.

The *Christian Commonwealth* is responsible for the statement that in America there are 7,000,000 young men, of whom 5,000,000 never darken a church door. "Seventy-five out of every 100 of these young men do not attend church; 95 out of every 100 do not belong to the Church, and 97 out of every 100 do nothing to spread Christianity." Awful! But our contemporary is still hopeful. Things are not worse than they were!

While the young men are *slowly* coming over, the *C. W.* looks for the conversion of the heathen—we mean those outside Christendom; and, in order to get this carried out it recommends the raising-the-wind scheme of the Rev. A. T. Pierson Taylor, who suggests that each church member should give twopence-halfpenny a day, in which way "£100,000,000 per annum would be raised for the missionaries." Good! But will you get the twopence-halfpennies?

Ministers are always finding out that Mr. Bradlaugh's scepticism rests upon a mistake, and that he would soon swallow Christianity if they made up the prescription. "We think," says the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, "that many of Mr. Bradlaugh's personal objections to Christianity would disappear if he could distinguish between ecclesiastical and scriptural Christianity." It is difficult to say whether ignorance or impudence predominates in this passage. Both are there in a very high degree. It is impudence to settle the measure of Mr. Bradlaugh's unbelief in this way, and ignorance to suppose he does not know the Bible as well as ecclesiastical history. By and bye Mr. Hughes will be teaching his grandmother to suck eggs.

Mr. Bradlaugh's "personal objections" to Christianity are not likely to be removed by Mr. Hughes, nor is he likely to be enamoured of the "scriptural Christianity" which leads to the concoction of lying stories of converted Atheists.

The Rev. Earl Gray tries to justify himself in the *Redditch Observer* for saying that "a beautiful girl of immoral character" was worshipped by the French Revolutionists as the Goddess of Reason. He thinks it sufficient to quote Carlyle's description of her as "Demoiselle Caudeille, of the opera, a woman fair to look upon, when well rouged." That settles it, in the opinion of the Rev. Earl Gray. But the poor man only betrays his ignorance of the opera, where all the performers have to make up with rouge and powder, to say nothing of more mysterious pigments. Madame Patti herself has to make up, and it would surprise her admirers to find she is therefore an immoral woman.

Mr. Gray's "beautiful girl" was not only not immoral, but not even a girl. If the reverend gentleman read a little further in Carlyle, he would find that she was only a "miss" on the stage. Off it she was a respectable married woman, and after the Feast of Reason she went home with her husband, who was a bookseller, and sat down with him to a frugal supper. The Rev. Earl Gray should really try to cultivate a sense of accuracy, which he will never do, by the way, if he spends too much time in reading the Bible.

The pill-vendor's Baptist concern at Southgate has been having an anniversary and boasting of its mighty deeds. Its chief achievement seems to have been the circulation of 1,000 copies of the *Dying Pillow*, a pamphlet *à la* Hugh Price Hughes, stuffed with lies about dying infidels. Such is the light of the world at Southgate.

A Liverpool friend says a two-headed boy is being exhibited in that city, and asks how many souls he has got. We don't know. Ask a Theosophist.

"Incendo" in the *Consett Guardian* gloats over the fact—with a good deal of what Hamlet calls damnable iteration—that only fifteen persons (we don't vouch for his figures) turned up at a meeting called for the purpose of starting a local Branch of the National Secular Society. Likewise, he almost bursts with delight at the thought of the deficit, which had to be borne by the Oxhill Branch, whose committee attempted the experiment. We beg to remind this journalist, who is perhaps as venal as he is slanderous, that if financial success is the true test of prosperity, the party of Jesus Christ must have been in a bad way when Cashier Judas sold the whole concern for thirty shillings. We further beg to remind him that the party was reduced to one leader and eleven followers, and that when the leader was arrested the eleven followers "all forsook him and fled." The Oxhill Branch of the National Secular Society has more than eleven members, and they are not good at running away. It is also probable that the Freethought cause will prosper, slowly but surely, at Consett; and as soon as a Branch there numbers eleven members, who won't run away, it will be stronger than the party of Jesus Christ was after three years' preaching and a perfect epidemic of miracles.

"Incendo" opines that "men by adopting Secularism in lieu of Christianity bring themselves to the dead level of so many dogs." After reading "Incendo's" libel on Secularist homes we are tempted to say he might *rise* to that level.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday morning, April 27, Bethnal Green Liberal and Radical Club, 22 Abbey Street, Bethnal Green Road, E.; at 12, "Should Parliament Regulate the Hours of Labor?"

Sunday evening (at 7), Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.; 7, "Mr. Gladstone on the Creation Story."

Tuesday, April 29, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N.W.; at 8, "Freethought and God." Free admission.

Friday, May 2, Secular Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell Road, S.E., "Freethought and Christ." Free admission.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

FREETHINKER.—Sorry you are disappointed. We will give the Rev. J. McNeill's sermons another trial as soon as we have leisure.

J. BRUMAGE.—We note your change of address to 38 Sydenham Terrace, Fratton, for the sake of your friends.

T. CLARK.—Rather too long, and your indignation at Jehovah's bandits has overwhelmed your versification. Why not try to reduce it by a half? It would gain by compression.

A. LEWIS.—It ought to convert us anyhow.

FREETHINKER.—The verse is not so good as the prose it is based on—a passage in Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*.

F. GOODWIN.—Glad to hear you so highly appreciate the work put into this journal. We reproduce the paragraph on the late Mr. Powell.

L. STANLEY.—Half-crowns are as welcome as larger sums to the Freethought Fund. We hope no one will hesitate to send what he can afford, however small the sum may be. It would be pleasant to see a hundred pounds realised before the Conference.

W. ELCOAT.—Mr. Foote will be in the district early in May. Something should be done with the Stockton Branch. There is a large field for its enterprise, and we believe a fertile one.

REX REGES.—Cuttings are always welcome. Pleased to find you thoroughly approve our criticisms on Theosophy. We simply acted from a sense of duty and took the risk which we foresaw.

C. H. KELP.—We note your suggestion. It is worth considering. Meanwhile we are always glad to answer questions as to the best books for any line of study.

SOPHIA ROBERTSON.—Doubtless you mean well, but you are only wasting time, paper and postage.

SCRUTATOR.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

The Freethinker and all Secular literature can be obtained at the small shop attached to the meeting place of the Battersea Branch N. S. S., Prince of Wales' Road.

DAYLIGHT.—Thanks for your congratulations. See "Acid Drops."

G. W. BALR.—We note the subject and await further particulars.

H. ROTHERA.—The Heckmondwike Branch is acting generously in sending an annual subscription to the new N. S. S. Fund. It is hardly to be expected that Branches should strain themselves. They consist chiefly of poor hard-workers. The well-to-do Freethinkers are the persons who should subscribe.

S. PEACOCK.—Glad to hear you are getting a few subscribers at South Shields for the new Fund. We believe it will be a great success in time.

C. DOEG.—Mr. Foote thanks the Liverpool Branch for its resolution of approval of his efforts as President of the N. S. S.

T. H. ASTON.—If you wish to set Mrs. Besant right you must apply to the journal she contributes to. We are not responsible for her statement that you are "notoriously untruthful." No doubt she will prove it or retract.

J. WILKS.—You are entitled to return your unsold *Freethinkers*, but our publisher cannot be expected to pay for the carriage of your returns. Nor can he make other publishers give you special terms. The real reason, we suspect, for the reduced sale of Freethought literature in Bradford, is that the local Secularists do very little but quarrel. It is high time that they sank their differences and fought the common enemy.

A. HASSELDINE.—You may rely on our doing our best to make the N. S. S. more lively and effective. To this end it is necessary for the members to subscribe liberally.

QUIZ.—That Mary Magdalen was a loose character is merely a a Christian tradition. There is no contemporary evidence of the existence of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, or even of Jesus. Glad to hear you circulate five copies of this journal weekly. Would that a thousand readers did the same.

W. BRANDLE.—We have always found you courteous, and we hope to find you so in future. But in stepping upon the C. E. S. platform you will have to remember the proverb about evil communications.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Cardiff Weekly Mail—Echo—Independent Pulpit—Margate and Ramsgate Gazette—Twentieth Century—Leeds Mercury—Woodford Times—Yorkshire Daily Chronicle—Newcastle Chronicle—National Advance—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Redditch Indicator—Christian Globe—La Verité—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Devon Evening Express—Consett Guardian—Freedom—Fritankaren—Der Lichtfreund—Evening Standard—Cosmopolitan—Leicester Daily Mercury—Boston Investigator.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Second List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
J. T. Hampson	1	0	0	G. Payne	2	2	0
Mrs. A. Hampson	1	0	0	B. H. Brace	0	10	6
A. Lewis	0	5	0	Heckmondwike Brch	0	10	0
G. Smith	0	6	0	J. V. Pearce	0	10	6
D. Hughes	0	5	2	H. S. Frizelle	0	5	0
G. V. Ball	0	10	0	L. Stanley	0	2	6
O. Hasseldine	0	5	0	S. Holmes	1	0	0

It is to be hoped that this second list will soon be followed by a third. Members of the N. S. S., or unattached friends of the movement, should bestir themselves. Let the President and his colleagues on the Executive be supplied, as they should be, with the sinews of war, and they will carry on the battle of Freethought with vigor, and they hope with success.

G. W. FOOTE

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote performed a dreadfully difficult task on Sunday evening. He lectured on "Is the Bible Fit for Children?" without shocking his audience. But he took the precaution of leaving the Bible at home lest he should be tempted to read from it. This evening (April 27) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science, when he will reply to Mr. Gladstone's new article on "The Creation Story" in the May number of *Good Words*.

The Woolwich Branch had some difficulty in obtaining the Co-operative Hall at Woolwich for Mr. Foote's lecture. Twice the Committee refused it, and it was only let after the Secularist members of the Co-operative Society talked of calling a general meeting. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Why I am an Atheist" drew a large audience, which included several

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ladies. Six local ministers had been specially invited, and one of them, the Rev. Mr. Baker, attended and offered some courteous opposition. He was followed by three other Christian speakers, each less rational than his predecessor, until the audience grew restive under the infliction. Mr. Foote's reply to his critics was very heartily applauded, and the Rev. Mr. Baker, in shaking hands, said he was perfectly satisfied with the courteous treatment he had received.

A freethinking lady got up to expose one of the Christian speakers, but the audience thought it beside the subject. Still, we can sympathise with the lady. She had heard this man traducing Mr. Foote at an outdoor meeting, where he read out a disgusting passage as if from the *Freethinker*. She promptly challenged him, and asked him to show her the paper he was reading from. At first he declined, but he yielded to pressure, and it turned out that not a word of the stuff was to be found in the paper. Such was the lady's story. Yet in Mr. Foote's presence the man claimed him as "a brother." And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Mr. Wheeler has published through Mr. Forder a new pamphlet, entitled *The Christian Doctrine of Hell*. Its object is to show that actual future torment has been taught by Christian divines throughout the ages. Some of the extracts should be serviceable to opponents of Christianity.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures to-day (April 27) at Reading, and we hope the local Freethinkers will give him a good reception.

Mr. C. J. Hunt, who is going north during his holiday on a lecturing tour under the auspices of the Organisation Committee, will work the Tyneside district pretty thoroughly. He will visit the following places:—May 20, Hartlepool; 21, Stockton; 23, Ox Hill; 24, Chester-le-Street; 25, South Shields; 26, Newcastle; 27, Cramlington; 28, Bedlington; 29, Gateshead; 30, Sunderland. Sunday, June 1, Mr. Hunt lectures at Belfast.

Birmingham Freethinkers should all foregather at Baskerville Hall to-day (April 27). Tea will be served at 5, and the entertainment will begin at 7. The proceeds will go to the Benevolent Fund. Those who cannot attend should take a ticket.

Mr. Foote has agreed to open the winter season for the Birmingham Branch with two lectures at Baskerville Hall and an afternoon free lecture in the Town Hall, a building capable of holding four or five thousand people.

The Newcastle Branch has done good work in establishing and sustaining the Sunday Music League. According to the *Evening Chronicle* the strength of the friends of the League can no longer be denied. A memorial with more than a thousand signatures has been presented to the Mayor, requesting him to call a town's meeting. The Mayor has acceded to the request, and the bigots who desire to regulate their neighbors' observance of the "Sabbath" will either have to defend themselves or let judgment go by default.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Branch will be held next Sunday (May 4) at 11 o'clock. All members and supporters are earnestly desired to attend.

North Middlesex Secular Federation.—From May 4 all the North Middlesex stations will be open for Freethought lectures, Tottenham excepted. New Southgate and Wood Green, 11.30; Finsbury Park, 3.30; Edmonton, 3; Old Southgate, 6.30. The arrangements for Tottenham are not yet completed.—Sam. Standring, 9 Finsbury Street, E.C., secretary.

Another petition with 5,338 signatures of Swedish Utilisters (Secularists) has been presented to Prince Karl in favor of Mr. Lennstrand's release, and protesting against punishment for opinion. The Swedes are a serious and determined people. Having once taken up with Freethought, they will hold on despite all opposition, and they have evidently the nucleus of a powerful organisation which will soon make impossible such prosecutions as those which have disgraced the present Government.

At the General Assembly of the French Freethought Federation held at the Salle de l'Ermitage, 29 Rue de Jussieu, Paris, on Sunday April 20, the statutes of the New Federation were approved and the following persons elected on the commission: E. Pasquier, C. Cilwa, Mme. Pasquier, G. Verone, MM. Beugnot, Schaere, Bevalet, Cottar, Okecki, Odin, Mlle. Chelega Loevy, MM. Lebey, Dobelle, Cordeau, and Rouselle. The energetic secretary M. Pasquier, and our good friend M. Cilwa were level at the head of the poll, and the rest followed in the order given. Our French friends also organised a *Dernier de la Libre Pensée*, for collecting money after the fashion of Peter's Pence for the Propagation of Freethought.

President Carnot, who is too much of a Freethinker to go to church, has had a splendid reception in the south of France. Boulanger, who ecquetted with the Church, is pretty well played out, while Carnot is daily rising in the esteem and affection of the people. At Corsica he was rather startled when the fishermen kissed his hand; it looked like treating him as a king; but it was only their fashion of greeting the great. One of these fine fellows saved twenty lives in a violent storm. While Carnot is respected by such men he may laugh at Boulanger and the Church too.

The *Independent Pulpit*, a Freethought monthly, of Waco, Texas, is in its eighth volume, and is full of interesting advanced Freethought matter.

Buddhism is not only making surprising advances in America and Austria, but in France. Leon de Rosny, a distinguished Orientalist, says it has taken firm root. He says that many of its disciples confound Buddha's pure philosophy with a variety of supernatural theories and dabble in spiritism, hypnotism, and occult practices.

A. E. Buultjeens, B.A., a young man brought up at St. Thomas's College, Colombo, Ceylon, has renounced the Christian faith and attached himself to that of the Lord Buddha. His name has been struck off the panels of the college, where it had been inscribed with honor.

The Austrian Christians have instituted a prosecution against Dr. Bruehl, Professor of Natural History in the University of Vienna, for "crimes against the Church and religion," the said crimes arising out of his lectures, in which he has taught Darwinism. Dr. Bruehl is seventy years of age and widely respected. The prosecution is bound to make the evolutionary doctrines more widely discussed and accepted.

The Liberal Woman's Convention, which met at Washington in February, has formally published its resolutions. The following will interest our readers, as showing a strong spirit of Freethought:—

Resolved, That as the first duty of every individual is self-development, the lessons of self-sacrifice and obedience taught women by the Christian Church have been fatal, not only to her own vital interests, but through her to the vital interests of the race.

Resolved, That every Church is the enemy of liberty and progress and the chief means of enslaving woman's conscience and reason, and therefore as the first and most necessary step towards her emancipation we should free her from the bondage of the Church.

Resolved, That the Christian Church, of whatever name, is based on the theory that woman was created secondary and inferior to man and brought sin into the world, thus necessitating the sacrifice of a Savior. That Christianity is false and its foundation a myth which every discovery in science shows to be as baseless as its former belief that the earth was flat.

Resolved, That morality is not theology, but has a basis independent of "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"; that right is right and wrong is wrong, not because any being in the universe so declares, but in the nature of things, the origin of right being in truth and not in authority.

A work upon which Mr. J. Stuart Glennie, the friend of Buckle, has long been engaged, will shortly be published by D. Nutt. It is entitled *The Origin of Civilisation*.

The *Truthseeker* gives as its cartoon for April 12, the figure of a Christian maiden clinging to a cross in the water, hard by the rocks of superstition. Priestly sharks are playing round her as the Freethought lifeboat approaches and offers her relief. She holds to the wooden cross with such fervent

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devotion that it is doubtful if she will accept the proferred help.

Religion does not play a very important part in the courts of New York nowadays. A juror in the Flack conspiracy case, on his examination, was asked: "Have you any religion?" "No, sir. We live to-day and die to-morrow." "Then you have no fear of the future?" "Not at all." He was sent to the box as a juror. A few years ago the man would have been discharged from the jury panel as incompetent to serve. —*Truthseeker.*

Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad, editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, Calcutta, has sent us an obliging letter in excellent English. He tells us that he has translated two of our essays into the vernacular. He also informs us that "the bubble of Theosophy is all but blown out here," but Mrs. Besant's conversion has caused some persons to make fresh inquiries about it, though with no very noticeable result.

Dr. Remegius Stölzle, the Professor of Philosophy at Wurzburg, states in a letter to Karl Blind, in London, that he has discovered a number of manuscripts in the Town Library of Augsburg and in the University Library of Erlangen, containing the transcript of writings and notes on Aristotelean works made by Giordano Bruno, the Italian philosopher, who was burnt at Rome in 1600, at the order of the Inquisition. Some letters of a German friend of Bruno have also been found referring to the travels, studies and publications of the ex-monk during his sojourn in Germany. The whole will be published in the forthcoming edition of the works of Giordano Bruno, which is to come out in Italy.—*Daily News.*

Mr. Hendricks has introduced into the New York Senate a bill to abolish arrests in civil actions except for contempt. Lawyers are divided in opinion as to the advisability of this proposed complete abolition of imprisonment for debt. Colonel Ingersoll says: "I am opposed absolutely to imprisonment for debt. It is a relic of barbarism and savagery. The bill to abolish arrests in civil actions as published in the *Herald* meets my views exactly as to what is demanded in the way of a reform of the abuses that have grown out of this crying evil. I hope the bill will become a law."

The *Reading Observer* prints two replies to the Rev. J. Rose on the subject of miracles. That of the Rev. D. Amos, the Unitarian minister, is very strong. Unfortunately the editor is obliged to close the correspondence. Liberal-minded as he is, he must keep an eye to business, and it won't answer to let orthodoxy be so soundly thrashed, and so frequently.

Our next number will contain an article by the editor on Mr. Gladstone's second *Good Words* article on the Bible—"The Creation Story." We shall print an extra supply in the hope that some of our friends will take more copies than usual for distribution among their orthodox acquaintances.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY NOT UNIQUE.

THE commandment of love our enemies and to return good for evil, the most sublime doctrine of Christianity—so sublime, indeed, that Christians themselves have declared it to be too sublime for this world—can be shown to belong to the universal code of faith and morality from which the highest religions have drawn their strength and life. Let me first quote the words of Christ: "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Now, let us first consult a religion which cannot possibly be suspected of having borrowed anything from Chistianity. Let us take one of the three great religions of China, Taoism, such as we know it from the writings of Lao-tze, who lived about 600 B.C. In the xlix. chapter of the Tao-te-king, Lao-tze says, "The good I would meet with goodness, the not good I would also meet with goodness. The faithful I would meet with faith, the not-faithful I would also meet with faith. Virtue is faithful. The sage dwells in the world with a timid reserve; but his mind blends in love with all. The people all turn their ears and eyes upon him, and the sage thinks of them all as his children." In chapter lxiii. he says again: "Recompense injury with kindness." How widely spread and how old this doctrine must have been in China we may gather from some curious remarks made by Confucius, the contemporary of Lao-tze and the founder or reformer of the national religion of China. In the "Anelects" we read: "Some one said, 'What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?' The Master said: 'With what will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness.'" This is evidently the language of a philosopher rather than of a religious teacher. Confucius seems to have perceived that to love our enemies is almost too much for human nature, and he declares himself satisfied therefore with demanding justice to our enemies—and who does not know how difficult it is to fulfil even that commandment? However, the true prophets who thought not so much of what men are as what men ought to be, insisted on love, or at all events, on pity for our enemies as the highest virtue. Thus Buddha said: "Let a man overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, and the liar by truth. . . . For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; *this is an old rule.*" Remark here again the same expression, that the commandment to love your enemy is an old rule in the eyes of Buddha as it was in the eyes of Confucius. What, then, becomes of the attempts to show that the doctrine of love towards our enemies must have been borrowed, wherever we find it, from the New Testament, as if that doctrine would become less true because other religions also teach it, or because it had been revealed, in the truest sense of that word, to all who had eyes to see and hearts to love. It is truth that makes revelation, not revelation that makes truth.—*Professor Max Muller in his last Gifford Lecture at Glasgow.*

TRIBUTE TO A DEAD FREETHINKER.

THE *Grays and Tilbury Gazette* prints the following:—

"We regret to record the death of Mr. Edwin Powell, of Grays, which sad event took place at his residence on Friday, the 11th inst. Deceased, who was widely known as "Ted Powell," was one of the most prominent working men Radicals in the district. His presence was to be seen at all meetings for the propagation of Radical principles, and his outspoken advice will be greatly missed by the whole of the party in South-East Essex. He was also one of the most active officials of the Grays Co-operative Society, which society on Friday had their flag flying half mast high as a token of respect. Deceased, who had been ailing for some time past, was 40 years of age at the time of his death, which occurred from a complication of diseases, dropsy and heart disease being, however, the immediate causes. He had been employed by Messrs Brooks, Shoobridge, and Co. ever since the commencement of their works, and has always been highly esteemed and respected by the members of the firm as well as by his fellow workmen; and it is a noteworthy fact that at all times, when others were working against the firm, he was one of its staunchest supporters. He was one of the leaders of the old Liberal Reform Club which was started in Grays some time back, and at the time of his decease he was one of the most prominent members of the existing Grays Liberal and Radical Club, and has invariably figured in all elections, both political and otherwise. He leaves a wife and six children to mourn his loss, although the bitterness of that loss will be less keen to the widow from her knowledge of the fact that during his life her husband worked for a firm who after his death will not allow her or her children to starve.

"Deceased was a professed Secularist. The funeral took place on Sunday at the Cemetery, in the presence of one of the largest gatherings which has ever assembled there. His widow and a large number of relatives followed, and in accordance with Mr. Powell's expressed wish he was buried as a Secularist, no religious ceremony being performed. The Secretary and other representatives of the Secular Society in London were present, and an eulogy on his life was read by one of the members. At the funeral Messrs. Brooks' firm was represented by Mr. Walter Brooks and Mr. Simpson."

Sir G. Stokes has published his lecture on "I" through the office of the *Family Churchman*. We shall get a copy and give it our attention. From the reports we have seen it is all my I.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you allow me to make a few comments on the criticism of the report of the Leicester Secular Society for 1889, which appeared in your issue of April 6th. I am sorry I had not time to send this letter before.

It is not correct to say that members of our club are "not necessarily Secularists." We do not intentionally admit a single person who is not a Secularist. It is possible for a non-Secularist to become a member by deceiving us but not otherwise.

It is hardly accurate to say that only £34 is spent "on lectures." £34 16s. 7d. is the amount paid to lecturers, but the cost of the lectures is of course much more than that. There are rent, rates, gas, water and coal (for heating), manager's salary and numerous other expenses connected with keeping up such a hall as ours, altogether amounting to over £200 per year spent in the purely propagandist side of our work. It would puzzle any Secular Society in the kingdom to show a better lecture list than ours, and if some of our friends do not ask much for their lectures, sometimes even charging nothing, I think we are to be congratulated on that fact. The lectures certainly are on all sorts of subjects, as we believe that Secularists should be interested in all sorts of subjects and given opportunities for discussing them. Still, our report shows that the large majority of the lecturers last year were pronounced Secularists.

I believe my father's bequest is being used in accordance with his wishes, and on that point I think I am a better judge than the writer of the criticism.

What "respectability" means I confess I don't know. If it means "ability to claim respect" I hope we may increase and not diminish our share of it. If it means considering "Mrs. Grundy" before the claims of Freethought, and developing a tendency towards pot hats and kid gloves, then I do not think we needed your critic's advice. This last kind of respectability has no hold on our Society, I cannot imagine Freethought being more free anywhere or more consistently vigorous. Our Secularism is not intermittent, alternating grand revivals with seasons of sloth; we keep steadily at work month after month, and year after year, with the result that our influence is always felt in our town.

There is nothing like going from home for news. Your critic thinks the "rank and file of the Secular party in Leicester" are dissatisfied. My impression is that it would be difficult to find anywhere a body of men and women working more harmoniously or more earnestly. In any case they are not "obliged to take what is given them." All our officers are elected by ballot, one member one vote, the smallest subscriber having exactly the same power as the largest. The policy of the Society is therefore in the hands of the majority.

I think your critic has somewhat mis-read the quotation from Mr. G. J. Holyoake. He does not say that "Secularists need not contest the divine origin of the Bible," but that secular principles *can* be stated and certain mischievous views of theology combated "without digressing into the discussion of the truth of Theism or divine origin of the Bible." I take this to mean that we can discuss Secularism without everlastingly hammering at God and the Bible. Criticism of Theism and the Bible has its place and is most necessary, but that is not all that Secularism consists of—at least, so we think at Leicester. We like to put God and the Bible in the background sometimes, and show that we are independent enough to do a little secular work without their help.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you for the criticism. It is always good to have our work examined, and a Secular Society whose work would not bear the closest examination would not be worthy of the name. If any of your readers are interested in knowing what we are doing at Leicester, I shall be glad to send a copy of the report on receipt of address.—Yours truly, SYDNEY A. GIMSON.

[We insert Mr. Gimson's letter for the sake of fair play. It does not convince us, however, that our criticism was very inaccurate. What he says about the self-denial of lecturers seems to us a sort of "sweater's" excuse, and we are unable to follow him in his arithmetic in the third paragraph. Nor do we think he has rightly read the principle he refers to in paragraph seven. As for the other paragraphs, more might be said about them if we had time to say it. It must now suffice that Mr. Gimson has made his reply. There are men whom we respect in the Leicester Secular Society, and we would not be uncivil to anyone who bears the name of Gimson.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

HOME RULE AND ROME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your paper very properly eschews politics; but it seems right to permit some discussion on the religious aspect of the Irish Question raised by your able contributor, Mr. O'Donovan. Most Freethinkers are Radicals, and many, like Mr. Morley, were Home Rulers long before the question was taken up by the Liberal party. Some few—very few, I think, but I know at least two—however, are Conservatives, placing Order before Liberty or Progress. Others, including such eminent Freethinkers as Huxley, Tyndall and Lecky, decline to follow Mr. Gladstone on this question, and would rather vote with the Conservatives than place Ireland in the hands of an Irish Parliament. Some again, and I confess myself of the number, though they deem Home Rule just and inevitable, feel much like a man who has to hand over a fortune to a relative, who, perhaps from its being too long withheld, has fallen upon bad times and bad company. The man can but doubt the issue. But the relative is clamorous, and will be satisfied with nothing short of his rights. The man can only say: "Take it freely, but I warn you new power will bring new responsibilities. Beware of those black parasites who have so long kept you poor, and who I fear only demand your rights to secure more for themselves."

Mr. O'Donovan sees what so many politicians and political journalists scrupulously put out of sight—that the religious and political questions are inextricably mixed. He has himself told us in burning words of the credulous submission of his countrymen to the priests. He sees hope in liberty. I heartily admire his bravery in propagating Freethought in Dublin, and I wish I could share his hopes of success. But Irish Freethinkers will have a long and uphill fight. I agree the Church will be too astute to directly persecute Protestants. But will it show the same tolerance to those who sap its authority and that of all religion? A College Green Parliament would have much to do. Will not the priests who control the votes, take care they control the expenditure? Will not Catholic schools thrive while others starve? Will not Parliament discover that the Protestants of Ulster can and must contribute the major portion of the expenses of the whole country? Will they not aim eventually not only at Catholic ascendancy, but at making Ireland an entirely Catholic nation? Prophecy is a gratuitous form of error, and I avoid it. I only ask for information. Mr. O'Donovan's views from the capital I have read with sincere pleasure, but I should also like to hear the opinions of Freethinkers in Ulster.

SAXON.

PROFANE JOKES.

Some one called a clergyman a fool. The latter threatened to complain to the bishop. "Do so," said the former, "and he will *comfirm you*."

"What did you see at church, grandfather?" asked Minnie after her first visit to the sanctuary. "I saw a man come in with his nightgown on, an' he was so 'shamed he hid his face in his hands a little while 'fore he dared to say a word."

"Say, Pathrick, whispered Jacobson to his Hibernian friend, "I vonder vot sort of man dot is at de odder end of de looncheounter?" "Begob," returned Pat, eyeing the stranger, "he musht be wan av thim new-fangled ducks called Eggnostics. A man that will ate bacon on a Froiday is nayther Jew nor Christian!"

A clergyman, mounted on a tall, lank, row-boned animal, asked a dirty urchin which was the nearer road to town. The boy said, "Who are you, old fellow?" The clergyman replied, "My son, I am a follower of the Lord." "A follower of the Lord, eh? Well, it makes mighty difference which road you take; you'll never catch Him with that horse."

SACRIFICES.—At first it is supposed that the spirits actually eat the food offered them. Soon, however, it would be observed that the animals sacrificed did not disappear; and the natural explanation would be that the spirit ate the spiritual part of the victim, leaving the grosser portion to his devout worshippers. Thus the Limboos, near Darjeeling, eat their sacrifices, dedicating, as they forcibly express it, "the life-breath to the gods, the flesh to ourselves."—*Sir John Lubbock, "Origin of Civilisation," p. 365. 1889.*

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, "Theosophy of the Day: its Autopsy and Obsequies," by an Orientalist."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Park Gates, 11.15, a lecture by Mr. Hunt. Social evening every Tuesday.

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. W. Heaford, "Some Objections to Christianity"; 3.15, at 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, members' general meeting.

Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson (closing lecture), "Rationalism."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Evolution in the Domain of Chemistry."

East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Why we Advocate Secularism."

Edmonton—Opposite the "Angel," 3, Mr. Sam. Standring, "God and Mammon."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Christ and Freethought."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone on the Creation Story."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Jesus and his Beliefs."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mrs. A. Besant, "Free Education, Shall we Compromise?"

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, Mr. Jesse Cocks, "The History of Freethought in Stratford"; 7, Mr. A. Dipper, "The Resurrection"; 8.30, music, etc.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Decline of Christianity." On Saturday (April 26) at "Duke of Ormonde," 13 Prince's Street, social meeting of members and friends.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Socialist speakers.

COUNTRY.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. M. Gass, "The Single Tax: Will it Solve the Labor Problem?"

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, Mr. H. Barkby, "Let the Slaves Unite."

Hull Branch—Cobden Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. J. Hooper, 10.30, "Bible Heroes"; 2.30, "Birth, Life, and Death of Christ"; 6.30, "The State Church, its Origin and Deeds."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—Mr. J. Clarke, M.A., 11, "The Religion of the Future"; 3, "Anthropomorphism"; 7, "The Childhood of Jesus."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, humorous and dramatic recitals by Mr. and Mrs. E. C. White. Free. On Friday, May 6, ball of the season, commence at 6.30; gents, 1s. 6d., ladies, 1s.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. R. J. Murray, "Bruno."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Woods, "Vegetarianism, a False Ism"; several prominent vegetarians likely to attend, and good discussion will follow.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, music, recitations, etc., by several friends.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, at 7, a lecture by Mr. Thos. Thompson.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — April 27, Reading. May 4 (morning), Westminster (evening), Woolwich; 11 (morning), Camberwell; 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25 (afternoon), Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

Tolman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 22 (evening), Woolwich; 29 (morning), Bethnal Green. July 6 (morning), Hyde Park; 13 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 27 (morning), Mile End Waste.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 27, Hull; 28, Grimsby. May 4, Nottingham.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 27, Hyde Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—May 4, Birmingham; 11, Hanley.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 18.] SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE ON THE CREATION STORY.

MR. GLADSTONE'S second article in defence of the Bible appears in the May number of *Good Words*. It deals with the Creation Story, a subject which, from the Christian point of view, is of the highest importance. This story stands at the very threshold of the Bible, and if it is a fiction it inevitably throws discredit on all that follows. But this is not all, nor even the worst. The story of Creation is inseparably connected with the story of the Fall. They stand or perish together. And if the Fall is to be regarded as a myth, what becomes of Christianity? The Christian scheme of salvation is unintelligible without the antecedent doctrine of the fall of man. It is the Garden of Eden which gives meaning to Gethsemane, the curse upon Adam and Eve which gives meaning to the tragedy of Calvary. Without the fall, and the ensuing curse, the Atonement is a baseless dogma, and the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection are but tremendous mistakes.

The Creation Story opens the first of the five books commonly thought to have been written by Moses, although, as Professor Max Müller says, no scholar believes anything of the kind (*Natural Religion*, p. 556). Mr. Gladstone himself, who disclaims any pretension to Biblical scholarship, does not venture to speak of Moses as an author. He designates the writer of the Creation Story as "the Mosaist or the Mosaic writer," and thus leaves the whole question of the date and authorship of the Book of Genesis to settle itself as it can. Nevertheless he speaks again and again of the Creation Story being a revelation to "primitive man." This is a very misleading phrase. Some readers will think it means Adam; or Cain, Abel, Seth and the rest of the first human family, according to the ethnology of Genesis. Others will think it means the family of Noah, and still others the Jews of the Exodus, while another class of readers will think of the "primitive man" of Darwinism, and wonder whether Mr. Gladstone fancies the Creation Story was "revealed" when our far off ancestors were dodging the mammoth and disputing snug quarters with cave bears and hyenas. It is difficult to believe that so acute a man as Mr. Gladstone did not catch a glimpse of this perplexity. We cannot help thinking he felt the phrase to be a very convenient one, as suggesting a good deal without affirming anything, and helping his argument without involving the necessity of defence. Accordingly he used it with the dexterity of a practised rhetorician.

Suggestion, however, was not enough; it had to be supported by something positive, for the antiquity of the Creation story is indispensable to Mr. Gladstone's argument. But the difficulties of such a theory are immense. Supposing the story to have been "revealed" to Moses, whether written down by him or transmitted orally, it is astonishing that not a mention of it occurs in the whole of the Jewish scriptures outside the Book of Genesis, with the single exception of the Fourth Commandment. This first piece of revelation, this primary message of the divine Father to his children, this record on which the whole institution of the Sabbath is said to have been based, was treated by Hebrew writers, century after century, with an unbroken conspiracy of silence. Such is apparently the fact, and it is too hard for flesh and blood to credit. Mr. Gladstone sees this, and he argues that "there are signs in subsequent portions of the volume that this tale of the Creation was regarded by the Hebrews as authoritative and important." But what are these "signs"? Surely they are the most marvellous "signs" that ever signified nothing. Mr. Gladstone finds them in Job xxxviii. and Psalms civ. and cxlviii. He discreetly refrains from quotation, and we will follow his example, though for a very different reason. We merely ask the candid reader to turn to those chapters, and see whether he can find the remotest allusion to the Creation story without putting on Mr. Gladstone's spectacles.

Mr. Gladstone may be a master of fence, but he cannot resist the pressure of facts. The Jews were never an inventive people, and it is now established beyond dispute that their cosmogony was borrowed. Some of it was the common possession of the Semitic people, but most of it was derived from Babylon, whence the Jews also took their weights and measures, their period of work and rest, and other basic elements of their post-exile civilisation. That something is due to the *shaping* of Hebrew writers we are far from disputing; but the Creation Story, the Fall, and even the Flood were all writ large in the stone records of mighty empires long before they were embodied in the Jewish scriptures by an hierarchy which was able to pass off new teachings as the voice of antiquity.

Not only does Mr. Gladstone fail to advance a single valid argument in favor of the Creation Story, but he practically treats it as a fiction. He remarked some time ago, in his discussion with Huxley, that the Story was not a treatise but a sermon. Since then he has been working out the line of defence, and he now discloses it in a state of perfection. "The conveyance of scientific instruction," he says, would not have been "a reasonable object for the Mosaic writer to pursue"—a statement with which we agree, for the Mosaic writer had none to convey. His object, it appears, was twofold. He did not say so, but apparently Mr. Gladstone has some occult information as to his intentions. First, he wished—or God wished through him—"to teach man his proper place in creation in relation to its several orders." Secondly, he wished to "make him know and feel what was the beautiful and noble home that he inhabited, and with what a fatherly and tender care Providence had prepared it for him to dwell in."

Let us examine these reasons. We will take the second first. The Mosaist's object—that is, if the story be inspired, God's object—was to show how the world had been prepared by the Heavenly

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Father as a dwelling place for his children. Now it seems to us that Mr. Gladstone's has lost all historic perspective in this statement. The earth is *at present* very largely made fit for man to live in, although, even in an old country like India, thousands of persons yearly fall victims to tigers and snakes. But so far as the earth *is* made fit, it is perfectly clear that man has himself done the work. He felled the forests, drained the swamps, tamed the buffaloes, broke the wild horse, domesticated the wolf, and bred sheep from a savage stock. The Genesaic story of the animals passing in meek review before Adam as the lord of creation, is a pretty picture, but a pure work of imagination. Primitive man was "monarch of all he surveyed" only while he looked upon his squaw and his offspring, and the rough walls of the natural cave, or artificial hole in the ground, where his highness lay sheltered from his prowling subjects, who were seeking to dine on his regal person. His faculties were sharpened through a wild and terrible struggle for existence, and finally he triumphed; but surely it is idle, in face of these facts, to talk of the "fatherly and tender care of Providence" in preparing his dwelling-place.

Even if the facts were otherwise, it is strange that God should have given this lesson as to his "fatherly and tender care" for his children to a few semi-savage and fanatical Jews, who kept the "revelation" strictly to themselves, and never imparted it to the mighty civilisations of Egypt, India, Phœnicia, Carthage, Persia, and Assyria, to say nothing of the more modern Greece and Rome.

But if the Mosaist's first object was unhappy, his second object was absurd. Man did not need a revelation to teach him "his proper place in creation." He did not require to be told that he was superior to fishes. Knowledge and vanity assured him that he was at the top of the scale, although his "dominion" was exceedingly precarious. When Ovid was versifying the old Pythagorean philosophy he naturally placed the creation of man at the end of the process.

> A creature of a more exalted kind
> Was wanting yet, and then was Man designed:
> Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,
> For empire formed, and fit to rule the rest.

We utterly dissent, therefore, from Mr. Gladstone's view that "primitive man" needed to or did receive "a conception, thoroughly faithful in broad outline, of what his Maker had been about on his behalf." Nor can we read without a smile his assertion that "the simplest phrases" were so necessary "that the Maker condescended "even to represent himself as resting" after his work. The Hebrew, we understand, really says that he "took breath." This rendering is a still more "simple phrase" than *resting*, and still more illustrates the condescension of the Maker.

Following out his theory, Mr. Gladstone regards the six days of creation, not as days of twenty-four hours, nor as geological periods, but as "Chapters in the History of the Creation." True, the text speaks of "evening and morning" in connection with every day, but that is only a rhetorical device to emphasise the distinction between the chapters; and just as day does not mean day, so evening and morning do not mean evening and morning. Mr. Gladstone, however, overlooks a very important point. Is there any evidence that the Jews ever looked upon the "days" of Creation in this light? Did they not understand the expression literally? Was it not the literal sense which gave its sanction to the fourth commandment? Are we to presume that God "condescended" to use "simple and familiar" language for the sake of a handful of ancient Jews, at the cost of misleading populous and more civilised nations in future ages, or was this a necessity of Almighty Wisdom?

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be continued.*)

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.

Christianity claims as its own all the progress and triumphs due to civilisation. A sufficient refutation is found in Abysinnia where Christianity has existed for over fifteen hundred years without advancing the people from semi-barbarism, because unaccompanied by those other circumstances to which progress is really due. But there is another way of disposing of the Christian claim. It is to examine the course of Christian history and see what has been actually its effects and its attitude towards science and civilisation.

For my part, I hold it as something more than a mere coincidence that the triumph of Christianity was followed by the irruption of the barbarians into the Roman Empire, and the decline of the old Roman civilisation. There are good reasons for holding it mainly responsible for these calamities. No doubt other causes contributed to the result. Constantine in setting up his capital in the East left Rome in the hands of subordinates and it tended to become little more than an outlying province of the empire. But the main cause of the fall of Rome was the decline of the Roman spirit of civic virtue and patriotism. And this had been sapped by Christianity, which turned men's thoughts from the things of the world and pointed them to the city of God instead of to the city of Rome.

Embraced by slaves Christianity directed their thoughts to realms above, leaving them here condemned to their hell on earth, their chains rivetted by iron religious terror. This is its condemnation. Jesus in a similar spirit to Mohammed had promised his followers that no man that left house, or wife, or brethren, or parents, or children for the Kingdom of God's shall who shall not receive manifold more in this time as well as eternal life in the world to come. But the promise was never implemented here on earth. Slavery lasted in Europe till eight hundred years after Constantine and in America until our own time. Take the important point of law. Hear the testimony of Lecky in his *History of European Morals* (vol ii., 44): "Indeed the more carefully the Christian legislation of the empire is examined, and the more fully it is compared with what had been done under the influence of Stoicism by the Pagan legislators, the more evident, I think, it will appear that the golden age of Roman law was not Christian but Pagan . . . In no respect is the greatness of the Stoic philosophers more conspicuous than in the contrast between the gigantic steps of legal reform made in a few years under their influence, and the almost insignificant steps taken when Christianity had obtained an ascendancy in the empire, not to speak of the long period of decreptitude that followed."

The attitude of Christianity towards Pagan literature was one of complete hostility. The Fathers exhorted the faithful to avoid all contact with Pagan culture, St. Antony refused when a boy to learn letters because it would bring him into two great intercourse with other lads. Under Theophilus, Primate of Alexandria, the magnificent library of the Serapion was destroyed by the monks, and Hypatia was hounded to death by St. Cyril. The fourth General Council of Carthage forbade the reading of all Pagan books, and Mosheim records that the most powerful party in the Church "considered learning and especially philosophical learning as injurious, and even destructive to true piety and goodliness." The burning of heretical works was a natural corollary to the persecution of the heretics themselves.

Protestants never realise how largely early Christianity was a monkish system finding its natural expression in retirement from a world which it believed was devoted to wickedness and would come to a speedy end. Consider the effect of numbers of

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the most earnest and devoted persons, who should have been productive and reproductive citizens leading lives of sterility and inactivity, saving, as they thought, their own souls, utterly regardless of the State. The ascetic, anti-worldly spirit was part and parcel of Christianity as at first promulgated. The attempt to make the best of both worlds, now so generally promulgated by modern Christians would have been rejected by those of the primitive faith as a device of the evil one. Genuine Christianity was tried during the first centuries, and its result was the breakdown of civilisation and the night of the Dark Ages. J. M. Wheeler.

THE IRISH SOUL MARKET.

To the Freethinker the existence of such a thing as a market for "souls" is a fact which, in the abstract, is calculated to excite merriment, but which, in the concrete, excites nothing but feelings of pity and disgust. It is due, perhaps, to the peculiar fancy of the Irish people for religion that we are able to maintain in Dublin a very active "soul" market indeed. It is true that people do not go about announcing "souls to sell"; and it is also true that there is no place yet that puts out the sign "Souls, damaged and sound, purchased here." But the market exists all the same, and the term "soul traffic" is a recognised word whose meaning everybody knows and understands.

The Irish "soul-hawkers" have their head-quarters in Dublin, but have branches throughout the country, chiefly in the midland counties and in the west. They are altogether Protestant, of some kind or other, as the Catholics do not engage in this sort of business, probably because of the fact that there are no poor Protestants

> "To sell their sowls
> For penny rowls,"

or for any other species of reward. The trade is in the hands of those Protestant old women, of both sexes, with more money than sense, and more bigotry than both. These subscribe their coins freely for the purchase of Catholic "souls" of a juvenile order, and for the support of the "soul" cases, or bodies, in orphanages, when the purchases are duly effected. Attention is also devoted to bribing adult Catholics into deserting their faith, and to circulating the Bible as broadcast as can be managed by paid, but very often dissolute agents. For the purchased "souls" I think that the bargain is a good one, for the bartered ones have a chance of enjoying life in a manner more comfortable than they otherwise could ever hope to experience. They become mean "cusses," however, for their training includes the development in their minds of the most intense hatred of everything Catholic, which is as different as possible from the hatred of the Freethinker for all religions, Catholic and non-Catholic alike.

These holy "soul" seekers are ghouls after a fashion. They go about by stealth, and ply their despicable trade in holes and corners, usually of an unsavory reputation. They penetrate into the slums of the city where the Catholic poor literally starve and rot, unforgotten and uncared for; and by tempting offers of coin they purchase the wretched offspring of wretched parents who cast them off in secret to the orphanages, or "Birds' Nests," while the parents who sold their little ones enjoy a square meal, or perhaps a square "drunk" on the proceeds. In case the religion of the denizens of the slums is too powerful for even starving cupidity, the "soul" merchants go their way and leave the starving wretches to rot away unpitied and unrelieved. It is "souls" they are after, and if no "souls" are to be had, then the bodies must manage to get along without the perverters' aid.

I don't know after all whether I was right in saying just now that there is something in this business to excite merriment, even from the abstract point of view. On second thoughts I am more inclined to say that it is altogether a dirty, devilish business, repulsive to the manly feelings of anybody with more than a mustard-seed order of mind. To contemplate these ghouls hovering round the fœtid dens in which the slummers of Dublin drag out their poor lives, is almost as sickening to me as to think of the vultures hovering over the Indian Towers of Silence in wait for the Parsee dead. That religious bigotry should descend to such depths makes one at times almost despair of human nature. The only redeeming feature is the comparatively better fate of the poor bartered ones. To leave the crowded, unhealthy homes, to depart from the sinks of filth and immorality, and to live henceforth amid wholesome air and wholesome, if mentally dark and bigoted, surroundings, are prospects after all that are alluring, if we put into the background the contemptible motives of the proselytisers.

The slums where the "soul" catchers ply their trade are places that it is by no means pleasant to visit. In a poor city it is inevitable that the slums should be horribly overcrowded. One half of the population of Dublin, in fact, live in a room-and-a-half for every seven individuals! Christian landlords take high rents from the odious dens in these slums; church bells innumerable clang away right in their midst everyday, and especially on Sunday; crowds of ragged dirty Catholic wretches come out of their holes on the Sabbath and piously go to thank God for his mercies to them, instead of to curse him if it was he who sent them into the world; and smug clergymen preach to them, and tell them, "blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." All very fine, indeed; but it strikes a person that *these* are queer folk to fill a heaven with! The neglected Catholic poor are left to their fate by the priests and the good Catholics and Protestants who extract rents from them; and they go on producing children, if they do nothing else, acting under the ruinous belief that God never sends mouths into the world without sending something also to fill them with. Yes; but this being that sends plenty of food to feed all, *is not able to secure a fair division of it.* But to return to the degraded denizens of the Dublin slums. I have said that they are allowed to rot in their filthy dens neglected and forgotten. Alas! it is but too true. The Catholic "soul" curers are too busy about the "souls" of those who can pay, to care for the "souls" or bodies of those who cannot.

It is only when the proselytisers are at work, or when they have bargains perfected, that the "spiritual" directors of the poor come on the scene. Besotted parents, when the money received for their offspring is spent, repent, and go with their tale of woe to their clergy. Then great efforts are made to secure the lost ones. There are police-court proceedings and High Court of Justice proceedings to compel the purchasers to give up what they have bought, and in these proceedings more money is squandered than would keep the poor people concerned in comparative luxury all their lives. But not a penny was forthcoming until the immortal "soul" of the child of the slums was endangered. There are many obstacles put in the way of these pious rescuers of lost "souls." The purchased ones are spirited away from orphanage to orphanage, and it is no easy matter to discover who is the proper person to direct a *Habeas Corpus* writ to. Sometimes the inmates of the orphanages are stolen away, usually by pious relatives who never cared a pin for them until their "souls" were endangered. To provide for the rescued ones, there are "homes" kept by Catholic nuns, and in connection with these it is on record that people have sold their children to the Protestants

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and directed them to afterwards escape to the Catholic "homes," to which they could not gain admission otherwise.

There are many amusing episodes in the tragi-comical record of this "soul" bartering business. Of these I may speak on some other occasion. For the present it must suffice to draw attention to as degrading an institution as ever existed under the cloak of the insane thing called religion.

J. O'Donovan.

THE CHAMPION MASHER.

Tune—"St. Patrick was a Gentleman."

King Solomon was a gay young spark
As ever maiden courted,
He'd wives enough to fill the ark
From foreign lands imported;
There were Moabites and Ammonites
And fair Hittite princesses,
Zidonians and sweet Edomites,
To share his fond caresses.

But still the wise king wanted more
To grace his high position,
So concubines some fifteen score
He kept up in addition;
He asked the Lord to send him wit,
And, we are told, received it;
But were it not for "Holy Writ"
We scarce could have believed it.

Full seven hundred wives he had
Besides those scores of "others";
'Twould surely drive a sane man mad
To keep a thousand mothers.
Think how he was aroused each night
To find some squaller's bottle!
No wonder sometimes he got tight—
How *could* he be teetotal?

With half a thousand boys to cane
And tend their education,
What wonder he called pleasures vain
And every joy vexation;
Then think upon their boots and shoes,
And dresses for each daughter;
And say what saint would scoff at booze
And pin his faith on water?

T. Clark.

HOSPITALS BEFORE CHRIST.

The first real hospital was one situated at Epidaurus, and dedicated to Æsculapius. This hospital was in full working order five hundred years before Christ. It consisted not only of a general hospital, but of two special hospitals in addition. The Temple proper contained accommodation for ordinary or acute cases, and also a hydropathic establishment. In separate buildings were a lying-in hospital and a chronic hospital, and to the latter the aged and infirm, and those believed to be *in articulo mortis*, were admitted. The priests of Saturn in Egypt treated people for lunacy 1500 years before Christ. This last fact is important, because we find that under them lunacy was considered as a disease not to be repressed, but as one to be overcome by kindness and skilled treatment, and the temples of Saturn combined much that is now to be met with in our best lunatic asylums. These hospitals and asylums were founded on the pay principle, for no one who resorted to them had so little self-respect as to desire to obtain free medical relief, and all took care to compensate those at whose hands they received treatment and benefit. There were home hospitals at Rome 250 years before Christ, called Tabernæ Medicæ, which at first only contained consulting rooms, where the physician used to see out-patients on payment. After experience it was found that there were many cases that could be better treated if they were constantly under observation. So rooms were built for the reception of in-patients as annexes to the Tabernæ, where paying patients were admitted and treated successfully. This is a very interesting point, because these Tabernæ included all the branches of our present hospitals—*i.e.*, an out-patient department, an in-patient department, consulting rooms, and hospital accommodation for paying patients; but all those who attended—*i.e.*, both the in-patients and out-patients—had to pay for the treatment they received.—*The Hospital.*

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"Religion," says Louise Michel, "does not interest me. I feel no animosity. I simply do not care for it." Louise's animosity is reserved for the rich. She does not seem to see that religion is at the bottom of the misery that nearly drives her mad.

The *Worcestershire Echo* finds an argument for Christianity in Joseph Merrick, "the elephant man" who died recently at the London Hospital. Poor Merrick is said to have been so hideous that seeing him men turned sick with loathing, and woman fainted, so that he hardly dared to venture abroad even by night. Exhibited in an East-end show, his visitors commonly enough shrieked and ran out as soon as the curtain was drawn. By the kindness of Mr. Treves, one of the surgeons of the London Hospital, he was taken to that institution, where a special room was built for him in a remote wing of the building. The story, to us, is another illustration that in human science and human sympathy lies the only providence for man.

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The Rev. Horace Elliott inquires in the *Church Times* "why so few men are seen in the majority of our churches," and finds the disparity in their numbers most alarming. Is it not largely because men have outgrown the creeds and cannot be caught by the emotional fervor which attracts so many women?

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Louisville is to publicly "thanksgive" for the tornado. If God spares us a calamity we publicly thank him; if he visits it upon us, all the more we thank him. In the latter case it brings bereavement to the Church and is worth to

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priestcraft all it costs the stricken. Hence these thanks.—*Ironclad Age.*

The Rev. F. A. Gace, vicar of St. Barling, Essex, is a sensitive gentleman. He described Nonconformists as heretics, Atheists, and idolators, and in return a Nonconformist, Mr. Lockwood, called him a bigot and likened him to a mad bull. This induced the reverend gentleman to bring an action for libel, but the jury found for the defendant with cost. No doubt Mr. Gace will be more careful in future, and commend his enemies to the wrath of the Lord of Hosts.

James Rae, an elder and session clerk in Rychill United Presbyterian Church, Dundee, committed suicide through financial difficulties—not through Atheism, Mr. Talmage.

W. E. Reid, the spiritist medium who conducted a spiritual post-office and pretended to give replies from spirits to letters sent to him, has been tried and found guilty of using the United States mails for purposes of fraud.

The Rev. Thomas Smith, residing near Shrewsbury, fell down dead after addressing a meeting of the Church of England Working Men's Protestant Union. Catholics may deem this "a judgment." as it would be generally interpreted in the case of a Freethought lecturer.

The striking gear of the clock of St. Peter's Church, Colchester, weighing about half a ton, dropped from the tower on Sunday, and fell in the porch, through which some people had passed some few minutes earlier. Providence saved them, but considerably damaged the church entrance.

Christ Schweinfurth, the new Messiah at Rockford, Illinois, seems to prefer travelling on the well-used lines of religious fanaticism rather than to startle the world by originality. His confession of faith is: first, to acknowledge him as the only savior; second, to promise perfect obedience; third, to deny yourself, which means give up money, lands and family to him, receiving in return promises of post-mortem value. Quite the same old game, unaltered since the days of the apostles!

At Demerara the Rev. Mr. Kelshall, Wesleyan minister, has raised a commotion by his denunciations of a native religious dance known as the "Long Tom Dance." Formerly the ministers used to recognise the ancient institution of Long Tom, and join in if they could find a comely partner. Mr. Kelshall is more Puritanical, though it may be doubted if the Long Tom dance is anyway as objectionable as the dance of David before the ark of the Lord, clad only in a linen ephod, much to the disgust of one of his wives.

A German photographer was arrested at Constantinople for breaking the Koran law against idolatry by making likenesses. But for his nationality he would have been condemned to death; as it is he has to leave the city of the faithful.

The committee of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, explain that they advertise for a nurse who must be a member of the Church of England, because they already have a chaplain of that persuasion. and the nurses are expected to attend his services. Yet they appeal for subscriptions to all the community.

England pays £300 a year for an Anglican chaplain at Vienna. This gentleman is supposed to provide for the spiritual wants of the English residents in that city. We have no objection to his doing so, but they should pay for their own edification. In religious matters, at any rate, John Bull is about the biggest fool in creation. He pays, and pays, and pays, and is positively humiliated when the leeches don't suck with all their might.

A vehement discussion is going on as to whether Christ quoted from the Old Testament according to the knowledge of his time, or made use of his omniscience. Canon Liddon declares in favour of Christ's absolute infallibility. But how can that be sustained? The Gospel says he *increased* in *wisdom* as well as in stature, and increasing in wisdom is not the mark of an infallible being.

The *Christian World* gives a summary of Mr. Gladstone's article on Creation, but does not venture on a word of criticism. In such a case it finds discretion the better part of valor.

The *Western Morning News* thinks that "Mr. Bradlaugh was not very far wrong when, on resigning his official position among the Secularists, he warned them that the next struggle would be with Rome." Our contemporary may find that Mr. Bradlaugh is right on many other matters.

Cardinal Manning is appealing for fresh funds to support a training college for his clergy. He says that the rapid spread of Catholicism causes a demand for more priests than can at present be supplied. It appears that the Irish priests are gradually being drafted from London and their places taken by English priests who have nearly all come over from the Anglican Church. Freethinkers should lay these facts to heart, and brace themselves for the coming struggle.

The Rev. J. Mc Neill, who is described as an "eagle" in the *Methodist Times*, while holding forth in the Central Hall had occasion to quote from the Psalms. He began, "David said." and then, pulling himself up, remarked, "In these critical days we may not say that David wrote the Psalms. We will therefore say 'The man who wrote the Psalms said.' The critics can't put us out of that." Yes they can, though. The Psalms were written by several hands, and Mr. McNeill must say "The *men* who wrote the Psalms."

Bigotry at Woolwich is discriminating. The Assembly Rooms were refused for Mr. Foote's recent lecture, but they have been let for the Rev. Hugh R. Baker's reply. We hope the reverend gentleman is proud of his co-religionists.

The Woolwich friends asked Mr. Foote to come and oppose Mr. Baker, but they will see from his engagement list that he was lecturing that evening at Milton Hall. Mr. Foote will be happy to meet Mr. Baker in a set debate.

Speaking at Islington, the Rev. T. E. Slater, an Indian missionary, said that "the hill tribes, who represent the lowest scale of civilisation in India, are very simple people, and much more likely to receive the Gospel than the higher races." What a splendid tribute to the Gospel! It cannot convert the higher races, but it gets on very well with the lower races and *simple* people. Yes, and the simpler the better.

Mr. Slater wound up with a skilful appeal for support for the missionaries. Unless they made haste, he said, India would be "over-run by scepticism, rationalism, and deism." Evidently it is a stiff race between God Almighty and his own creatures. Of course this sounds blasphemous, but Mr. Slater is responsible for it. For our part, we should bet three to one on Rationalism. When the subtle Hindoo gets rid of his old religion, he doesn't usually take another not half as fascinating. He goes right over to Freethought.

Canon Cheyne asks us to interpret the sayings of Christ "with the breadth conceded to poetry." One of them, at any rate, namely that about eunuchs, is broad enough already.

Mr. Bellamy's Socialist romance, *Looking Backward*, being popular, a clergyman advertised a discourse with this title. His congregation was treated to a sermon on Lot's wife.

The myth of Lot's wife, by the way, doubtless arose from natural salt pillars near the Dead Sea, Dean Stanley says: "A great mass of legends and exaggerations, partly the cause and partly the result of the old belief that the cities were buried in the Dead Sea, has been gradually removed in recent years."

Now traveller after traveller visits the Dead Sea region, but nearly all omit to follow the injunction of Jesus to "Remember Lot's wife." They seem to think it best to forget her. The story is such a palpable legend that no modern man of repute will venture to endorse it, though it

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and directed them to afterwards escape to the Catholic "homes," to which they could not gain admission otherwise.

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But still the wise king wanted more
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So concubines some fifteen score
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But were it not for "Holy Writ"
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Full seven hundred wives he had
Besides those scores of "others";
'Twould surely drive a sane man mad
To keep a thousand mothers.
Think how he was aroused each night
To find some squaller's bottle!
No wonder sometimes he got tight—
How *could* he be teetotal?

With half a thousand boys to cane
And tend their education,
What wonder he called pleasures vain
And every joy vexation;
Then think upon their boots and shoes,
And dresses for each daughter;
And say what saint would scoff at booze
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How these Christians love each other! The *Nonconformist* accuses the country clergy of boycotting Dissenters, and the Anti-Liberation Society, in its leaflet No. xvi., entitled "Dissenting Mendicity," accuses the Dissenters of turning their chapels into palaces of Mammon, and asserts that "ethical novelty was never more industriously pursued than it is in our day in the chapels of our own modern Separatists."

The enterprising New York *World* took a census of the number of children in 300 families in Fifth Avenue, the fashionable quarter where Colonel Ingersoll resides, and found that there were 91 children under 10 years of age, and six children was the total number born within the last twelve months. It also took a census of 300 families in Cherry Hill, the lowest Irish quarter, and found 660 children under 10, and 111 born within the past year. There is more food for meditation in these figures than in any sermon we ever heard.

Louisville is to publicly "thanksgive" for the tornado. If God spares us a calamity we publicly thank him; if he visits it upon us, all the more we thank him. In the latter case it brings bereavement to the Church and is worth to

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priestcraft all it costs the stricken. Hence these thanks.—*Ironclad Age.*

The Rev. F. A. Gace, vicar of St. Barling, Essex, is a sensitive gentleman. He described Nonconformists as heretics, Atheists, and idolators, and in return a Nonconformist, Mr. Lockwood, called him a bigot and likened him to a mad bull. This induced the reverend gentleman to bring an action for libel, but the jury found for the defendant with cost. No doubt Mr. Gace will be more careful in future, and commend his enemies to the wrath of the Lord of Hosts.

James Rae, an elder and session clerk in Rychill United Presbyterian Church, Dundee, committed suicide through financial difficulties—not through Atheism, Mr. Talmage.

W. E. Reid, the spiritist medium who conducted a spiritual post-office and pretended to give replies from spirits to letters sent to him, has been tried and found guilty of using the United States mails for purposes of fraud.

The Rev. Thomas Smith, residing near Shrewsbury, fell down dead after addressing a meeting of the Church of England Working Men's Protestant Union. Catholics may deem this "a judgment," as it would be generally interpreted in the case of a Freethought lecturer.

The striking gear of the clock of St. Peter's Church, Colchester, weighing about half a ton, dropped from the tower on Sunday, and fell in the porch, through which some people had passed some few minutes earlier. Providence saved them, but considerably damaged the church entrance.

Christ Schweinfurth, the new Messiah at Rockford, Illinois, seems to prefer travelling on the well-used lines of religious fanaticism rather than to startle the world by originality. His confession of faith is: first, to acknowledge him as the only savior; second, to promise perfect obedience; third, to deny yourself, which means give up money, lands and family to him, receiving in return promises of post-mortem value. Quite the same old game, unaltered since the days of the apostles!

At Demerara the Rev. Mr. Kelshall, Wesleyan minister, has raised a commotion by his denunciations of a native religious dance known as the "Long Tom Dance." Formerly the ministers used to recognise the ancient institution of Long Tom, and join in if they could find a comely partner. Mr. Kelshall is more Puritanical, though it may be doubted if the Long Tom dance is anyway as objectionable as the dance of David before the ark of the Lord, clad only in a linen ephod, much to the disgust of one of his wives.

A German photographer was arrested at Constantinople for breaking the Koran law against idolatry by making likenesses. But for his nationality he would have been condemned to death; as it is he has to leave the city of the faithful.

The committee of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, explain that they advertise for a nurse who must be a member of the Church of England, because they already have a chaplain of that persuasion, and the nurses are expected to attend his services. Yet they appeal for subscriptions to all the community.

England pays £300 a year for an Anglican chaplain at Vienna. This gentleman is supposed to provide for the spiritual wants of the English residents in that city. We have no objection to his doing so, but they should pay for their own edification. In religious matters, at any rate, John Bull is about the biggest fool in creation. He pays, and pays, and pays, and is positively humiliated when the leeches don't suck with all their might.

A vehement discussion is going on as to whether Christ quoted from the Old Testament according to the knowledge of his time, or made use of his omniscience. Canon Liddon declares in favour of Christ's absolute infallibility. But how can that be sustained? The Gospel says he *increased* in *wisdom* as well as in stature, and increasing in wisdom is not the mark of an infallible being.

The *Christian World* gives a summary of Mr. Gladstone's article on Creation, but does not venture on a word of criticism. In such a case it finds discretion the better part of valor.

The *Western Morning News* thinks that "Mr. Bradlaugh was not very far wrong when, on resigning his official position among the Secularists, he warned them that the next struggle would be with Rome." Our contemporary may find that Mr. Bradlaugh is right on many other matters.

Cardinal Manning is appealing for fresh funds to support a training college for his clergy. He says that the rapid spread of Catholicism causes a demand for more priests than can at present be supplied. It appears that the Irish priests are gradually being drafted from London and their places taken by English priests who have nearly all come over from the Anglican Church. Freethinkers should lay these facts to heart, and brace themselves for the coming struggle.

The Rev. J. Mc Neill, who is described as an "eagle" in the *Methodist Times*, while holding forth in the Central Hall had occasion to quote from the Psalms. He began, "David said." and then, pulling himself up, remarked, "In these critical days we may not say that David wrote the Psalms. We will therefore say 'The man who wrote the Psalms said.' The critics can't put us out of that." Yes they can, though. The Psalms were written by several hands, and Mr. McNeill must say "The *men* who wrote the Psalms."

Bigotry at Woolwich is discriminating. The Assembly Rooms were refused for Mr. Foote's recent lecture, but they have been let for the Rev. Hugh R. Baker's reply. We hope the reverend gentleman is proud of his co-religionists.

The Woolwich friends asked Mr. Foote to come and oppose Mr. Baker, but they will see from his engagement list that he was lecturing that evening at Milton Hall. Mr. Foote will be happy to meet Mr. Baker in a set debate.

Speaking at Islington, the Rev. T. E. Slater, an Indian missionary, said that "the hill tribes, who represent the lowest scale of civilisation in India, are very simple people, and much more likely to receive the Gospel than the higher races." What a splendid tribute to the Gospel! It cannot convert the higher races, but it gets on very well with the lower races and *simple* people. Yes, and the simpler the better.

Mr. Slater wound up with a skilful appeal for support for the missionaries. Unless they made haste, he said, India would be "over-run by scepticism, rationalism, and deism." Evidently it is a stiff race between God Almighty and his own creatures. Of course this sounds blasphemous, but Mr. Slater is responsible for it. For our part, we should bet three to one on Rationalism. When the subtle Hindoo gets rid of his old religion, he doesn't usually take another not half as fascinating. He goes right over to Freethought.

Canon Cheyne asks us to interpret the sayings of Christ "with the breadth conceded to poetry." One of them, at any rate, namely that about eunuchs, is broad enough already.

Mr. Bellamy's Socialist romance, *Looking Backward*, being popular, a clergyman advertised a discourse with this title. His congregation was treated to a sermon on Lot's wife.

The myth of Lot's wife, by the way, doubtless arose from natural salt pillars near the Dead Sea, Dean Stanley says: "A great mass of legends and exaggerations, partly the cause and partly the result of the old belief that the cities were buried in the Dead Sea, has been gradually removed in recent years."

Now traveller after traveller visits the Dead Sea region, but nearly all omit to follow the injunction of Jesus to "Remember Lot's wife." They seem to think it best to forget her. The story is such a palpable legend that no modern man of repute will venture to endorse it, though it

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is not only related in holy scriptures but was appealed to by Jesus and by many of the fathers of the Church.

The German Reichstag consists of 212 who class themselves as evangelicals, but who vary in every shade of Protestant belief; 147 Catholics, who vote and act together, 3 Reformed Catholics, 5 Jews and 20 Freethinkers. They have sanctioned the abrogation of the Law of 1874, which rendered priests liable to banishment for non-compliance with laws of the State. This shows what the Catholics can do by holding together.

Have the Blasphemy Laws no terror for the editor of the *Western Figaro?* The number for April 25 gives three illustrations of "Adam and Eve—a tragedy." Act I., The Forbidden Fruit, depicts a loving pair of yokels munching an apple while seated on a rail; Act II. illustrates The Fall, and Act III. The Expulsion, the farmer and his dog appearing on the scene.

The Rev. H. Lloyd Jones, having received notice to terminate his services at the Ulverstone Free Church, unburdened his mind on the subject of the duties of deacons and other matters during his sermon last Sunday. At the conclusion of his discourse the chairman of the church committee jumped up and characterised the remarks of Mr. Jones as an unwarrantable and uncalled-for personal attack on members of the committee. A regular squabble ensued in the course of which an accusation of falsehood was made against the pastor, who had to remind his congregation that they were not at a political meeting.

A conference of Wesleyan churches in New York State has condemned dancing, theatre-going, and card-playing as inconsistent with church membership. These sour fanatics are clearly of opinion that Shakespeare is incompatible with salvation, that whist means woe, and dancing damnation.

Our pious contemporary, the *Christian Commonwealth*, has a "Mental Troubles Column," in which we see a letter from "G. A. G.," a young fellow of eighteen who has attended atheistical lectures, read Paine's *Age of Reason*, "likewise productions of Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, and Foote," and finds himself drifting into utter disbelief. Our advice to him would be "Go on thinking for yourself, form your own convictions, and hold by them honestly." But very different advice is tendered to him by the Christian editor. He gases about the flowers smelling of God, and about God's name being written across the midnight sky. We fear, if "G A. G." doesn't get stronger advice from his Christian guide, philosopher, and friend, he will become "a lost soul."

The Duke of Edinburgh rubbed shoulders on Monday with the Archbishop of Canterbury and that pattern of sober piety, Sir R. N. Fowler, M.P. The Duke took the chair at the annual meeting of the "Missions to Seamen," and pleaded for bigger subscriptions. He took occasion to refer to the good work of Miss Weston at Portsmouth, and said that much good was done in the Royal Navy by such religious agencies. But of course he forgot to say that ladies like Miss Weston are allowed a free run in the service, as though they were a Government department, while every kind of petty tyranny is practised to prevent the spread of Freethought.

Poor Bishop Temple! The public really ought to present him with a gross of soft pocket-handkerchiefs to wipe his eyes with. Recently he was addressing a meeting and the poor man wept in public. "People," he said, "tell me I am overworked, but when I think of my poor, overworked clergy——" Here his lordship broke down and sobbed like a child. How pathetic! But we did not read that his lordship sobbed over the sufferings of the poor folk during the dockers' strike. He reserves his tears for his clergy, whose bread is assured, and the poorest of whom live in some degree of comfort.

Some of Bishop Temple's friends, it appears, tell him he is overworked. Have any of them told him he is overpaid?

The Rev. John Owen, a Welshman, is the new president of the Baptist Union. In his address to that body he boasted that the Welsh preachers had educated the people and rescued them from "infidelity and irreligion." But we rather fancy the task was a very simple one, for the Welsh people, owing to their comparative seclusion and their separate language, have been little under the influence of the scepticism which has pervaded the rest of Great Britain. Scientists and philosophers do not write in Welsh, and thus the inhabitants of the Principality have been left to the mercies of their ministers, who are looked upon as little God Almighties.

The Baptist President sees that what is true of Wales is far from true of England. "While admitting," the *Daily News* report says, "that the influence of the Christian ministry was greater to-day than it ever was, he admitted that the leaders in science and literature, as also the laboring population in great towns, were but little affected." For our part, we think the religious fanaticism of the Welsh people—which, by the way, is gradually breaking down—is a poor offset to the indifference of the working population of England, and especially to the indifference of "the leaders in science and literature."

Colonel Saunderson, the famous Orangeman, says "My chief pleasure of London is found in the Marylebone Presbyterian Church and the Book of Job." Well now, truth *is* strange, as Byron said—stranger than fiction. Who would have thought the heavy wit of the Irish Tory party was nourished on the Book of Job? Still, we expect he will appreciate the Book of Job even more when Home Rule is carried.

There are "ructions" at Reading. It has been discovered that the Rev. J. M. Guilding has been carrying on Confession in St. Laurence's parish church for many years. The ladies—of course the confessing souls are all of the fair sex—pour their sins into the holy ears of the man of God at the altar, the parish clerk being in the building but out of hearing. This gentleman acts as "gooseberry" to save the proprieties. Nevertheless the Reading folk don't like it, and many members of Mr. Guilding's congregation are indignant. They ought to bear in mind, however, that the Prayer Book sanctions confession, and recognises the power of the minister to "declare and pronounce to his [God's] people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins."

Mr. Gladstone recently said that England will not have discharged her debt to India until she has given her the Gospel in all the length and breadth of the Empire. This is a remarkable "New Way to Pay Old Debts," and will hardly be relished by the Hindoos, who don't want our Christianity, but do want our civilisation.

Mr. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock" does not commend itself to "Schoolmaster," who writes in the *Sporting Chronicle* that he and most of his colleagues "feel that the time spent on these old Scripture stories is literally wasted." He thinks the English rebellion against King Charles is of more importance to English boys than the Rebellion of David against Saul. So does every man with a grain of sense in his noddle.

Some of the London papers are making strange discoveries about Mr. Bradlaugh. The *Pall Mall Gazette* finds that his Atheism was "accidental," while, according to the *Speaker*, his reply to Cunninghame Graham showed "how much has been gained by diverting his activity from Secularist agitation to political and economical matters." If we know anything of Mr. Bradlaugh he will smile at both these utterances.

Hugh Price Hughes has got into hot water with the Wesleyan missionaries in India by his statements in the *Church Times* as to their high living and little doing. At a recent meeting on the subject he said he had no wish to shirk any inquiry and would welcome the fullest investigation. Why does he not take the same position in reference to the Converted Atheist?

Dr. Parker seems to have had an eye on the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes when he said at the meeting of the Congregational Union that religious journalism was the hope of the Devil. It is not so very long since Dr. Parker had a journal of his own.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 4, Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne; at 11, "The Follies of Theosophy: a Reply to Mrs. Besant"; at 3, "A Defence of Atheism: a Reply to the Rev. Walter Walsh"; at 7, "An Hour with the Devil."

Monday, May 5, North Shields.
Tuesday, May 6, Stockton.
Thursday, May 8, Darlington.
Friday, May 9, Oxhill.

May 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science, London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. SIMPSON.—Jokes are always welcome. We like to have a good stock in hand.

W. WARRY.—We are not responsible for the statements of the debaters, whose speeches were fairly reported in our columns. If you want Mr. Robertson's authority for any statement, you should apply to him direct. Address, 63 Fleet Street, London, E.C.

TOLEMAN-GARNER.—We are sorry to hear of your health being impaired and hope you will soon recover.

J. PARTRIDGE.—The date is booked.

C. BUSSIE.—We are extremely pleased to hear from you after so many years, and shall be very happy to see you again if you will send us your address. We value your congratulations.

No. 12.—Thanks for the cuttings. Glad to see you are still "pegging away."

J. COOKE writes: "I have just finished the *Essence of Religion*, and found it very valuable. I hope you will bring out more of Feuerbach's works." This correspondent is informed that a copy of the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* shall be sent as desired.

J. BURRELL.—Yes, we know Mr. Taylor personally, and can appreciate the Branch's loss.

W. LEYS.—Try to get the reverend gentleman, or one of his colleagues, to debate publicly with Mr. Foote.

T. J. MOORE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We hope the Branch will remind Mr. Baker of the bigotry of his "friends."

J. SMALL.—Please send orders for literature to Mr. Forder in future.

H. NICHOLSON.—Mr. Foote is always ready to meet any representative Christian in public debate.

R. NICHOLLS.—Thanks for the N. S. S. subscription and your annual promise. Business is fairly good, and the circulation of this journal is improving. We have just set up our own composing room.

A. WHEELER.—We have already said that Guide Notices must be sent weekly. We cannot undertake to file lecture programmes.

H. HURRELL.—Pleased to hear you were delighted with our reply to Gladstone on Sunday.

J. SLYFIELD.—Cuttings are always handy.

A. F. WALDEN.—There is something in what you say. Your letter shall be considered.

W. WHEELER.—The statute against Blasphemy has never been enforced, perhaps because it was drawn too stringently. All prosecutions have been under the Common Law. We were prosecuted for "bringing the Holy Scriptures and the Christian Religion into disbelief and contempt." Legacies to Secular Societies are invalid. The Manchester friends lost £500 left by the late Mr. Spencer only a few years ago.

CIVIS.—The versification is rather stiff in the joints. Mr. Foote is quite willing to visit Brighton.

W. BOWDEN.—Mr. Foote's lectures are not reported in any paper.

H. CALASCA.—Thanks for the report.

BUSCO LA VERDAD.—Glad to hear you so enjoy the *Freethinker*, and that it so successfully runs the gauntlet of the Russian censorship. You are right. Our contributor was slightly mistaken. Castelar is hardly a Freethinker. We did not know that Sagasta was one. The office of *Las Dominicales* is 5 Cueva, Madrid.

F. SMITH.—Dr. Kinns's book is hardly worth reading, but there is no harm in your seeing for yourself.

H. W. BOLTON.—Mr. Foote did not write the article you refer to. He has no time for any writing outside the Freethought cause, and for years he has written nothing but what bore his name. We shall deal with the *Lux Mundi* volume when we have done with Mr. Gladstone.

B. T. HALL, political secretary of the Hatcham Liberal Club, who is himself a Secularist, desires it to be known that he has nothing to do with the refusal of the Club hall to Mr. Reynolds. The responsibility rests with the General Committee. Many Secular lecturers have spoken at the Club on politics.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought Secular Thought—People's Press—Boston Citizen—Referee—Woolwich Gazette—Echo—Keble's Margate and Ramsgate Gazette—Twentieth Century—Stockholm Dagens Nyheter—Birkenhead Advertiser—Canterbury Press—Camberwell Leader—Dalton News—Liverpool Weekly Post.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Third List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
J. Umpleby	1	1	0	H. Hurrell	0	2	6
C. B.	0	10	0	W. J. Birch	5	0	0
R. Nicholls	2	2	0	W. P. Mills	0	10	0

SUGAR PLUMS.

Whit-Sunday is approaching, and with it the National Secular Society's Conference. We hope there will be a large and representative gathering at Manchnster. Every Branch should see at once whether it can send a delegate, and make the necessary arrangements. Individual members will be welcome from all parts of the country, and they have a right to speak and vote on the important proposals which Mr. Foote will submit.

We have printed an extra supply of this week's *Freethinker* so that our friends may take the opportunity of circulating our reply to Mr. Gladstone among their acquaintances. We are happy to say that the *Freethinker* is becoming more prosperous every week, but it does not yet remunerate the editor for his work, and we hope our friends will continue to push its circulation. Every week brings us letters from persons who met with the paper by accident and have become regular subscribers.

There was a capital audience at the Hall of Science, London, on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on Mr. Gladstone's article on "The Creation Story." The lecture was followed by an hour's discussion, the Gladstonian side being defended by Mr. Elflein, who returned thanks for the very fair and courteous hearing he had received.

Mr. Foote is leaving London for an eight days' lecturing tour in the North of England. He begins work at Newcastle, goes through Durham and South Northumberland during next week, lecturing every night, and winds up with three

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lectures at South Shields. Altogether about 700 miles' travelling and twelve lectures in nine days, besides writing for the *Freethinker* and attending to a lot of correspondence. Such is the easy life of a Freethought lecturer and editor.

In "Hyde Park on Sunday"—a descriptive article in the *Speaker*—after telling of a Christian speaker who offered to demolish all Freethinkers scientifically, the writer says, "On the place where the scientific defender of Christianity had succeeded so well, the sale of free-thought publications was also successful." We are glad to hear it.

The Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter* of April 22nd gives publicity to a lengthy address to the Swedish King, written from prison by V. E. Lennstrand. The publicity given to this case by the Swedish press contrasts well with the general indifference of the English papers to the imprisonment of Mr. Foote.

Not only in Sweden are the Scandinavians waking up out of their religious sleep. The last four numbers of the *Svenska Folkets Tiduing* (Swedish People's Journal) of Minneapolis, devote two or three editorial columns to the Church's war against science. They go over the whole ground of its opposition to astronomy, geography, geology and medicine, especially its opposition to the use of anæsthetics in labor cases; and tell again of the persecution of Galileo and the martyrdom of Bruno. The writer shows the Church's errors in the domain of economics even down to Luther's time, and quotes from that worthy as follows: "Every usurer is a thief, and ought to be hanged. I call him an usurer who lends money on interest." This is notable in a Swedish paper having many Lutheran subscribers. The paper concludes: "We see here, in great and small matters, how mankind step by step has had to struggle with unspeakable pain against the Church's despotism that was so wicked as to attempt to destroy all possibilities of human weal."

The *Boston Investigator* for April 2 copies from our columns, with acknowledgment, Mr. Wheeler's two articles on Rome in America and Rome in England. The good old *Investigator* now enters upon its sixtieth volume.

Professor C. H. Toy of Harvard University has an excellent article on "Ethics and Religion" in *The Popular Science Monthly* of New York. He shows that religions have only copied their ethics from what men by their unaided efforts have arrived at, and that it is very doubtful whether ethics has received any new idea from religion.

Prof. Toy says, "If the ancient Hebrews received their ethical code directly from God, whence comes it that manners were milder in Ezra's time than in the pre-exilian prophetic period, less mild in the days of David, and comparatively rude in the period of the Judges? It would be singular if the generations which stood nearest the revelation were least affected by it."

The *Hospital* says that the first real hospital in the world was one situated at Epidaurus, and dedicated to Æsculapius. It was in full working order five hundred years before Christ. This, however, was not really the first hospital. The Egyptians, ages before, had public establishments for the treatment of disease.

The New York Sun has had a symposium on miracles, including those of the Old and New Testament. Prof. E. D. Cope of the University of Pennsylvania, boldly ascribes them to "Careless observation, inexact recording and absolute fabrication." Mr. D. G. Thompson, president of the Nineteenth Century Club, says: "Those statements in the scriptures which set forth facts commonly styled miraculous are, in my judgment, false; their falsity coming rather from mistakes of fact made in relying upon traditions with their primitive credulity, which is seen in all eastern peoples."

Hermann, the conjuror, who joins in the symposium, gives his opinion that Moses was an excellent sleight-of-hand performer and adept prestidigitateur, who did not hesitate to use his skill in this direction to fortify and strengthen his position as leader; while Kellar, another "magician," thinks "Christ is a sun-god" and the transformation of water into wine, like the resurrection, is performed yearly.

We are informed that Freethought works are gradually creeping into the library of Toynbee Hall, and are much sought after. A short time ago it was discussed whether the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer* should be placed on the table, and the proposal was only lost by one vote.

Mr. Toleman-Garner's list of lecturing engagements is withdrawn, but his faith in Freethought is not shaken. He is obliged for physical reasons to discontinue out-door lecturing and to confine himself to in-door engagements. Open-air lecturing tries all but the very robust, and the Freethought party is much indebted to those who do such arduous work.

The *Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser* inserts a capital letter from "True Blue" on the question "Has Christianity had its Day?" "True Blue" points out that what is admitted to be erroneous by the learned is sooner or later seen to be so by every one else. The letter is so straightforward that the editor is constrained to append a note and ask "what does he propose to substitute in its place." Fancy a man with a tumour wanting to know what he should have instead when the tumour was taken away.

The eighth annual conference of the German Freethinkers' Union will take place at Hannover from May 31st to June 2. Addresses will be given by Prof. Ludwig Büchner, Dr. A. Specht, Dr. T. Voelkel, Dr. P. A. Rüdt, and Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi.

At large meetings held in Calcutta to condemn Lord Cross's Councils Bill cries were raised of "Bradlaugh for ever."

The friends of freedom must be delighted to see that Boulangism is on its last legs in Paris. No doubt the French Republic has its failings, but it has done and is still doing a great work. It has educated France and upheld religious liberty. Under any successful reaction the latter would soon disappear.

Mr. Grant Allen has contributed two striking articles to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, giving an account of "The Gospel according to Herbert Spencer." This is how he sums up Spencer's teaching:—"Know yourself, and your own place in the universe about you. Fear no phantoms, but face realities. Understand your own Body, and the light cast upon it by the analogy of other bodies. Understand your own Mind, and the light cast upon it by the history and evolution of other minds. Understand the phenomena, organic or inorganic, physical or psychical, by which you are surrounded, and the laws to which they severally conform. Understand the Society of which you are a member, and learn from like analogies the origin and functions of its various parts. So, in your capacity as individual, will you govern your own path through the world aright; so, in your capacity as parent, will you produce and bring up better units for the composition of the Society in future; so, in your capacity as citizen, will you help to mould the State, of which you are a part, to ultimate conformity with Truth and Justice. In contradistinction to all the preachers of Faith—that is to say of contented and uncritical Ignorance—Mr. Spencer stands forth as the preacher of Knowledge."

Mr. Grant Allen admits that Herbert Spencer's gospel is "not a gospel for the Man in the Street. It cannot be peddled about on Sundays with drums and fifes, like General Booth's free salvation." But it has "profoundly modified every fibre of our collective brain and nerve in Europe and America."

Better late than never. Last week's *Academy* contained a fair report of Mr. Foote's lecture on Shelley's Religion before the Shelley Society in Easter week. The report mentions the "large audience" and describes the lecture as "exceedingly interesting."

The *Camberwell Leader* reports a debate at the Camberwell Liberal Institute on the subject "Has Christianity Advanced Liberty and Progress?" The negative side seems to have been well supported by Messrs. Soddy, Hartman, Wood and Veitch.

Mr. A. B. Moss's lectures were enjoyed by the Reading Freethinkers. He effectively disposed of a discourteous opponent.

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Mr. Woods, late Unitarian minister, attended at the hall of the Portsmouth Branch on Sunday evening, and took part in the discussion on Vegetarianism. He said that at one time he would have hesitated to mix with Secularists in any way, but he now felt, although he differed from them, that they were helping to remove superstition.

The annual report of the Nottingham Branch shows a financial improvement. We hope the next winter season will be still more prosperous.

One of our subscribers in Russia (not the one answered in "To Correspondents") writes to thank Mr. Forder for giving him the address of a Russian Freethinker in the city he is engaged in. We don't give the name of the city for obvious reasons. Our subscriber says, "I had some difficulty in finding him. He is a Russian student who speaks English, and I have had several pleasant chats with him. He very eagerly accepted the loan of some Freethought literature, and lent me in return the prosecuted Christmas Number for 1882 (I wonder how that found its way into Russia!) and several years' *Freethinkers* bound complete."

The courses of Free Lectures at Camberwell and Milton Hall have not been largely attended, but most of the attendants have been strangers, and these are the persons the London Federation aims at reaching.

THE IMPROVED MAN.

THE improved man will be in favor of universal liberty—that is to say, he will be opposed to all kings and nobles, to all privileged classes. He will give to all others the rights that he claims for himself. He will neither bow nor cringe, nor accept bowing and cringing from others. He will be neither master nor slave, neither prince nor peasant—simply man.

He will be the enemy of all caste, no matter whether its foundation be wealth, title or power, and of him it will be said: "Blessed is that man who is afraid of no man and of whom no man is afraid."

The improved man will be in favor of universal education. He will believe it the duty of every person to shed all the light he can, to the end that no child may be reared in darkness. By education he will mean the gaining of useful knowledge, the development of the mind along the natural paths that lead to human happiness.

He will not waste his time in ascertaining the foolish theories of extinct peoples nor in studying the dead languages for the sake of understanding the theologies of ignorance and fear, but he will turn his attention to the affairs of life, and will do his utmost to see to it that every child has an opportunity to learn the demonstrated facts of science, the true history of the world, the great principles of right and wrong applicable to human conduct—the things necessary to the preservation of the individual and of the State, and such arts and industries as are essential to the preservation of all.

He will also endeavor to develop the mind in the direction of the beautiful—of the highest art—so that the palace in which the mind dwells may be enriched and rendered beautiful, to the end that these stones called facts may be changed into statues.

The improved man will believe only in the religion of this world. He will have nothing to do with the miraculous and supernatural. He will find that there is no room in the universe for these things. He will know that happiness is the only good, and that everything that tends to the happiness of sentient beings is good, and that to do the thing—and no other—that adds to the happiness of man is to practice the highest possible religion. His motto will be: "Sufficient unto each world is the evil thereof." He will know that each man should be his own priest, and that the brain is the real cathedral. He will know that in the realm of mind there is no authority—that majorities in this mental world can settle nothing—that each soul is the sovereign of its own world, and that it cannot abdicate without degrading itself. He will not bow to numbers or force, neither to antiquity nor custom. He, standing under the flag of nature, under the blue and stars, will decide for himself. He will not endeavor by prayers and supplications, by fastings and genuflections, to change the mind of the "infinite" or alter the course of nature, neither will he employ others to do these things in his place. He will have no confidence in the religion of idleness, and will give no part of what he earns to support parson or priest, archbishop or pope. He will know that honest labor is the highest form of prayer. He will spend no time in ringing bells or swinging censers, or in chanting the litanies of barbarism, but he will appreciate all that is artistic—that is beautiful—that tends to refine and ennoble the human race. He will not live a life of fear. He will stand in awe neither of man nor ghosts. He will enjoy not only the sunshine of life, but will bear with fortitude the darkest days. He will have no fear of death. About the grave there will be no terrors, and his life will end as serenely as the sun rises.

The improved man will be satisfied that the supernatural does not exist—that behind every fact, every thought and dream, is an efficient cause. He will know that every human action is a necessary product, and he will also know that men cannot be reformed by punishment, by degradation, or by revenge. He will regard those who violate the laws of nature and the laws of States, as victims of conditions, of circumstances, and he will do what he can for the well-being of his fellow-men.

The improved man will not give his life to the accumulation of wealth. He will find no happiness in exciting the envy of his neighbors. He will not care to live in a palace, while others who are good, industrious, and kind are compelled to huddle in huts, and dens. He will know that great wealth is a great burden, and that to accumulate beyond the actual needs of a reasonable human being is to increase not wealth, but responsibility and trouble.

The improved man will find his greatest joy in the happiness of others, and will know the home is the real temple. He will believe in the democracy of the fireside, and will reap his greatest reward in being loved by those whose lives he has enriched.

The improved man will be self-poised, independent, candid and free. He will be a scientist. He will observe, investigate, experiment, and demonstrate. He will use his sense and his senses. He will keep his mind open as the day to the hints and suggestions of nature. He will always be a student, a learner, and a listener—a believer in intellectual hospitality. In the world of his brain there will be continuous summer, perpetual seed-time and harvest. Facts will be the foundation of his faith. In one hand he will carry the torch of truth, and with the other raise the fallen.—ROBERT G. INGERSOLL (*New York World*).

"This world," says the *Echo*, has been made green by God, and should now be made glad by man." We agree with both halves of the sentence. God has made the world very *green* indeed. Was it not Carlyle who said that England—Bible-reading, church-going, infidel-hating England—contained thirty millions of people, mostly fools. And what is true of England is true, and sometimes still more true, of other countries. The people are led by the nose by priests and plundered by the privileged classes, and in return for all their miseries in this life they are promised any amount of felicity in the next life. Yes, yes; God has made the world *green* enough. But it is no less true that the world "should now be made glad by man." And how can he do it? By studying in Nature's school; by exchanging his fancies for knowledge, his religion for science; by dismissing his hopes and fears of heaven and hell, and subduing evil and promoting good in this world.

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THE FASTING PROPHET.

(*From the Hebrew Chronicle.*)

GALILEE and the regions around being in a state of considerable excitement regarding the alleged exploits of one Jehoshua ben Joseph, who is said to be a wonderful thaumaturgist, we sent our reporter to Galilee to ascertain for himself if possible the correctness or otherwise of the reports. The feat upon which Jehoshua has now entered has excited much noise in consequence of its being identical with that performed by the renowned prophets Moses and Elijah. He has engaged to fast for 40 days, and as a preparation thereto, it is said had been eating and drinking enormously at a marriage feast at Cana, so much so, that it is said he had a reputation as a glutton and wine-bibber.

Our reporter had some difficulty in discovering the wonder-worker's quarters, for he had located himself in a wilderness. Being at length directed to the spot by a hairy man, who looked like a wild man of the woods, and who himself lived on locusts and wild honey, our reporter was astonished to find that no proper arrangements had been made for medical supervision. He instantly despatched messengers to Cæsarea, Capernaum and Tiberias, and secured the eminent physicians, Dr. Moses Schwindlar, Rabbi Judas Hashbaz, and Dr. Levi Shikkur. It appears from their observations that the patient, if we may so call him, is losing at the rate of 9¾oz. every 24 hours. His bulk has shrunk enormously, having decreased round the abdomen from 41⅜ in. to 21¾, at the chest from 39⅛ to 20⅞, round the thigh from 19¾ to 6⅛, and the knee from 19¾ to 15, at the calf from 11½ to 7¼; the biceps have shrunk from 7¾ to 6⅛, and the neck from 16¾ to 10⅝, while his stature shrank from 4·11¾ to 4·11½. Otherwise their bulletin is of a satisfactory character, the pulse being 78 and the temperature 96½ in the shade. As the fast has progressed he has shown signs of dementia, doubtless arising from the enfeeblement of the system. He says he has been tempted to eat stones by the devil, who has carried him up to a high mountain and stuck him on a pinnacle of a temple.

Latest Intelligence.—As the fasting prophet shows signs of utter emancipation and collapse, a number of women came and ministered to him of their substance. He swears they are angels.

OUTWARD BOUND.

On Saturday night, the 26th ult., at the "Duke of Ormonde," Prince's Street, a general meeting of members and friends was held, the room being crowded for the purpose of presenting an illuminated address to Mr. J. Taylor, upon his departure for Australia. The design and execution of the address had been entrusted to a young friend, who is exceptionally gifted, and its artistic excellence was much admired. The presentation was made by Mr. W. Wheeler on behalf of the members in a most eloquent speech, commenting upon Mr. Taylor's valuable services rendered to the Branch, and paying a tribute to his earnest work in the Secular cause. Deep regret was felt by all present at his departure, and they wished him and Mrs. Taylor health, happiness, prosperity, and long life. The reply of Mr. Taylor was most impressive. Short farewell addresses were delivered by the following gentlemen: Messrs Burrell, Ross, Johnson, Smith, Greenman, Pothozth, Frazer, and Varley (of the Central Branch). Mr. S. Ross recited an original poem written expressly for the ocoasion, and during the evening Mr. J. Stace sang a farewell ode. The evening concluded with a variety entertainment, to the success of which the following ladies and gentlemen contributed: Miss C. Woolley, whose good voice and pleasing manner were well displayed in her recital, "Nail your Colors to the Mast"; Mr. F Cullimore presiding at the piano, his humorous songs being much applauded; the ballad singing of the brothers Rous was also greatly appreciated, and our thanks are due to Messrs. Clark, Johnson, Freeman, Varley, and W. Wheeler for their singing. The evening concluded by all present singing "Auld Lang Syne," bringing to a close the most memorable evening in the history of the Westminster Branch.

OBITUARY.

Died on April 22nd, aged 27, John Cole, an active member of the Bethnal Green Branch. He had formerly been a teacher at St. Philip's Church, Bethnal Green. About twenty minutes before he died he stated that he wished his Christian friends were present that he might show them what he thought of their cowardly lies of infidel death bed scenes. His end was so quiet that his wife thought he had fallen asleep. He was respected by all who knew him.—James Neate, Hon. Sec.

Died at Paris, 22nd April, Citizen Joseph Bonier, an active French Freethinker, and founder of the "Groupe Garibaldi" of the Anti-Clerical League. He was buried without religious ceremony.

CHRISTIANITY AND VEGETARIANISM.

FREETHINKING Vegetarians are by no means scarce, and from the accounts occasionally set forth, are far from satisfied with the unreasonableness on the part of the Vegetarian Society's officials of mixing so much religion with their publications. Every issue of the *Vegetarian Messenger* teems with Christian matter nearly as absurd as that to be found in Prophet Baxter's *Christian Herald*; and although the practice has again and again been objected to by those who look upon Vegetarianism from a scientific standpoint, no improvement apparently will ever take place.

The present writer, a Vegetarian for the last ten years, has more than once written strongly to the Editor and Secretary, pointing out that Vegetarianism requires no religious aids to support its teachings, and that if the system cannot rely on scientific aids alone, the sooner it gives up the ghost the better; for it must be clear to the most careless critic that no sane person would appeal to a book so full of bloodthirstiness as the Bible is from beginning to end, in support of a system which prohibits the shedding of blood.

Freethought and Christianity are of course quite independent of Vegetarianism, and one set of teachings has as much right to be introduced into Vegetarian publications as the other; and those who do not approve of the action of one set of thinkers cramming their pet notions on religion down the throats of others in connection with a purely scientific matter, should withhold their subscriptions to the Vegetarian Society, and transfer them to a more worthy and honest institution. Our Christian friends would then probably see the folly of their onesidedness.

This is not the place to air Vegetarian views, and the remarks are made merely to call attention of non-Christian Vegetarians to the great importance of our rights being enforced in all cases; and that something might be done to bring about a more liberal spirit even in the ranks of our Vegetarian leaders who appear to be as conservative as Jehovah himself.

There are many members of the Vegetarian Society, who cannot fail to disapprove of the unfair teachings set forth by the Society: Professor Newman, and Mr. Smallman, for example; and probably some friends will pursue the question further.

Would not our money be spent to a much greater advantage by the National Secular Society for its legitimate object, than by a Society which uses its funds for purposes other than those for which they are subscribed? At any rate many of us cannot approve of money intended for the spread of Vegetarianism being used for the furtherance of false religions.

W. J. F.

In the course of an article on "Flaws in Ingersollism" in the April *North American Review*, the Rev. Lyman Abbott expresses surprise that the "inspiring story" of Abraham should have no attraction for Colonel Ingersoll. Abraham, it will be remembered, was commanded by the Lord to kill his son, and appears to have been willing if not anxious to obey the command. A similarly "inspiring story" now comes from Faulkton, South Dakota, to the effect that E. Eckhart, while suffering from theological dementia, stabbed his two young sons with a bread knife and cut his wife's throat. Eckhart claims that the Lord told him to commit the murder. Since this incident involves the killing of three persons instead of one, Dr. Abbott should find it three times as inspiring as the story of Abraham.—*Freethought.*

Parson to widow in tears: "I presume your husband had made all preparations to face his Maker?" Widow: "He had, indeed. He was insured in six different companies!"

Bishop (reproving delinquent page): "Wretched boy! Who is it sees all we do, and before whom even I am but a a crushed worm?" Page: "The missus, my lord."

Governess: "Certainly, it says in the Bible that King Solomon had seven hundred wives." Astonished child: "Did he have them all at once? Miss Smith?" Governess (hesitatingly): "Yes I think so." Astonished child (who has lately seen an auntie married): "Oh. Miss Smith, however *did* they all get into the church together?" And then why does it say "he slept with his fathers?"

A sailor having died at sea, the carpenter made a coffin for the corpse, but found he had no lead to sink the coffin, so he put in coals instead. A sailor stood by, laughing while the funeral service was being conducted, and being asked by the captain the meaning of his unseemly conduct, replied: "I have seen many a man going to hell, but I never saw one take his own coals with him."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christ's Teachings"; 11.30, Kingsland Green, "Miracles."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Calvert, "History of the New Testament Canon." Social evening every Tuesday.

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. J. Fagan, 11.15, "The Apostles' Creed."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Our Conversation as in Heaven"; 11.30, Station Road, Camberwell, "The Myth of the Ascension."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus, and What did he Teach?"

East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, a lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3, Lucretius Keen, "Holy Morality."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "The Greek Philosophers' 'God.'"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Is the Bible Impregnable?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Sermon on the Mount." May 7, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "Is Matter able of Itself to Produce its Phenomena?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "A Plea for Atheism."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Man First, God Nowhere."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 6.30, Sam Standring, "The Foolishness of Faith in God."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. J. Marshall, "Something Personified called God."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation"; 7, Mr. J. Simes, "The Fundamental Objection to Christianity"; 9, Music.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Heavenly Government."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, a Freethought lecture.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. H. Smith, 11, "By the Grace of God I am what I am"; 7, "By the Blast of God they Perish."

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. McClusky, "The Moral Teachings of Christianity."

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. G. E. C. Naewiger, "The Fourth Commandment."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, annual meeting of the Branch; Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Bergmann, "Bible Morality Unsound."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, William Russell, "Sky-pilots and Devil-dodgers."

Newcastle—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "The Follies of Theosophy: a reply to Mrs. Besant"; 3, "A Defence of Atheism: a reply to the Rev. Walter Walsh"; 7, "An Hour with the Devil." Tea in Society's Rooms after the afternoon lecture.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Charles Cater, "The Single Tax, and Why I Adhere to it."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, a lecture.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, at 7, a business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Oredon Road, London, S.E. — May 4 (morning), Westminster (evening), Woolwich; 11 (morning), Camberwell; 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25 (afternoon), Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—May 4, Nottingham.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—May 4, Birmingham; 11, Hanley; 25, Liverpool.

E. Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton Liverpool.—May 11, Liverpool; 18, Failsworth. June 8, Manchester.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—May 4 (morning), Plaistow Green; 18 (morning), Mile End Waste; 25 (morning), Battersea. June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 19.] SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE ON THE CREATION STORY.

[CONTINUED.]

MR. GLADSTONE makes the extraordinary assertion that "no moral mischief ensues because some have supposed the days of creation to be pure solar days of twenty-four hours." Certainly the belief in a literal six-days' creation does not prompt a man to pick pockets or commit adultery. But is there no "moral mischief" in hindering the progress of science, upon which so much of our well-being depends? Is there no moral mischief in the persecution of those who are afterwards seen to be our benefactors? Was there no moral mischief in the intimidation of Galileo? Was there no moral mischief in the murder of Giordano Bruno? Was there no moral mischief in the early prejudices of Sir Charles Lyell against what he subsequently recognised as truth, or in the insults heaped upon him when he proclaimed it to the world? Was there no moral mischief in the bigotry with which the clergy as well as their fanatical dupes treated the teachings of Darwin? Is there no moral mischief in wasting the working man's precious day of leisure, every week, in obedience to a Sabbatarian law which is founded on the literal Story of Creation?

We would also observe that Mr. Gladstone is extremely vague, and, in so far as he is clear, inaccurate, in his remarks on the Sabbath. "It seems also probable," he says, continuing his *lessons* of the Mosaist, "that the Creation Story was intended to have a special bearing on the great institution of the day of rest, or Sabbath, by exhibiting it in the manner of an object lesson." Now in the whole of the early Jewish history there is no trace of a Sabbath. We find it in the Mosaic Law, which is a post-exile concoction, but not in the annals of the Judges and Kings. Indeed, the very reference in the Fourth Commandment to "the stranger within thy gates," shows that it was not delivered to desert nomads, but to a people settled down in Palestine and dwelling in walled and fortified cities. For these reasons, or partly for these reasons, Paley maintains that God "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" by a sort of historical anticipation. But Mr. Gladstone would have us believe that "Assyrian researches" have revealed traces of some primitive "institution or command." This is, however, the veriest perverseness. What Assyrian researches have shown is that the number seven was held sacred by the masters of the Jews, and that they had a Sabbath, or day of rest, long before the chosen people. Here again the Jews were not inventors, but borrowers; and the primeval sanctification of the Sabbath is one of the many impostures of their priestly annalists.

The Egyptians had a periodic day of rest; namely, one day in every ten; but it appears that they were also acquainted with the seven-days division of time. The Assyrians, the Romans, and other ancient nations had likewise their periods of rest and work. And why? For the simple reason that the leaders of a civilisation based upon slavery discovered the necessity of a periodic rest to the laborer. Without it his energies decayed. And that the time of rest, whatever it was, should be associated with mythical events, was only natural in a society in which every part of life was under a religious sanction.

It is also clear that the sacredness of the number seven, in Assyria as in scores of other parts of the world, sprang out of natural reasons. Moon worship precedes sun worship because man's attention is excited by the changeable rather than the regular. It was discovered that the full lunation occupied twenty-eight days. That number was halved, and the result was fourteen. That number was halved again, and the result was seven. But this number could not be halved, or divided in any way; it was indivisible and mysterious, and therefore sacred. Then there were the seven planets, from which the days were named, and this not only doubled but squared the sacredness of the number seven. But behind this there is something older and more vital. The covering of the generative organs is often neglected by the males among savages, but scarcely ever among the females. That covering was the beginning of decency, and it rose from the fact of menstruation. Now the sexual periodicities throughout the whole animal world, including the human race, run in seven days or multiples of seven days. Let this truth, therefore, be connected with the indivisible quarter of the moon's total phases, and the number of the planets, and you have an importance, a mystery, and therefore a sacredness attaching to the number seven, which could never attach to another number. This is the reason why the number seven appears and reappears in all religious systems. It is found among savages, and it asserts its ancient and august claims in the teachings of Theosophy, which talks learnedly, but after all superstitiously, of the sevenfold nature of man. Thus religion is like the mythical snake of eternity. Extremes meet, and the head and the tail are united.

There is still another aspect of the question. It is shrewdly observed by Rénan, in his *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, that the Sabbath could not have arisen among nomads. Except when they shift their tents, and travel to fresh pastures, they have nothing to do but to sit and watch their flocks and herds. One day is exactly like another, and a day of rest would be unintelligible. It is obvious, therefore, that the story of the primeval sanctification of the Sabbath, and its injunction in the Mosaic Law, belong to a much later period than the Exodus. They belong, in short, to the post-exile period. Every fact supports this theory, and there is not a single fact which contradicts it.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

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THE BOOK OF ENOCH.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."—Jude 14-15.

THE work appealed to as a supernatural prophecy by "the seventh from Adam," though it had the fate of being lost to Europe for a thousand years is still in existence, and of late has had considerable attention drawn to it, though it is by no means as well-known as it should be to all students of early Christianity. The Book of Enoch has had a curious fate. It was much used by the Christian writers of the first five centuries, and the earlier ones certainly regarded it as of divine authority. As the doctrine of the coming of Christ to judge the world fell into the background, or from some other cause, the work was neglected and, after the decline of literature consequent on the triumph of the Church, remained unknown till 1773, when Bruce the Abyssinian explorer brought back three copies from that country, where it forms part of the Sacred Canon standing immediately before the book of Job. He deposited a copy at Oxford, but it remained untranslated till 1821, when it was published by Dr. R. Laurence, afterwards Archbishop of Cashel whose work has been republished with an important introduction by Mr. Charles Gill, author of *The Evolution of Christianity*.* Irenaeus, the first father who mentions the Four Gospels, and who indeed founds the reason of their being four on the cosmology given in the book of Enoch, affirms that Enoch although a man filled the office of God's messenger to the angels (Against Heresies iv., 19.) See Enoch xv.

Tertullian, in his treatise "On Female Dress," in which he traces feminine ornamentation to the conjunction of daughters of men with fallen angels, asserts (bk. i., ch. 3) that "the Scripture of Enoch was published before the deluge," and argues that it was preserved by Noah, and is authoritative although not accepted by the Jews. He says:

"But since Enoch in the same Scripture has preached likewise concerning the Lord, nothing at all must be rejected *by* us which pertains *to* us; and we read that 'every Scripture suitable for edification is divinely inspired" [see 2 Tim. iii., 16]. By the Jews it may now seem to be rejected for that very reason, just like the other portions nearly which tell of Christ. Nor, of course, is this fact wonderful, that they did not receive some Scriptures which spake of Him whom even in person, speaking in their presence, they were not to receive. To these considerations is added the fact that Enoch possesses a testimony in the Apostle Jude."†

Modern apologists compare the quoting of Enoch by Jude to the citation by Paul of Gentile poets (Acts xvii., 28; 1 Cor. xv., 33; Titus i., 12). Why Paul, if inspired, should quote uninspired writers, is not easy to see, but at least he describes them correctly, whereas Jude makes the mistake of saying the seventh from Adam prophesied, and indeed builds upon this prophecy his own doctrine of angelology and eschatology. The work from which he quotes is indeed a farrago of fanatical rubbish, now mainly of use as illustrating what insanity passed in the East for inspiration.

The Book of Enoch, like so many other works of the early Christian period, is a forgery. That is, it pretends to be written by Enoch the prophet, the son of Jared and the father of Methusaleh, who walked with God, while in reality it was composed in the first century before the Christian era. It was quite the fashion of that time to draw attention to religious works by affixing to them the name of some noted personage. Thus we have Ecclesiastes pretending to be the utterance of "the son of David the king in Jerusalem," though Solomon was as innocent of its composition as of that of The Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha. Psalms were ascribed to David, which were written in the Maccabean period, and another work of the same time ascribed to Daniel. New Testament literature labors under similar suspicion. An approximation to the date of the Book of Enoch can be attained from its contents. It evidently arose among devout Jews, whether Chasidim or Essenes, who longed and looked forward to the restoration of the true faith and the judgment of the righteous upon the ungodly. The citation in Jude fixes a date below which it cannot be placed, and although it may be argued that different strata are embeddied in its composition, the absence of the name of Jesus or any allusion to the Roman power shows that it was all written for Jews before the Christian era, and probably from the time of the Maccabees to that of Herod.

Nevertheless the book is permeated with what we may call Christian thought. The coming of the Lord with ten thousand of his saints is indeed a central idea. The work reveals the source of many Christian dogmas and mysteries and it especially shows that Jesus in his predictions of the end of the world and cranky John of Patmos in his mad description of the same in the Apocalypse, were neither of them as as original as usually supposed. This statement is scarcely so strong as that made in a paper prepared for the Church Congress of 1888 by the Rev. Sir George William Cox, and read by the Rev. R. Healey at Manchester that year. Sir G. W. Cox contended that the eschatological matters in the epistles bearing the name of Jude and Peter was obtained from the Book of Enoch—that the imagery of the Apocalypse and the matter of the discourses in Matt. xxiv. and xxv. was obtained from the same source, and that these discourses were therefore not uttered as given to us, and were probably not uttered at all. This statement was greeted with loud hisses at the Manchester Church Congress, but all the clerical cackle in Christendom could not now remove the evidences that the New Testament is honeycombed with ideas and phrases founded on a work admittedly spurious.

In proof of this assertion we can only afford space for a few extracts, followed by New Testament references, both of which might be largely multiplied.

Enoch xliv. 4: "And a voice was heard from heaven."—See Matt. iii. 17.

En. vi. 9: "The elect shall possess light, joy and peace, and they shall inherit the earth."—Matt. v. 5.

En. xcvi. 6, 7, 25: "Woe unto you, sinners, who say, 'We are rich, possess wealth, and have acquired everything which we can desire. Now then will we do whatsoever we are disposed to do whatsoever we are disposed to do; for we have amassed silver; our barns are full.' . . . They shall surely die suddenly."—Luke xii.

En. xlvi. 2: "This is the Son of man . . . who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed."—Col. ii., 3.

En. ix., 3, 4: "Then they said to their Lord, the King: Thou art Lord of lords, God of gods, King of kings. The throne of thy glory is for ever and ever, and for ever and ever is thy name sanctified and glorified. Thou hast made all things; thou possessest power over all things; and all things are open and manifest before thee. Thou beholdest all things, and nothing can be concealed from thee."—Rev. iv. 11.

En. lxxix.: "In the days of sinners the years shall be shortened, . . . and every thing done on earth shall be subverted and disappear in its season. . . In those days the fruits of the earth shall not flourish in their season, ... heaven shall stand still. The moon shall change its laws, and not be seen at its proper period, . . . and all the classes of the stars shall be shut up against sinners."

En. lxi., 9: "And trouble shall seize them when they shall behold this Son of woman sitting upon the throne of his glory."—Matt. xxiv. 7, 21, 22, 29, 30.

En. cii. 17: "The former heaven shall depart and pass away, a new heaven shall appear."—Rev. xxii. 1.

The phrase applied to Judas by Jesus, "it were better that man had never been born," is taken literally from Enoch. For numerous other instances of how far the New Testament compilers were indebted to this uninspired writer who flourished before the world had heard of Christianity, we refer our readers to the work itself and its Introduction by Mr. Gill.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Published by Kegan Paul, Trübner and Co.
† P. 308 Ante-Nicene Christian Library, vol. xi.

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RELIGION AND VIRTUE IN IRELAND.

WHENEVER I assert, in conversation with my Christian acquaintances, that men and women would live much happier and better and more useful lives if there were no such things as priests and churches, I am always met by the argument that but for the restraints of religion, and the fears of hell, the bulk of the people "would go to the dogs" from the point of view of morality. They point with triumph to the great virtue of the Irish women as an instance of the influence of religion, and they say that but for the confessional matters would be very different indeed. These are the stock arguments of the religious folk, and there are people who go so far as to say that even if religion is all humbug, it is very much better that men and women should believe pious lies than they should believe secular truths and act up to them.

There is no doubt but that the women of Ireland are very virtuous, and that the confessional exercises a very great influence over their conduct. There is no denying that there are fewer illegitimate children in Catholic Ireland than there are in non-Catholic Ireland. This fact is a continual boast of the priests, who say that it is all due to their teachings and the teachings of the Church. Admitting all this without reserve, the fact still remains that this boasted virtue must be very artificial when it is unable to subsist except under threats of the most awful torture in a future world.

If it is true that morality in Ireland would be shattered by the overthrow of religion, then there are two conclusions that must inevitably be come to. One is that the virtue that now prevails is not genuine, as it cannot stand the test of freedom from imaginary terrors; and the other is that the teachings of the Catholic clergy for centuries must have been exceedingly empty when they have resulted in nothing better than this knock-kneed morality that depends for its existence upon fears of punishment and hopes of reward. Both of these conclusions are valid in every way.

Virtue in Ireland is a negative sort of thing. People are not virtuous because it is good to be virtuous, but because they *fear* to be otherwise. In reality I do not think that we are much better than our neighbors. From what the priests themselves say, it is perfectly plain that the people, if left to themselves, would conduct themselves very differently from what they do at present. They are *inclined* to break certain commandments, we are told; they *desire* to ignore certain codes of conduct laid down by the Church; and they merely stop short of carrying out their inclinations and their desires through fear of the consequences in another world. This is all that religion has done for virtue in Ireland; it has done everything for making people virtuous *in act*, but it has done nothing at all to raise the minds of the people to that level whose standard is, that true virtue is its own reward and its violation its own punishment.

I am not to be taken, for a moment, as meaning that I would look with unconcern at anything like a lowering of the present standard of female virtue in Ireland, even though that standard is far and away more artificial than real. But at the same time I can see clearly that while the present state of things last there will be no true progress, and no genuine advance in civilisation in Ireland. The Irish are not natural enough. Their civilisation is a cast-iron sort of affair, incapable of much alteration or improvement. They regard the teachings of their Church as the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and that for all practical purposes the last word has been spoken about what it is right to believe and disbelieve. As long as they remain in this stick-in-the-mud condition their mental and moral development will be sadly hampered. And if the priests can manage it, in this condition they will remain for all time.

I have just said that the Irish are virtuous *in act*, if in no other way. But the bulk of them have really no true ideas of sexual virtue at all. They have a horror of civil marriages, and would as soon think of committing murder as of getting married at a registry office. Yet their notions of marriage, in the great majority of instances, do not rise above carnal or mercenary motives. Amongst the peasantry marriages are a mere matter of barter, and anything like marriage for love is hardly ever heard of. The priests foster this degrading state of affairs. Mercenary alliances bring fat fees into the priestly till, and *that* is what the priests want. As to young men and young women choosing mates for themselves, the thing is never dreamt of. But to protect them from wishing so to choose, all merry-making in country places is discountenanced, and there are instances even where priests will not allow young men and young women to talk to each other in the village street in broad noon-day. For anybody with genuine respect for woman, the summary manner in which she is disposed of in rural Ireland is at once disgusting and disheartening.

In the cities the cry of the priests to young men is "Get married." They preach incessantly the enormity of the crime of "keeping company" with young women. How decent Catholic young men tolerate the way they are preached to is simply amazing. It is no unusual thing to hear preachers state that it is little short of a "mortal sin" for a man to take a walk into the country in company with a woman. To the man who does so they address fervent appeals to get married. These teachings are followed by evil results. Under them marriage is too often but a mere licence for immorality, and the boasted virtue anything but virtue. I fear that too many people follow the priest's advice and marry for no better reason than to satisfy their passions. But they are told and believe that the mumblings of a priest make matters all right and constitute them highly virtuous and moral folk.

While there are no higher ideas of marriage than these, it must be expected that the Irish as a people can never reach that standard of moral and manly excellence of which they are capable. Where such marriage customs hold good, the home-life can never offer such healthy examples to the young as if marriage was free and regulated by choice, instead of being regulated by the priests' desire for money and by their notions of what constitutes morality. Outwardly the Irish home may be an example of happiness, while the reality too often is that a "cat and dog life" prevails. Men and women are driven to marry, and no matter how they may come to hate each other, there is no hope for anything like a divorce. The intercourse of such people may be called "virtue," but if it is, virtue loses its beauty in my eyes.

If the restraints of religion were removed there might be some falling off in the decorous conduct observable in Ireland. But it would be well at any rate to have the people natural, as then we might expect them to progress, the ambition for which is in the nature of man when he is not under unnatural restraint. As matters now are there can be no progress and no appreciable advance in civilisation. Religion in Ireland and the virtue it enjoins are insuperable bars to that development which the natural intelligence of Irishmen would, under happier circumstances, impel them to attain.

J. O'DONOVAN.

A little girl in church, after the contribution plate had been passed, complacently and audibly said, "I paid for four, mamma; was that right?"

Teacher: "Tommy, what did our Savior mean when he said to Peter, 'from henceforth thou shalt catch men'?" Tommy: "I suppose he meant Peter was going to be a policeman."

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THE MAGIC FIGHT.

Tune—"The Enniskillen Dragoon."

THE Jews had pitched at Kephidim
While on their famous tramp,
When there arose a mighty king
To pulverise their camp.
Said Moses unto Joshua,
"Go fight him in the plain,
And I will to yon hill repair
Your valor to sustain."

Then Josh and all his men marched out
The enemy to kill,
While Moses, Hur, and Aaron
Climbed up a neighboring hill;
And when Mo held his stick aloft
The Israelites prevailed;
But when he let his hand go down
They just as sadly failed.

Then Aaron hunted up a stone
Whereon good Moses sat,
And Hur stood on this side of him,
While Aaron stood on that,
And steadied up his heavy hands
That Josh might win the fight;
And in that queer position
Remained till it was night.

No doubt they found it tiring work
To keep his elbows straight;
For we are told in "Holy Writ"
His hands were no light weight.
And then, suppose the merry louse
At work among their thatch,
How could they, with both hands engaged,
Perform the needful scratch?

By that time General Joshua
Had vanquished all his foes;
Then Moses dropped his weary hands
And from his rock arose,
And built an altar to the Lord
For bringing them such luck,
And giving to the Jewish troops
The right amount of pluck.

'Tis strange no ancient artist
Has portrayed this battle scene,
With Moses perched upon a hill
Two godly priests between,
'Twould be a grand attraction
In a gallery of art,
And bring the Jews from far and near,
Their golden "quids" to part.

T. CLARK.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

Johnny: "Pa, what do they ring church bells for?" Pa: "To make people believe there's a fire in another world my son."

Johnny: "Is God Irish?" Sunday-school Teacher: "Why no, my dear. Why do you ask such a question?" Johnny: "Coz, he always says 'ye.'"

ACID DROPS.

The blessed May Meetings are in full swing. We don't refer to the Labor demonstrations, but to the meetings of the Black Army who swarm in London and plot and plan in the interest of superstition. Anyone who bought a list of these assemblies at the *Christian World* office, and attended them all, except when two or more took place at the same hour, would be fit for a lunatic asylum at the finish. Only a miraculously strong head could possibly stand such a dose of unction, cant, snuffling, lies, and hypocrisy. For our part, we think it would be politic on the part of the Christians to concentrate their forces. Church and chapel might be kept separate, but they might form two great divisions. One might be presided over by the weeping Bishop of London, the other by the oily and unscrupulous Hugh Price Hughes. Nay, the two leaders might co-operate in producing a novel, or a drama. Temple might supply the *pathos*, and Hughes the *invention*. For a title we suggest "The Christian Mother and her Atheist Son."

A Methodist correspondent of the *Echo* says "Methodists need to be rich people. The fancy pet West-end scheme [of Hugh Price Hughes] is crippling finances in all our country circuits." The Wesleyan Missionary Society, like its other organisation, is in an unsatisfactory condition. It began the year with a debt of £9000 and the year's contributions were £10,000 less than in 1888.

The clerical majority on the Plymouth School Board are doing their best in favor of denominational education, in direct opposition to the spirit of the Education Act. They have put out an innocent-looking circular, asking pupil teachers, etc., to join religious instruction classes. Although this circular is signed by the Archdeacon of Totnes and others, it is distributed by the Church representatives on the School Board. Pupil teachers, who have enough to do to be proficient in the secular subjects included in the Code, should leave these religious instruction classes severely alone.

Who is "Horace Courtney," hailing from Clapham, who writes a curious letter to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*? We suspect he is a Christian masquerading as a Freethinker. He "ventures to say" that there is not a single Freethinker of culture and intelligence who has the least sympathy with the vile stuff purveyed by Mr. Foote under the fair name of Freethought." Well, we don't pretend that any of our readers possess the colossal "culture and intelligence" of Horace Courtney, but some of the best friends of this journal are doctors, solicitors, schoolmasters and university men. More than one professor takes the *Freethinker* weekly, and some of our correspondents, whose names we are not free to publish, are famous in the world of letters.

"Horace Courtenay" is evidently very ignorant of current Freethought literature. He writes as though Comic Bible Sketches were still appearing in the *Freethinker*. He also says that the party we "supply" is "rapidly dying out," in face of the fact of our increasing circulation.

Disestablishment is bound to come in Scotland. Even the Grand Old Man is a convert at last. There are twelve parishes in the Highlands, with a total population of 13,353; each parish has a church and a minister, and the total number of communicants is 63, an average of five and a quarter for each church.

The Rev. James Owen, the new president of the Baptist Union, in his opening address to the Spring Assembly, admitted that the Christian ministry did not exercise a dominant—if indeed any influence over either the leaders in society and literature or the laboring populations in large towns. Yet he has faith that all will yet go well. Faith is here the evidence of things not seen.

Political men marry for love, but they generally like a pile of money as well. Mr. O'Brien, it is reported, is going to marry the rich Miss Raffalovitch. She has plenty of cash and is a Home Ruler, two desiderata to begin with. But, according to the *Star*, she has another qualification besides these, and besides her mental gifts. She has a most accommodating disposition. "It is significant," says the

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Star, "of the completeness with which Miss Raffalovitch identifies herself with her bridegroom that she will adopt Mr. O'Brien's religion." Really, it is enough to make a Freethinker split his sides with laughter. The lady puts on a new religion with her wedding dress. It is to be hoped she will change again if Mr. O'Brien should turn Protestant.

If the *Kentish Mercury's* report of the Rev. Hugh R. Baker's reply to Mr. Foote's lectures at Woolwich is accurate, it was a very unsatisfactory reply indeed. Mr. Baker said he "wanted to show in a general way that Mr. Foote's statements were not truthful." He singled out the statement that the God of the Old Testament was a national one. What then does the phrase the God of Israel mean? In Judges xi. 24, Jehovah is distinctly compared with Chemosh, another national God.

Mr. Baker is reported as saying that Mr. Foote "spoke in glowing terms of Apollo, Juno, Diana, Venus and Cupid as good examples which might be followed." Mr. Foote is in the north of England, but without consultation the sub-editor will venture to characterise this statement as untruthful. Those who know Mr. Foote know he is not so ready to expose himself to Christian gibes. Then Mr. Baker spoke of prayer. He "considered the primary object of prayer was to converse with the Almighty and not necessarily to ask for blessings." Yet the Lord's Prayer asks for daily bread.

Mr. Baker founds another charge on the statement that religion was founded on fear. This, said the man of God, was a slander, distinctly opposed to the teaching of the Bible, which was that of love. We fancied we had read a good deal about the fear of the Lord in the old book, but its teachings after all have little to do with the original foundations of religion, which are far older and go much deeper than any written documents.

"Stanhope" signs a long, old-fashioned screed in the *Consett Guardian* against Atheism in general and Mr. Bradlaugh in particular. When we state that he writes, "the death-bed of the infidel is anything but nice," we have said enough to show that he is beneath contempt. "Stanhope" must rise to the level of the age—not, perhaps, a very lofty one, after all—if he wishes to be listened to. Fantastic lies are played out in the controversy.

The Rochester Diocesan Conference pronounced against Sunday bands, Sunday papers and Sunday dinners. It was a fine old clerical Protectionist meeting, but it will not affect the progress of Free Trade in religion as well as in commerce.

Marcus T. Bergman, a missionary to the Jews, calls for a Bible in Judeo-Polish or Hebrew-German. He is especially anxious that the East-end Jews shall not continue to get their ideas of Jesus Christ from the "blasphemous" Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, which he wrongly refers to as "in the Talmud." Those who would like to see the real facts about this work should read the *Jewish Life of Christ*, edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler.

Mr. Spurgeon says that "a man with a mind must have a creed." True. But a man with any mind worth speaking of must have a better creed than Spurgeon's.

Mr. Spurgeon puts in a fresh word for Calvin. Jack of Geneva, it seems, when he cremated Servetus, was only doing what any other person in his position would have done. Mr. Spurgeon's excuse is that "they all did it." But this is not held to be an excuse for those guilty of the ordinary frailties of human nature, whom Mr. Spurgeon damns to hell without the slighest compunction. Jack's excuse for murder won't hold good for Tom, Dick, and Harry's peccadilloes.

Richard Weaver has been advertised as a great attraction at Wood Green. "Scribo," in the *North London Echo*, wonders whether Richard's "past life at Macclesfield and Stockport is like a forgotten dream," and suggests that the place for "broken-kneed" Christians is not the pulpit but the pew.

A Liverpool paper is severe upon "the London begging gang" who run philanthropic institutes on Gospel lines and cadge right and left, making the most piteous, and often whining, appeals for help "by return." It gives an extract from the begging letter of a London Cottage Mission, in which it is stated that the landlord is going to distrain (hard-hearted man!), and the poor "little ones" will be turned out in the streets unless six subscribers send £5 each "by return of post." As all these beggars believe in prayer, it is wonderful that they don't ask God to soften the landlord, instead of investing in postage stamps.

Dr. Parker "hates" the Calvinism of Mr. Spurgeon as he "hates selfishness and blasphemy." He calls it "leering, slavering, and sly-winking," and says he would not condescend to kick it. Yet this same Dr. Parker thinks the Blasphemy Laws should be maintained to make Freethinkers polite in criticising Christianity. It is the old, old story of the beam and the mote.

A very curious case was that of Lampard *v.* Buck, tried before the Queen's Bench Court last week. Lampard is a tea merchant, intimately connected with the Salvation Army, of which Buck has been a staff captain. Buck, however left, and threatened to lecture against the Army and write a book exposing "the headquarters of the army as a house of ill-fame and a den of thieves." He obtained £50 from Mr. Lampard, which he afterwards advertised as "hush money." It was however decided by the court that the money was a loan, which must be refunded.

In a Government Commission on the number of persons in the Russian empire without visible means of existence, out of a total of 293,445 beggars 3,491 were clergymen. This large number is probably accounted for not by their adherence to the command of Jesus to give all to the poor, but by the custom which deprives the parson of his living when his wife dies.

The Rev. A. J. Johnson, vicar of Toftries, near Fakenham, the clergyman who wandered from home in the winter and was discovered frost-bitten and starving, has died in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital after having his feet amputated.

The cranks who believed in the prophesy that San Francisco and other cities would be destroyed on April 14 had the sense to hedge. They prayed that the disaster might be averted, and now claim that their prayers were answered. But what is the use of the Lord inspiring prophets when his purposes can be turned aside by prayer?

The inspired prophets who predict the end of the world and the destruction of cities are, like the religious maniacs, instructive examples. As the fossils found in geological strata show us the kind of life which once existed on the earth, so these survivals show us what the old prophets actually were and what a curse was their superstition.

While the trembling believers waited last Monday for the earthquake which was to destroy the city, there came over the wires from the observatory on Mount Hamilton these words: "No earthquake tremor, however slight, registered on the delicate seismometers of the Lick Observatory." It was like the voice of the Freethinker James Lick rebuking the cowardice of the Christian community.—*Freethought.*

Prophet Baxter has two assistants, Messrs. Jaye and Osborne, who are zealously propagating the end of the world delusion at Brighton. It is a money-making game. Induce people to think the end of all things is at hand, and they will surely contribute well to God's elect. Like all other Christian humbug, this variety thrives well in the rank soil of Bibliolatry.

In the report of the British Commissioners of Lunacy, "religious excitement" is credited with 3,769 cases of insanity. This is a more potent cause even than love affairs, which are credited with 2,224, while "over-exertion" is responsible for 761. "Mental anxiety," the chief cause, occasions 25,897 cases, and of these we suspect religious anxiety has a considerable place, for it may not always develop into decided recognisable religious mania.

Count Tolstoi's *Kreutzen Sonata* is to be translated into

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English and published by Mr. Walter Scott. It is reported to be a Zolaesque novel, and it will no doubt excite a great deal of interest, particularly as Tolstoi means it as a social study from the standpoint of the Sermon on the Mount.

The great Russian novelist has devoted much of his leisure of late years to expounding his social and religious views in the direct form of essays. He writes as an uncompromising Christian of the Quaker type, or rather, perhaps, of the type of George Fox and William Law rolled into one. He takes the commandments of Christ literally, and he is, in that sense, one of the very few real Christians on this planet. Whether his philosophy could be practised in actual life is quite another matter. We hope to give a fuller account of it some day, for a man like Tolstoi is better worth attention than the gentlemen who preach the Gospel for as much as they can get.

Under the Christian king, Mwanga, the followers of Jesus have fought and beaten the followers of Mohammed. According to the London *Chronicle*, "the reconquest of the country appears to have been followed by a division of the spoil, the land being parcelled out among the victors, while very little is left to the 'heathen.'" The earth is the Lord's, and he has given it to the saints—white or black.

The world *does* move. The *Christian Commonwealth* steps in front of Jesus Christ, and declares that "no law, human or divine, can morally compel two human creatures to be bound together for life when one of them proves himself to be a brute, or a sot, or a drunkard."

Prof. D. G. Porter's long paper on "The Agnostic Controversy" is running through the *Christian Commonwealth*. He lauds the Rev. Dr. Wace to the skies, damns Huxley with faint praise, and says that Ingersoll's reply to Gladstone "does not require any consideration." This is the famous old trick of the ostrich. But it doesn't pay.

Handbills have reached us of four public discussions at Swindon between Pastor King and Mr. H. Jones, who is described as "a Secularist." The subjects are rather curiously worded, and one evening's discussion is to be on Bible Morality "for men only." This is a condition which we have always regarded as objectionable. Secular Societies do not recognise any distinction of sex, and if women cannot be admitted at any meeting, either the subject is not one for public treatment, or it is very badly handled. Let the Christians lecture "for men only." Freethinkers should avoid it as foolish or prurient.

A Bedfordshire correspondent mentions that at Sewell in that county he heard of some badgers who had made their abode in a disused Quaker's burial ground, and had also made very free with the remains of departed Friends there. He thinks the fact may be adduced as "an additional reason in favor of incineration," and adds, "it's bad enough for some of us to be badgered whilst living."

The Rev. J. V. Sutton, presiding at the Chester-le-Street meeting of the Religious Tract Society, said that "a certain paper called the *Freethinker* had lately lamented the powerful influence of the society." We do not remember our lamentation. Possibly it is just as true as the story which immediately follows, of "the conversion of a young man who pretended to be an infidel" by means of one of the society's tracts.

The *Church Times* defends the empty City churches on the ground that they offer the mute witness of their consecrated walls to people apt to be lost in worldliness. We should fancy a few consecrated hoardings might be even more useful.

The wave of secession to Rome continues to roll on. According to the *English Churchman*, the principal of the Oxford University Mission at Calcutta has followed the example of the head of a similar mission at Bombay, and joined the Papists, who have also received the Revs. W. Tatlock, R. Beasley and G. Clark, besides numerous lay converts, those converted at Brighton being estimated at five hundred.

"Nebuchadnezzar" is the title of an oratorio performed this week at St. James's Hall. We presume there will be a pastural symphony descriptive of the king grazing, and some firework fugues representing Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace.

The South Wales *Echo* sees nothing startling in some of the Welsh Wesleyan Methodists asking Cardinal Manning and the Marquis of Bute to subscribe to the building of a Methodist chapel. It says, "Christians are everywhere showing a desire to come nearer to one another whenever possible, especially in the face of Giant's Doubt and Despair that threaten the stronghold from without." That's it. Whatever semblance of unity there is comes upon compulsion, but when the Catholic lion lies down with the Wesleyan lamb the Methodist will be inside.

Charles Wells, a Staffordshire magistrate, and an ironmaster in a large way of business at Wolverhampton, shot himself through the head in the Queen's Hotel, Coventry. He left a letter for his solicitor, concluding with the words, "May God bless and prosper you and yours." The poor man's head was turned by financial losses, though he was not reduced to want. We merely mention the case as another fact for Talmage.

Sir Edwin Arnold has poetised the Life of Buddha in Tennysonian blank verse, and the volume has had a considerable sale. Its well-known title is *The Light of Asia*. He is now writing *The Light of the World*—that is of the fourth part of the world which possesses Christianity. Its subject will be the Life of Jesus, and we daresay it will be written from a *Daily Telegraph* point of view. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are evidently played out.

The conference of the African M. E. Church expelled the Rev. G. H. Smith on the remarkable charge of being a thief, a fugitive from justice, and a conjuror.

Some American holy humbugs appropriately chose April 1 for a Convention at Washington of those who want to insert God into the Constitution of the United States. Joe Cook was the leading spirit. If the Americans are wise his wind will be wasted.

Stewart Headlam asked the London School Board to banish Bible reading and explaining from its schools. Copeland Bowie seconded the motion. Both these gentlemen are "reverends." The motion was supported by Mrs. Besant. Apparently it had no other friend, which is somewhat surprising. The opposition was led by the Hon. Lyulph Stanley and Professor Gladstone. The former cited the authority of "the late Arthur Arnold"—we suppose it means Matthew Arnold—as to the beneficial effect of Bible teaching; but he forgets to say that the same Mr. Arnold had likened the Christian Trinity to three Lord Shaftesburys. The Grand Old Man's kinsman soared on the wings of prophecy. He predicted that "candidates for the Board who proposed to exclude the Bible from the schools would have very little chance of being elected." Well, we shall see. A few Secular Education candidates were returned at the last and next time we may do still better.

Ultimately the "friends of the Bible"—that is, the folk who force it down the mental throats of children without mastication or saliva—burked the motion by passing "the previous question," the *Star* says by thirty-six votes to two. But where was the third vote? There should at least have been three.

The *Age*, a Melbourne paper of March 22, reports "An important seizure of blasphemous literature was made by the Customs authorities yesterday in the shape of the Christmas number of a freethought publication. The contents of this particular number were exceedingly coarse and ribald, and very little consideration was required, after a glance at them, to cause them to be pronounced unfit for circulation. The parcel, which came by mail from Sydney, was, therefore, taken possession of by the Customs officers and burned." No further particulars have yet come to hand, but we hope soon to obtain further information from our Australian friends.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 11, Free Library, South Shields; at 11, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; at 3, "Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Bible"; at 7, "Is there a Future Life?"

May 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.
June 1, Hall of Science, London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

L. STANLEY'S subscription of 2s. 6d. should have been acknowledged as from him and F. Zambia.

A. TARN.—We are overcrowded with copy at present.

G. H.—Hardly a profane joke. Thanks, however. It may be worked in later on.

A. GUEST.—Presently.

H. BEE.—(1) Among his miscellaneous verses. (2) Thackeray's *Four Georges*, the Greville Memoirs, and Walpole's Letters. The first is a cheap book, the others are dear.

F. ABLARD.—The Second Series of *Bible Heroes* were delayed by an accident, and Mr. Foote has been too busy since to remedy it. But the volume will be ready before the end of this month, and Mr. Forder will then execute your order with others.

A. E. HINE.—The card arrived too late to be of service.

K. FIELD.—We don't doubt a word of your letter, but we cannot afford to fight a libel case against a big hospital. Thanks for the cutting.

W. R.—We will see if there is substance enough in the Scottish Spurgeon's deliverances to found a Letter upon. See "Acid Drops."

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec. North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—E. Elcoat, 5s.; Stockton Branch, £1 0s. 7d.; a Friend, 1s.; Mr. Greenwell, 2s. 6d.; West Hartlepool Branch, 17s.; Darlington Branch, 7s. 6d.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 10s.; West Auckland Branch, 6s. 9d.; Oxhill Branch, 10s.; Newcastle Branch, 9s.; Samuel Seal, towards Mr. Foote's tour, £3.

J. N.—Mr. Forder has issued a catalogue, which he will supply on application.

J. WEBB.—The manuscript is under consideration. You will hear from us shortly.

SENEX.—The President of the National Secular Society has no more control over the Hall of Science platform than you have. It is a matter, therefore, in which he cannot possibly interfere. He has already given his opinion as to the policy of the Secular platform being used for the advocacy of what ninety-nine (at least) out of every hundred Secularists are opposed to, and what most of them regard as rank superstition.

R. S. BRANSBY.—We cannot be supposed to have a personal knowledge of every member of the party. If Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Daniel Baker will stand sponsors it shall be inserted. Everyone must see that there must be *some* conditions of publicity.

IN consequence of Mr. Foote's absence many correspondents remain unanswered this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought Boston Investigator—Fritankeren—Twentieth Century—Freedom—Citizen—Transvaal Standard—Kentish Mercury—Chester-le-Street Advertiser—La Lanterne—Mot d'Ordre—L'Etoile—La Rennovator—La Verité—Newcastle Leader—Newcastle Chronicle—Sussex Daily News—El Radical—Northern Daily Telegraph—Liberty.

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

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Fourth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
James Fisher	1	0	0	H. J. Putz	0	5	0
H. M. Ridgway	0	3	0	W. Anderson	0	5	0
Peter Weston	1	0	0	J. G. Barnes	0	2	6
G. Anderson	2	2	0	A. Carter	1	1	0
H. S. Ashford	0	5	0	J. H. E.	0	10	0
C. H. B. (per R. O. Smith)	1	0	0	W. Stewart	0	5	0

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Report of Executive.
3. Treasurer's Report.
4. Election of President. Motion by Finsbury Branch:—
   That Mr. G. W. Foote be President for 1890-1.
5. Election of Vice-Presidents.
   [*The following are nominated by Executive.*]

G. Anderson.	Dr. E. Schlaeger.
Daniel Baker.	Thos. Slater.
Hypatia Bradlaugh-Bonner.	R. O. Smith.
Prof. Ludwig Büchner.	Joseph Symes.
W. W. Collins.	Geo. Standring.
P. A. V. Le Lubez.	J. Swaagman.
J. Pratt.	E. Truelove.
W. H. Reynolds.	

5a. Motion by Finsbury Branch:—
That Mr. J. M. Wheeler be elected a Vice-President.
6. Election of Treasurer.
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Election of Secretary.
9. Announcement relating to certain shares.
10. Notice of motion by G. W. Foote:—
(1) That the yearly subscription of membership be altered to a minimum of one shilling, each member being allowed to fix his subscription in excess of that amount according to his means and inclination.
(2) That Branches shall henceforth pay to the central fund the sum of sixpence per year for each member.
(3) That the Propagandist and General funds be henceforth merged into one.
(4) That it is advisable to consolidate and centralise the lecturing system except in cases where the lecturers work on the plan of taking the surplus of proceeds; and that (2) an attempt should at once be made to send lecturers on tour at the expense of the central fund, the Branches being expected to bear the necessary local expenses; and that (3), when a charge for admission is made at such lectures, the Branches shall forward to the General Secretary a statement of receipts and expenditure, and remit to him one-half of any balance that may remain in hand.
(5) That instead of a special collection for the Propagandist Fund, every branch shall make at least one annual collection for the general purposes of the Society, and remit the same within a fortnight to the General Secretary.
11. Notice of motion by Birmingham Branch:—
That in future no person shall hold the office of President for more than three years in succession.

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12. Notice of motion by Newcastle Branch:—

That the Conference instruct the Executive to take active steps to bring about the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and exhort all Freethinkers in the United Kingdom to bring pressure to bear wherever possible upon Parliamentary candidates.

13. Notice of motion by Liverpool Branch:—

That it is desirable that the Annual Conferences should be held only in towns affording facilities for access, and that the expenses attending them should in part at least be defrayed from the general fund.

14. Any other business.

After the above business is concluded, the Conference will be thrown open and all Freethinkers can then take part therein; but on the above business none but members of the National Secular Society can speak or vote.

The morning sitting will open at 10.30 and close at 12.30; the afternoon sitting will open at 2.30, closing at 4.30; the evening sitting opening at 7.

The Conference will be held at the SECULAR HALL, RUSHOLME STREET, MANCHESTER.

At the Public Meeting in the evening addresses will be given by G. W. Foote, J. M. Robertson, Arthur B. Moss, R. Forder, and others.

J. M. ROBERTSON,
G. STANDRING. } *Agenda Committee.*

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had good audiences [at Newcastle on Sunday. The afternoon lecture, "A Defence of Atheism," in reply to the Rev. Walter Walsh, was well reported in the next day's *Leader*, and still better in the *Chronicle*. After the evening lecture a collection was taken on behalf of the North Eastern Secular Federation. During the day the Newcastle Branch enrolled seven new members.

The Newcastle Branch is making excellent headway. It has over a hundred financial members, and a great many outside supporters and sympathisers. It is now seeking better premises for its ordinary meetings, and if it succeeds in this quest it will undoubtedly very much improve its position. Mr. Joseph Brown is an energetic leader, and he is well backed up by a strong committee. An extremely gratifying and promising feature of the Branch is the number of earnest and intelligent young men it comprises.

The sale of the *Freethinker* has largely increased in Newcastle and is still increasing. Mr. Peter Weston, in Newgate Street, began by selling a dozen or two; at the time of Mr. Foote's last visit he was selling seventy copies weekly; he is now selling a hundred. The paper is also sold by other newsagents in Newcastle and Gateshead.

Mr. Foote concluded the Camberwell course of Free Lectures on Friday last. There was a considerably improved attendance, notwithstanding the fine weather, and a large proportion of strangers. Next season, with better advertising, these Free Lectures will probably be a great success.

Despite advancing summer, the London Secular Federation has arranged for a course of Thursday evening Free Lectures in the West-end. They will be delivered in the hall of the Hammersmith Club. The lectures have been fixed for Thursday evenings, May 15, 22, 29 and June 5. Mr. Foote will deliver one of the course. The Hammersmith Club is situated at No. 1 The Grove, Broadway.

The Federation has not been able to arrange for a course of Free Lectures in the East-end. There has been a great difficulty in obtaining a suitable hall at a reasonable rent. A Church schoolroom was offered by a clergyman, but he stipulated a variety of impossible conditions. He evidently thought them perfectly just, but that only shows how the clergy are accustomed to having everything their own way. The East-end will have to wait for its Free Lectures till the fall of the year, when a strong effort will be made to carry our propaganda among that vast working population.

The immense demonstration in Hyde Park last Sunday was notable as signalising not only how rapidly social problems are coming to the front, but how entirely secular interests are displacing theological ones on the Sunday. Here were half a million of people gathered together all concerned in a matter of worldly interest and with bands and banners expressing secular sentiments. Whatever else it showed, the demonstration certainly proved that the so-called sanctity of the Sabbath has no hold on the workers of London.

The debate upon the Disestablishment of the Scotch Church was notable for two things, the division in which as many as 218 voted in favor of disestablishment and disendowment as against 256, and the declaration of the Marquis of Hartington that "in voting against the motion they were not voting that an indefinite continuance of the present state of affairs was desirable."

Despite the energies of the Church party, the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill has once more passed the Commons by an increased majority, and it now remains to be seen if the lawn-sleeves in the Lords will again reject a measure legitimatising unions which are legitimate in all our colonies.

The *Sussex Daily News* has a very sensible leader on the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. It ridicules the idea of the bishops deciding such a matter, and says "We are governed by the common sense of the community and not by the traditions of parsons."

We admire the pluck of the Rev. Stewart Headlam and J. Copeland Bowie in bringing their motion for the abolition of Bible reading before the London School Board, though we are surprised they were not better supported by the other members of the Board. Mr. Headlam's speech is given in this month's *Church Reformer*.

The Newcastle Sunday Music League has sustained a check, which we hope, however, will only stimulate its efforts. The town's meeting, convened by the Mayor, showed a majority against Sunday freedom. But this success of the bigots was won by a hard whipping up in the churches and Sunday schools, and some characteristic rowdyism to boot. The *Daily Leader* admits that the majority against the League was "not nearly so large as anyone who watched the meeting would have suspected," and confesses that "the body of persons in the hall in favor of Sunday music was large enough to show a volume of opinion that might make itself felt."

The Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. held its annual meeting last Sunday. The balance-sheet and the report of the energetic secretary, Mr. Doeg, was adopted, and the outgoing officers re-elected. A donation of £1 from "B" was acknowledged. A committee was appointed and delegates nominated to the Manchester Conference.

At the third meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation, held at Laycock's Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford, it was decided to hold a demonstration at Shipley Glen on June 8, at 3 p.m. A picnic at Highfield House, Morton, near Bingley, on the 18th of May, at 2 p.m., was also arranged for.

Our French friends keep Whit Sunday as a Feast of Flowers and Youth. This year they have an excursion to Meudon, a parish for ever celebrated since the Freethinker Rabelais was appointed curé thereof. We hope there will be a large gathering, and we are sure there will be plenty of enjoyment.

We have received a copy of a new Spanish Republican and Freethought paper entitled *El Radical*. It is edited by Odon de Buen, one of the Spanish delegates to the Freethought Conference at Paris. The first number gives a portrait of Senor Figueras, the first President of the Spanish Republic in 1873.

Mr. J. M. Robertson is having another set debate at the London Hall of Science. It comes off on Wednesday and Thursday, May 21 and 22. His opponent is the Rev. Mr. Ford, an "advanced" Christian. The subject of debate is, "Is Christianity True?"

Mr. A. B. Moss intends to do a lecturing tour during his annual holiday, from July 26 to August 16. He will be glad

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to arrange for visiting South Lancashire, Tyneside, and, if possible, Ireland and Wales.

There has been a big two night's debate at the Metropolitan Temple, San Francisco, between Samuel P. Putnam and Moses Hull, on the question "Do the Phenomena of Spiritualism Demonstrate a Future Life?" Both disputants are unbelievers in Christianity. Moses Hull, who takes the affirmative, is a skilled debater, and Mr. Putnam has occupied the position of President of the American Secular Union.

Mr. Putnam, who has been both an orthodox and a Unitarian preacher, has issued a narrative of his phases of religious thought, entitled "My Religious Experience."

The *Truthseeker* has taken up the cause of the Swedish Freethinkers, and has several letters on the subject. One encloses a letter from Mr. Lennstrand, written from prison. Mr. Lennstrand says: "I see the dawning of a better day in this country. I do not stand alone in this struggle, for thousands have declared themselves willing to fight for truth and liberty for this and coming generations. Our organisation is growing stronger every day, and I only wish my countrymen in America would do something jointly to drive away all nonsense, prejudice and superstition that has bedimmed our eyes and stolen away interest for our real welfare."

One of the lectures for which Mr. Lennstrand has been imprisoned is translated into English and published by Mr. Forder, with an introduction by Mr. Wheeler.

By paying nothing to authors or their representatives, American publishers are able to issue reprints of English works very cheaply. We see that the Humboldt Publishing Co., of New York, is issuing a number of standard works of Freethought tendency, such as Mr. S. Laing's *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, J. Stuart Mill's *Utilitarianism*, etc., at prices which should command a large sale and do much to spread Liberal ideas in the States.

Dr. Büchner has prepared a paper on "The Future History of Humanity in the Light of the Development Theory," which he will read before the German Freethought Conference at Hannover.

A translation of Arthur Schopenhauer's Aphorisms has just been published by Messrs. Swan, Sonnenschien and Co., It is entitled "The Wisdom of Life." Mr. T. Bailey Saunders, the translator, contributes a preface.

Professor John Fiske opens the *Popular Science Monthly* for May with an account of the life of Edward L. Youmans, including the story of his association with Herbert Spencer. Professor Fiske was a warm friend of the late Professor Youmans, and describes his fruitful labors in popularising science and the evolution philosophy in America with sympathetic appreciation. Herbert Spencer also writes on "Justice," and the Bishop of Carlisle on "Dr. Wallace on Darwinism."

Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy has been epitomised by Mr. F. Howard Collins, whose book is already in a second edition. It is a notable sign of the times to find so many readers for such a work.

Mr. Swinburne contributed a fervent poem "In Memory of Aurelio Saffi" to last week's *Athenæum*. The two following stanzas show that the poet retains his hatred of priests—

No hate of man, but hate of hate, whose foam
Sheds poison forth from tongues of snakes and priests,
And stains the sickening air with steams whence Rome
Now feeds not full the God that slays and feasts;
For now the fangs of all the ravenous beasts
That ramped about him, fain of prayer and prey,
Fulfil their lust no more: the tide of day
Swells, and compels him down the deathward way.

Night sucks the Church its creature down, and hell
Yawns, heaves, and yearns to clasp its loathliest child
Close to the breasts that bore it. All the spell
Whence darkness saw the dawn in heaven defiled
Is dumb as death: the lips that lied and smiled
Wax white for fear as ashes. She that bore
The banner up of darkness now no more
Sheds night and fear and shame from shore to shore.

The *Stockwhip* has reached us from Brisbane, Queensland. It is edited by Wallace Nelson, and in its first number proclaims that "Christianity will be the special object of our attack." Mr. Nelson has entered upon a bold enterprise, in which we wish him all success.

The *Stockwhip* has a column headed "Freethought all over the World," in which it makes the following reference to ourselves: "'No one,' says Mrs. Besant, 'can hope to take Mr. Bradlaugh's place in the hearts of the thousands who love his personality'; and in another place she says, 'his loss is irreparable.' Now we think all this is overdrawn. The Freethought movement must ultimately stand or fall on the truth or falsity of its principles; no mere man, however great, is indispensable. Besides, Mr. Bradlaugh will still remain a Freethinker, and continue, at least with his pen, to advocate our principles. Where the 'irreparable loss' comes in we fail to see. There is only one man in England who has a right to take Mr. Bradlaugh's place. Mr. Foote by his culture, his capacity, and his courage has won the right to be regarded as England's representative Freethinker. No man understands our principles better, or loves our cause more dearly. The National Secular Society will honor itself by making him President."

The *Stockwhip* commences a novel by the editor entitled "God and Man." It promises to depict the career of a youth from Theology to Secularism, and we suspect contains some autobiographical matter.

Messrs. Rose and Seago, who went out to Johannesburg, in the Transvaal, are evidently doing something for Freethought in that locality. In two different papers we have received from Johannesburg there are Freethought items such as would scarcely be admitted into any of our newspapers.

Mr. Foote's article, "God in a Coal Pit," is reprinted with acknowledgment in our esteemed exchange, the *Ironclad Age*.

We publish in another column the Agenda of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Manchester on Whit-Sunday. It is to be hoped that every Branch that has not yet appointed delegates will do so without delay. The 1890 Conference will probably be a turning-point in the Society's history.

"THE DEVIL'S PRAYERS."

Such a title as "The Devil's Prayers" would be blasphemous if it emanated from a Freethinker. As, however, it originates with a popular preacher who placards the East End of London with announcements of this subject as his leading article in his religious magazine *The Shield and Spear*, it is evident that the title is perfectly consistent with godliness, truth and respectability. If there is any doubt in these points, the responsibility will lie with the Rev. W. Evans Hurndall, M.A., who issues the address. He commences thus:—

"A strange subject that, some one cries! We did not know, say others, that Satan was in the habit of praying. But he is! And he is very much fonder of praying than a good many Christians are! He shames the mass of believers by his zeal and fervency in supplication. Come away to olden times, and see in Job i., 6—12, and ii., 1—6.; how he prayed concerning the patriarch, and how he prevailed in prayer. Turn to Matt. iv., 1—11, and note how he prayed to the Lord Jesus and did *not* prevail. Read in Rev. xii., 10, about the accuser of the brethren, who accused them before God day and night: plenty of prayer mixed up with those accusations. Yes! Satan is a great hand at prayer. And he is by far the more dangerous because he knows how to use this weapon, and to use it in many adroit ways. Do we not sing,

'And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees?'

But how do matters look when Satan himself takes to his knees! And how do matters look when Satan takes to his knees, *but the weak saint does not!* Brothers and sisters, we had better pray. Life is largely 'a battle of prayers.' Let us pray—for Satan is praying against us, and that in many ways."

If the preacher desired further confirmation of his belief, or pretended belief, in a praying Devil, he might have shown his congregation that the little devils could pray as well as the big Devil himself.

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He could have told them how the devils "besought" Jesus that they might enter into two thousand pigs, and how graciously and pitifully their supreme Lord and Master answered their prayer of faith by granting the desired boon without any regard to the feelings of the pigs and their owners, who apparently were most righteously punished for failing to offer prayer to the incarnate deity to whom even the devils bent the knee. The good pastor could point to these devils, and recommend his audience to imitate them in praying to Jesus not to torment them (Luke viii., 28), or at least not to torment them before their time (Mark v., 7). At the same time he might explain why the natural desire to escape torment is so grand and glorious a motive in the Christian, although it is shared by the devils who equally "believe and tremble."

Modern preachers, however, with any pretension to knowledge and culture, fight shy of the little devils who talked to Jesus two thousand years ago, but who very sensibly retire from business as fast as they are discredited by the growth of reason and science. Even the great Devil they convert as far as possible and as often as possible into a figure of speech, or allegorical personification of moral evil; although they are perfectly willing to dangle the puppet before the eyes of those who are still frightened by it. How far the Rev. W. Evans Hurndall is one of the conscious or unconscious hypocrites I have no means of knowing. He certainly professes belief in the personal Devil who afflicted Job and planted Jesus on a pinnacle of a temple, and yet he does not carry out such views to their logical conclusion. Perhaps he is one of the many preachers who believe in Satan with their lips but not with their hearts and understandings. He keeps a devil just as he does a parrot, but keeps them both caged up and utilizes them both in the same offhand way, as models of conduct as far as earnest praying is concerned. He says:

"When we pray, let us pray as Satan does—with all our might of earnestness. I have a parrot at home who prays a great deal better than many of you do. When she wants anything she crawls up to the top of her cage, hangs backward, holding on by her talons, and then shrieks as though she would shriek the house down. Magnificent earnestness that! She generally gets what she wants, and that pretty speedily too. She is a grand hand at prayer, that parrot."

Having learned to pray like the devil and like a parrot, we are next told to notice that "not only does Satan himself pray, but he teaches others to do so." He commonly converts the Lord's Prayer into a Devil's Prayer, it seems, and causes the latter prayer to be uttered with the greater sincerity and fervency. He teaches weak Chiristians to wish that their heavenly Father may not keep a rod, but may rather break it, or burn it, or destroy it in any way rather than make them uncomfortable with chastisements from above instead of the pleasant gifts they desire. He teaches men to wish on that their own will may be done rather than the Lord's, and that God's kingdom shall not come, because life would not be worth living then with all its pious restrictions and worries. The artful Devil also causes falling saints to ask for cheese and butter, and meat, and fine houses and furniture and clothes besides the daily "bread" which is apparently all they ought to ask for; and he tempts them to wish for more than the "daily" food which should content the faithful who are willing to live from hand to mouth, in full reliance on the Lord's continued help. He makes them want to "know about to-morrow as well as to-day" and to see a good way ahead" and to acquire money and property, for fear the Lord might forget the family meals some day, and might not prove quite so regular and certain as the daily calls of the butcher and baker and greengrocer. The popular preacher forgets to tell us whether it is the Devil that inspires the desire for a parrot and other luxuries, and the pastor's desire for a good income, and his habitual trust in the baker and butcher and the power of cash and property and secured prospects rather than an implicit reliance on divine providence, *plus* human improvidence and ceaseless prayer.

There is one consideration which never by any chance occurs to preachers so far as *their own* beliefs or assertions are concerned. If the Devil inspires prayers or wishes may he not inspire sermons and teachings? May he not enter the pulpit as well as the pew or the confessional? Does so cunning a deceiver stupidly refrain from misleading priests and evangelists? Would he not be likely to poison the waters at the fountain-head? Would he not introduce plausible forgeries into the Bible and all manner of errors and delusions into the minds of the conflicting teachers of conflicting sects? May there not be Devil's Sermons and Devil's Doctrines as well as Devil's Prayers? And may not the condemnation of human forethought and human providence, and the glorification of self-seeking prayer and mendacious terrorism and fraud and folly proceed from a bad source rather than a good one?

If the preacher is right in his views, Satan's prayers must be far more efficacious than those of Christians. For nearly two thousand years Christians have prayed for the conversion of the world and the coming of Christ's kingdom. Yet Satan's wishes and prayers to the contrary have so far prevailed that not a fourth of the world's population is converted, and science and Freethought are fast undermining and dissolving their belief. Even among this Christian section of mankind, the Protestant sub-section must own that Satan has perverted the belief of the majority of Christians into the gross superstition and immorality of Popery and the Greek Church, to say nothing of Mormons, Anabaptists and so forth, who have only been put down by physical force. Up to the present the Devil has been more powerful than Jesus. Jesus, for whose prayers on our behalf we are to pray, has not prayed with sufficient energy. The ministers should stir him up "with strong crying and tears" till he too is in as "deadly earnest" in his prayers, as we are told that his great and successful rival is. How can Jesus and his followers ever expect to convert the world if they allow themselves to be beaten by their adversary even in their own special line of praying?

One important question the Rev. Evans Hurndall never attempts to solve. He does not tell us why God answers the Devil's Prayers, or permits them to be answered, instead of fulfilling the prayers and wishes of his omnipotent Son and of earnest Christians in general. Good Christians must be content to know that Satan's successes are somehow achieved by prayer, and that if they would imitate his successes they must imitate the means by which he gains them. They must never venture to suspect that the Devil himself speaks from the Christian platform to recommend reliance on prayer, while he laughs in his sleeve at his poor dupes and resorts to more active and more effective means of baffling their pious intentions. Still less may they venture to suspect that the Christian bogey is a contemptible fraud, or a mere figure of speech. They must rest assured that any such suspicion would be a sure and certain proof of the presence and activity of the Great Tempter, and they must at once expel him and his insidious suggestions by the power of Christian prayer. Whether the Christian prayers for crushing thought and reason under the heel of blind credulity may not be Devil's Prayers, is an idea that must be similarly crushed under the great steam-roller of faith as another subtle device of the terrible enemy of mankind. If there is no Devil there is no need of a Savior. God and Satan, heaven and hell, must disappear together, and what would the Christian do then, poor thing? What could possibly restrain him from ruining the world by his inevitable indulgence

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in the awful vices and terrible crimes for which he proclaims his almost unconquerable predilection? The poor Christian libels himself. He would survive the loss of his darling Devil and even of his beloved priest, just as well as Sinbad survived the loss of his Old Man of the Sea. When Christendom attains manhood it will smile at the lost bogey of its childhood, and live by higher ideals and wiser rules than were possible while degrading superstitions still maintained a hold upon men's feelings and upon their daily life.

W. P. BALL.

OBITUARY.

Died on May 1, at Derby, James Birken, aged 58, after a lingering illness. A stedfast friend, a kind husband, indulgent father, and staunch Freethinker. His last wish was to be buried as he had lived, a Secularist.

The funeral of John Cole, an energetic member of the Bethnal Green Branch, took place on April 30, at Finchley Cemetery. There was a large gathering; Mr. Forder read the Secular Burial Service.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. Soddy, "The English Language and the Confusion of Tongues."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Free Concert. Social evening every Tuesday.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, Capt. Pfoundes, F.R.G.S., "Philosophic Buddhism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30 Mrs. Annie Besant, "An Answer to the Question: What is your Opinion about Spiritualism?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, "Some Popular Mistakes about the Church's Teachings."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "And yet it Moves"; 9, music, etc.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Free Will and Responsibility."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Calvert, "Is Matter able of Itself to Produce its Phenomenon?"

Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Faith and Freethought."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3, Lucretius Keen, "Holy Morality."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney "The Bible against Civilisation."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "A Future State."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, W. Heaford, "A Vindication of Freethought."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Men who have Risen."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 6.30, Sam Standring, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Plaistow Green, 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Is there a God?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. J. Marshall, "Who Shall Deliver me from the Body of This Death?"

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, a Freethought lecture.

COUNTRY.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S, 122 Ingram Street, 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Secularism in Glasgow, 1881-90."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, Mr. H. Smith, 11, "By the Grace of God I am what I am"; 3, "What Think ye of Christ"; 7, "The Child of Hell."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. E. S. Jones, "A Defence of Atheism."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, a meeting of Sunday Music League to make arrangements for concerts on Town Moor; 3, fortnightly financial meeting of members.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Hore will read Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, Dr. Gaunt, the deferred humorous lecture on "Magic," with startling illusory experiments.

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean Road, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 3, "Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Bible"; 7, "Is there a Future Life?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—May 11, (morning), Camberwell; 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25 (afternoon), Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End. July 13, Mile End.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—May 11, Hanley; 25, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton Liverpool.—May 11, Liverpool; 18, Failsworth. June 8, Manchester.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—May 11 (morning), Wood Green; 18 (morning), Mile End Waste; 25 (morning), Battersea. June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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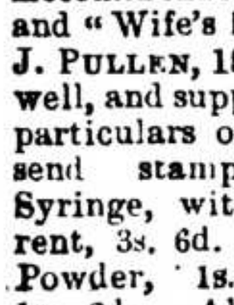

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 20.] SUNDAY, MAY 18, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE ON THE CREATION STORY.

[CONCLUDED.]

Now let us return to the centre of Mr. Gladstone's argument. Everything turns upon his convenient theory that the six days of creation are not six literal days, but six "chapters in the history of the creation." By this means he seeks to overcome the difficulty of the fact that the order of creation in Genesis does not properly correspond with the teachings of Evolution. The Mosaic writer, it appears, anticipated the modern fashion of writing history, of which we have the first great example in Gibbon. His order is not strictly chronological, but in accord with his subject matter. Thus "in point of chronology his chapters overlay." So that, if light exists three days before the creation of the sun, the explanation is that the Mosaist simply puts them in different chapters, not for chronological reasons, but for a special purpose. And what was that purpose? Mr. Gladstone says it was "to convey moral and spiritual training." He goes to the length of saying that "the conveyance of scientific instruction" would not have been "a reasonable object for the Mosaic writer to pursue." An ordinary person might suppose the Deity capable of imparting scientific instruction as well as moral instruction, and the Jews capable of receiving the one as well as the other. Mr. Gladstone's theory implies a very serious limitation of God's power, or a no less serious misconception of the causes of human progress. Is not science as necessary as morality? Is there much use in desiring the welfare of mankind without the knowledge of how to promote it? Will a good-hearted doctor do a patient any service if he is lacking in skill? Buckle, indeed, contended that civilisation was entirely owing to the advance of the intellect, and very much the same contention was advanced by Macaulay. But here is Mr. Gladstone arguing that "moral and spiritual training" is most necessary, while mental training is so unimportant that the Deity wisely refrained from taking the trouble to assist us in that respect.

We have already said that Mr. Gladstone's interpretation of the "six days" as "six chapters" is arbitrary. Neither the chosen people, nor their inspired teachers, ever understood their cosmogony in that sense. They existed before the days of antagonism between the Bible and Science, when new meanings have to be discovered in every part of God's Word. They took the language of Genesis, as the Church of England presents its Articles, in the plain, grammatical sense of the words. It is too late to rescue the Mosaist in Mr. Gladstone's manner. The "six chapters" theory is worthy of the old parliamentary hand, but he himself perceives its inadequacy, or why does he endeavor to show that the chronological order of creation is after all in harmony with the conclusions of modern science? Will it be believed that after pressing his super-subtle argument through thick and thin; after declaring that day is not day, and morning and evening not morning and evening; after claiming that the Mosaist sacrificed chronology for the sake of shaping his chapters so as to convey a moral and spiritual and not a scientific lesson; will it be believed that, after all this, Mr. Gladstone goes on to argue for so close an agreement between Genesis and Science that nothing short of inspiration is adequate to account for it? Yet that is precisely what he does. "The Creation Story in Genesis," he asserts, "appears to stand in such a relation to the facts of natural science so far as they are ascertained, as to warrant our concluding that they first proceeded, in a manner above the ordinary manner, from the Author of the visible creation." Or as he expresses it in his concluding sentences, "to warrant and require thus far the conclusion that the Ordainer of Nature, and the Giver or Guide of the Creation Story, are one and the same."

This is clearly a complete change of front. The "six chapters" theory is virtually discarded as useless, and Mr. Gladstone proceeds to defend the scientific character of Genesis. The Creation Story was a scientific lesson after all, only it was skilfully disguised. Moses anticipated Darwin; in fact, Moses is the original author and Darwin is only the commentator. Such is the true character of Mr. Gladstone's theory, and in arguing it he flounders, as might be expected, in a morass of bad science, bold assumption, and wild exegesis.

According to Genesis the earth was at first "without form and void," a description hard to realise, and "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now Mr. Gladstone is aware that "the Hebrew word for earth means earth, and the word used for water never means anything but water." How then is this to be explained away? Why easily. The Hebrew word always means water, but the Mosaist meant something else. He meant that the world was at first *fluid*, and as the people he wrote for only knew of one extensive fluid, namely water, he called it water to suit their comprehension. But in reality he was adumbrating the nebular hypothesis. That, at any rate, is what Mr. Gladstone argues, and we will not venture to refute him. We can only stare with astonishment at his coolness—not to use a harsher word; and we suspect that the writers of the Creation Story, if they could live again and read Mr. Gladstone's article, would be quite as astonished as we are.

The Mosaist, it seems, not only sketched (in a very occult manner) the nebular theory, but showed how "the *chaos* passed into *cosmos*, or, in other words, how confusion became order, medley became sequence, seeming anarchy became majestic law, and horror softened into beauty." But *chaos* is not a doctrine of science. It belongs to the old Pagan cosmogonies. The laws of nature obtained in the fiery cloud whirled off from the sun precisely as they do now it has cooled down into a solid planet. According to Mr. Gladstone's science, if we may reason from analogy,

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there is *cosmos* in a cubic inch of cold water, and *chaos* in a cubic foot of steam.

With regard to the existence of light three days before the sun, Mr. Gladstone tells us that it simply means (observe how he knows what the Mosaist *meant* but did not *say*) that the sun became visible in that stage. The earth's photosphere, or something, cleared away, and "the visibility of the sun was established"—when there was no one to see it. The "light-power" became "concentrated by the operation of the rotatory principle," and —— But how on earth are we to go on? Our gravity is not equal to Mr. Gladstone's. We require an interval for laughter.

Modern science has told us the truth about the stars. Outside our solar system there are other and mightier systems. But it was natural for the Jews to regard the stars as dots of light. The sun and the moon were the "two great lights," and the stars were thrown in with an "also." But "relativity is the basis of the narrative," and the Mosaist wrote like an ignoramus, not because he was not as wise as Herschel, but because his readers were too thick-headed to learn the truth. He was like the gentleman in the play, who "could an' he would."

The Mosaist also tells us that not only grasses, but the later fruit trees, grew before the sun shone upon the earth. This nonsense was exposed by Professor Huxley, but Mr. Gladstone has not profited by that discussion. Assuming that the sun, in the Creation Story, can be shuffled in before the earth, and that our planet was veiled in vapor, he argues that "there were light and heat, atmosphere with its conditions of moist and dry, soil prepared to do its work in nutrition," and so the Mosaist is saved by the skin of his teeth. But the argument is really too barefaced. Fruit trees are not a part of the world's primitive fauna. They are probably later than man himself.

Mr. Gladstone strains his faculties in vain to reconcile the Creation Story with palœontology. He cannot work in reptiles and marsupials, so he says they did not come within the Mosiast's "moral and spiritual" purpose. Then there is the difficulty that fish and fowl are created on the same day, while geology shows they are separated by millions of years. But day does not mean day. The Mosaist simply puts them in the same chapter, and he puts the fowl after the fish, and that is the right order.

After all this special pleading, the credit of the Mosaist being saved at every point by incessant assumption and forced logic, Mr. Gladstone advances to his triumphant conclusion. The Creation Story is a perfect miracle of scientific anticipation, and if God did not write it who did? But it will be observed that the old parliamentary hand is silent as to the creation of man. "As the objector is silent," he says, "I remain silent also." The objector silent, indeed! Whatever objector has Mr. Gladstone in his mind? The account of Adam and Eve is the most difficult, and the most ludicrous, part of the Creation Story. Up to that point the writer preserves a certain grandeur, however mistaken; but the narrative of Adam's production from dust, and Eve's production from one of his ribs, to say nothing of the farce of the Fall, and the six thousand years' chronology, is positively food for mirth. Mr. Gladstone is the Rip Van Winkle of religious controversy. For seven years Darwin has lain in his grave, yet Mr. Gladstone writes as though the Newton of biology had never been born. Still Mr. Gladstone's "silence" is not without its eloquence. It shows that the champion of the Creation Story must avoid Darwinism. In the light of that great doctrine, which has revolutionised the world of thought, the Creation Story is an old fable, the drama of Eden a Semitic fiction, the Fall a fallacy, and the foundation of the Christian creed a mere fragment of oriental mythology.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE APOSTLES' SISTERS.

When Christians are told of the ill-effects of their faith, their usual plan is to attribute these effects to corruptions which crept in and tainted the original purity and simplicity of the Church. Why a divine revelation should become tainted is not explained, nor is proof offered of this original purity. The earliest Christian writings, those of Paul, exhibit a scene of perpetual strife between the apostles who adhered to the declaration of Christ that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and the self-constituted "apostle to the Gentiles." Paul boasts himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi., 5), speaks of others as "false apostles, deceitful workers" (v. 13), sneers at James, Cephas and John as seeming to be pillars (Gal. ii., 9) and declares he withstood Peter to the face because he acted the hypocrite (v. 11-13).

Paul tells us of the "envying, strife and divisions" among the believers (1 Cor. iii., 3), whom he accuses of being "drunken" at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi., 21), and of having wickedness among them such as was "not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Cor., v. 1).

Speaking of the primitive Christians, Dr. Donaldson, the editor of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, says in his paper on Christianity and Woman in the *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1889:

"The sects may be divided into two classes. Some affirmed that marriage was unnecessary, that full liberty had been conceded to them of indulging the passion, and that indeed the way to rise to perfection was by a practical acquaintance with all forms of action possible to man. Others held that marriage was immoral, that the flesh was corrupt; that those who sowed to the flesh must reap corruption, and that in the kingdom of God on earth as in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage."

Again he says:

"It is one of the most striking facts in all history that in the second century the Christians were universally believed by Pagans to be secret conspirators combined for immoral purposes, and at their trials it was sufficient for a man to confess that he was a Christian to be condemned as a licentious villain. The assertions made in regard to them were that they met in secret, that slaughtering an infant they poured his blood into a cup, and that passing this cup round they all drank of it, that then the lights were extinguished and the men and women proceeded to indiscriminate licentiousness."

Of course Dr. Donaldson does not believe in these charges, neither do I. But he agrees there was quite sufficient to give color to the accusation.

"They called each other father and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers and sisters. They were in the habit of assembling before dawn, or at night men and women together in private houses to conduct their worship. The assembly consisted of a strange assortment of characters and grades. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian Church, says to them: Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminates, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor cheats, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers, shall inherit the kingdom of God: and these things were some of you."

Two features of the Christian Church which only survive in the case of some small sects further offered ground for the Pagan charge. These were the agapæ or love feasts at night when they all supped in common, and when, as St. Paul shows (1 Cor. xi.) sometimes intoxication and riotousness prevailed. The other was the custom enjoyed by Paul himself of saluting the brethren "with a holy kiss of love," a custom found to be dangerous, or it would not have decayed, being enjoined upon believers no less then five times in the New Testament, while scores of other Christian practices—as for instance keeping the Sunday holy—are not enjoined at all.

It is noticeable that while the orthodox repelled these charges as against themselves, they were quite ready to admit they were true of the heretics. Says the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in his *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. 26. "Nicolas, a hot Pauline, and his followers, 'rushed headlong into fornication without

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shame'" [*Euseb. Hist. Eccle.* iii., 29]; he had the effrontery to produce his wife and offer her for promiscuous insult before the assembled apostles [*Ibid*]; the later Pauline Christians went further. Irenæus identifies this Nicolas with the one of the seven deacons mentioned in Acts.

M. Emile Ferrière, in his work *Les Apôtres* (Paris, 1879) expresses the conviction that "Les Apôtres dans leurs missions emenenaient chacun une concubine chrétienne." He gives a far from flattering portrait of the twelve apostles, exhibits their obtuse intelligence (Matt. xiii., 36; Mark vii., 18), superstition (Matt. xiv., 26), cupidity (Mark x., 24), jealous rivalry (Matt. xviii., 1), ingratitude and cowardice (Matt. xxvi., 56; Mark xiv., 50). Bad manners (Matt. xv., 2) is added to the indictment. He points out that Christ exhorted to celibacy (Matt. xix., 12), that the disciples were enjoined to abandon not only father and mother, but wife and child (verse 29), and that they regarded this as demanding some recompense (Matt. xix., 27). They were told that whoever had given up house or wife should receive a hundredfold "now in this time" as well as eternal life in the world to come (Mark x., 29-30; Luke xviii., 28-30). From 1 Cor. ix., 5, M. Ferrière argues that it was among the privileges of an apostle to carry about with him a sister-woman who was virtually a concubine. Since the apostles had to give up their wives, he contends that the "woman a sister" there mentioned could not bear the interpretation of being a wife. He points out that these sisters, known as agaptæ or "beloved," were frequently the occasion of scandal, and remained in the Church from the earliest times, not being definitely suppressed until the Lateran Council of 1139.

McClintock and Strong, in their *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, article "Agapetæ," say: "In the early ages of the Church this title was given to virgins who dwelt with monks and others professing celibacy, in a state of so-called *spiritual* love. This intercourse, however pure and holy it may have been at first, soon occasioned great scandal in the Church, and at length became the cause of such evils that it was synodically condemned."

Dr. Hefele, in his standard work on the Christian Councils, writing on Canon 3 of the Council of Nicæa (325) which forbids these Agapetæ or subintroducta, says: "In the first ages of the Church some Christians, clergymen and laymen, contracted a sort of spiritual marriage with unmarried persons, so that they lived together, but there was not a sexual, but a spiritual connection between them, for their mutual spiritual advancement. They were known by the name of *suneisaktoi*, agapetai and *sorores*." "That," he adds, "which began in the spirit, however, in many cases ended in the flesh."

In our own time a clergyman, the Rev. Mercer Davies, of Chiswick, has argued in favor of Christians being permitted to have concubines.* He cites the 17th Canon of the Council of Toledo, which distinctly permits those who live with a concubine to receive communion, provided they have not a wife at the same time. The clergyman finds additional reasons from the practice of the Patriarchs. In view of these facts it looks as if the question of the primitive purity of the Christians was worthy of reconsideration.

J. M. Wheeler.

According to the *Athenæum*, Stanley's forthcoming book is to have for preface an open letter to Sir William Mackinnon, in which the great traveller "repeats his determination to testify to the hand of God before the eyes of men." It is a curious study in religious psychology, how adventurous men like Stanley are prone to see the hand of God in all their successes. Did not Oliver Cromwell call his victory at Worcester "a crowning mercy"? What the Scotch thought of it was something different. The Royalists said Cromwell was in league with the Devil.

* See *Hagar, or Lawful Concubinage.*

THE GOSPEL OF FACT.

Part I.

Facts are stubborn things. As far as man is concerned, facts are everything. In the pursuit of knowledge it is facts we are after, and experience shows that, like all things valuable, they are hard to get. Schools and colleges and universities are all only institutions for the discovery and utilisation of facts, while books are the storehouses in which discovered facts are preserved for general use. The pursuit of fact is what was Stanley's mission into the heart of the Dark Continent, as it was the same pursuit that moved the great men of old to proceed in their memorable voyages of discovery around the world.

Fact and truth are synonymous terms. Both are used to describe what we know; and at any given time what we call "knowledge" is the sum of the facts or truths we have discovered. But unfortunately most people make a distinction between Fact and Truth; the former, they say, is what they know to be true, while the latter includes in addition what they only *believe* to be true. This use of the term Truth is a prostitution of its real meaning. We cannot possibly say that any belief is Truth of which we have not actual and trustworthy evidence. To believe a statement as true without adequate grounds is exceedingly foolish; to have *faith* in its truth is equally insane. Faith and Fact are totally inconsistent. Fact makes faith unnecessary, for what is a fact, or an established truth, renders faith superfluous. Faith in reality is only credulity writ large; and people who express their *faith* in the truth of any statement only admit that that statement is not a fact. A fact stands on its own legs. The crutch of faith it can neither need nor use.

In man's intercourse with man fact is the great and all-important consideration. Truth in act and truth in word are honesty, and honesty is virtue. On the other hand untruth in act and untruth in word are dishonesty, which is a social crime. In other words, fact is a virtue, and anything not in accordance with fact or contrary to it is reprehensible. This all-important fact which governs every-day life is the fact which our senses recognise and accept. Any thing extern to this is simply not a fact, and is not taken into account between man and man.

In dealing with fact our senses are the sole judge. This is self-evident, as indeed is everything I have said up to the present, for facts are always self-evident. Anything that is not patent to our senses should really have no concern for us except as speculation. Speculation in itself is harmless, and becomes objectionable only when it masquerades as truth or fact, which it has for so long succeeded in doing. The hold which speculative teaching has obtained on men's minds justifies the disciples of fact in eschewing all speculation and adhering strictly to their Gospel, which excludes nothing that is a fact, and admits nothing contrary to or unknown to human reason.

The Gospel of Fact then is the simplest of all gospels. It contains nothing that is not known to be true, and truth is simplicity itself. It is not however a stereotyped, cast-iron sort of gospel. It expands as human knowledge increases; and it accompanies the scientist in his voyages of discovery, encourages him in his investigation, and joyfully accepts the truths he is able to demonstrate. In short, the scientist—who uses nothing but fact whereby to discover other facts, and who deals with nothing but what is evident to human reason—is at once the founder, the supporter, and the preacher of the Gospel of Fact.

While the Gospel of Fact is elastic enough to accept discovered truths at all times, it is otherwise a stern, inexorable Gospel. No fine theories, however plausible or clever, can be included in its tenets, nor

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be tolerated at all except in so far as they seem to be reasonable deductions from established truths.

What we know of ourselves and of the world is the limit of the Gospel of Fact. That we exist, that we have feelings, that we have eyes to see and minds to think, are the facts that are the groundwork of all our knowledge. That there is a world, wonderful, grand and beautiful; that there are sun and moon and stars, magnificent, brilliant and moving with inexorable regularity, are facts that every human being is aware of. Practically, this is the sum total of the teachings of the Gospel of Fact. This much we know; more than this we cannot know. Our minds are such that it is beyond their power not alone to know how the world originated, but even to conceive it as originating at all. That the universe is there, and that it reveals its nature and its motions to our senses, are facts enough for us. Behind this we cannot go. Beyond the visible and apparent attributes of nature all is mystery and uncertainty; all is incomprehensible. The Gospel of Fact shuts it absolutely out, and completely ignores it. Because the mind cannot unravel the mystery is no reason why we should trouble ourselves by endeavoring to account for things by plausible explanations and apologies. We must take things as they are, admit nothing but what we know, and not bother about reconciling fact with speculation, or speculation with fact.

As to the origin of Nature, if it had an origin within human comprehension, we now know nothing, and mayhap may never know anything. As to the ultimate destiny of Nature, we are and must be in equal ignorance. But this really does not matter. Established facts are what we have to deal with, and nothing else. As to the origin of life and mind and reason, we are not in such blank ignorance. Evolution may not be the absolutely correct theory of the origin of species and the development of the human mind; but it is the nearest to the truth that we have yet been able to get. Evolution as a whole may not be allowed to form a portion of the Gospel of Fact, as it is not absolutely devoid of all speculation; but in so far as its principles are deductions from fact, and in strict accordance with human reason, it is not only allowable but essential that evolutionary principles, in the main, should form a portion of the Gospel of Fact.

It might be more satisfactory if the Gospel of Fact was not so limited as it is. With this, however, we have nothing to do. Unsatisfactory or otherwise, fact is fact. Wishing things to be different, or trying to convince ourselves that they *are* different, will not help matters. If we do try to so convince ourselves we are merely using our minds, which can only comprehend facts, for the purpose of endeavoring to explain matters which our reason tells us are inexplicable. By speculating at random the mind is abused, as it is used for purposes for which it is unfit and worthless. In strict truth, therefore, the name Freethinker is somewhat paradoxical, as it implies a man who denies himself the freedom of mind to soar into the realms of speculation, where all is doubt and uncertainty.

J. O'Donovan.

(*To be continued.*)

The criminal statistics fully justify the expenditure devoted to education since the School Board Act of 1870. In 1868-69 there was one known thief to every 1,000 of the population. In 1887-88 the percentage had fallen by nearly half, and there was only one known thief to every 1,945. The decrease in receivers of stolen goods is still more marked; in 1868-69 there was one in 8,430, in 1887-88 one in 25,595. Murders have, however, increased, which perhaps is not to be wondered at, since every condemned murderer is sure to evoke a deal of public sympathy, in addition to having secure quarters in Abraham's bosom.

ACID DROPS.

General Caprivi is apparently as pious as Prince Bismarck. In his speech on Monday he said that "the rifle and the Bible must do the work of Christianity" in Africa. That they *will* do so who doubts? They have done it in America, and in the course of a century or two the African blacks will probably be as rare as the American redskins. Their exterminators will pray and prey, and however unscrupulous the white policy may be the men of God will be found "to bless it and approve it with a text."

Any clergyman who wants a striking opportunity for a sermon on Prayer might avail himself of the recent fire at a large lunatic asylum near Montreal. Many of the inmates were burnt to death, most of the poor creatures having been too frightened to move. The rescuers strove with great gallantry, and in one or two cases lost their own lives. But the personage called Providence did nothing. After creating the poor lunatics in such a boggled fashion that they were incapable of helping themselves, he left them to their fate when they were threatened by the most agonising form of death. We are not saying that this shocking calamity proves the inefficacy of prayer, or the non-existence of Providence; but we do say it would give a justifier of the ways of God to men a splendid scope for the strenuous exercise of all his faculties.

The newspapers will write nonsense about Mr. Bradlaugh. Here is the London correspondent of the *Western Morning News* asking if Mr. Bradlaugh is to be "a preacher of the faith he once reviled," and gravely asserting that "the idea is mooted in religious circles, and there are outside indications enough to cause it to be regarded seriously, even by those who know 'Iconoclast' well." This will be news indeed to some who do know Mr. Bradlaugh well, or at any rate better than the writer of this oracular rubbish. Our old general is very much talked of at present, and he hears a great deal of novel information about himself. The gentlemen of the press credit him with religious virtues, which he repudiates every week in the *National Reformer*.

The *Morning News* man draws on his imagination very freely. He refers to the "bitter hostility" shown towards Mr. Bradlaugh in "some of the blatant organs of the more blasphemous." Names, please. But of course they will not be given. It is a pious invention *à la* Hugh Price Hughes.

That funny paper *The Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* looks on the railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem as a fulfilment of prophecy. The Bible writers, however, quite forgot to mention any of the inventions of modern science. We guess the railway will help cut up the supposed sanctity of the Holy Land.

The same paper, under the heading of "Anecdotes and Incidents at Gospel and Temperance Meetings," has a story of a nameless "gentleman" who until the last five months was "an infidel and a follower of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant." This "gentleman" was in the habit of jeering at his wife and religion, and, after the usual fashion of infidels, "burnt her Bibles and religious books." But she, good woman, never ceased to pray for him, and he is now "a believing, faithful [but nameless] Christian."

"H. S. B." writes to the *Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal* asking that the Secularist lectures in Finsbury Park shall not be allowed "to poison the sweet stillness of the Sabbath and the minds of our people" He says he shall bring the matter before the London County Council, but is evidently doubtful of the result since he asks, "Could not some Evangelist, accompanied by a good choir, do something to remedy the sad state of affairs of which I complain." "H. S. B." evidently trusts to Freethought being suppressed by authority or by noise rather than by argument.

According to the *Weekly Times and Echo*, "the casuistry with which Mr. Gladstone evades the objections of plain people to the obvious fact that the author or authors of Genesis contradict themselves hopelessly in the first chapter is worthy of a Jesuit."

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The chaplain of the American House of Representatives on April 30 caused consternation by protesting against the blasphemy used during a debate. The States seem to have a profane Parliament or a particular chaplain.

Sky-pilots are proverbially prolific. We suppose they trust in Providence and human stupidity for provision for their families. Last year the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation relieved 127 curates who had families of from five, the lowest, to twelve children. Their average income was £115 each, which is regarded as a beggarly stipend for a man of God who must keep up appearances.

The Wesleyan Missionaries urge that if their salaries are reduced, those of home ministers should be equally reduced in proportion, and they propose to begin with the salary of Hugh Price Hughes, whose West-end Mission has bled the Wesleyan body so profusely.

There was quite a scene at the Glasgow Presbytery of the Established Church. Only six out of thirteen candidates for the ministry brought certificates with them and the Rev. R. Thomson insisted on their being catechised. They were accordingly asked the stupid questions about election, justification and sanctification from the Shorter Catechism, and their replies induced Mr. Thomson to say it was a shame to pass such men. Mr. Thomson then took to catechising himself. Addressing one student, he asked "Who is the author of the first five books of the Bible?" Student: "Moses." "Did he write by inspiration or invention?" Student: "Inspiration." "That's right," said Mr. Thomson, quite satisfied as to the orthodoxy of this candidate.

The *Liverpool Citizen* (May 7), in an article on the Corporation Churches, gives figures showing that they cost the city an annual loss of £2,748. It suggests that it would be better if they were let at a low rent to the Salvation Army.

Orthodoxy can only advance by the march of its expounding army away from its base of supplies. And it can only forage on the enemy by becoming the enemy's. Orthodoxy is in a bad way, because the world is moving. To move forward with it is death to orthodoxy; to stay behind and let it move on is extinction to orthodoxy.—*Ironclad Age.*

An American paper remarks on the inscription on their coinage, "In God we trust," that it should properly read "In *this* God we trust."

The Christian Life, the organ of the backward Unitarians, writes of the late Sunday demonstration in Hyde Park under the title "Labor's Debt to the Bible." If we may believe Genesis, the laborer is indebted to Adam for the curse of labor. We do not recollect any passage exhorting to shorter hours, though we do to "be content with your wages."

Five thousand Italian dupes made a pilgrimage to Rome last week, and were addressed by the Pope, whom they hailed with "Long live Pope King." The dispatch describing the affair says that "the Pope admitted to kiss his feet the principal personages of the pilgrimage." It is presumed the other members of the party had to content themselves with less exalted privileges.

The poor old Pope laments that ungodliness is now exalted in Italy. He says, "Look at the men whose names are now selected for honor after death, men who died opposing Christianity—men like Mazzini and Saffi." Yes, people are beginning to see that progress is owing to men who not only put aside the papal creed but fought against the continual enemy of freedom.

The Pope is anxious to proclaim as a dogma of the Universal Church that the Papacy should have temporal power. Does he hope that other Catholic nations would enforce the claim? If so he will be sorely disappointed. The proclamation of the temporal power will only exasperate the Italian Liberals and convince the world that the Papacy can neither learn nor forget.

A fact was recently mentioned by Dr. Sadler in connection with the life of Priestley, which we do not remember having heard before. Everyone knows how Priestley's house at Birmingham was attacked by rioters in 1792; but Dr. Sadler says Priestley's granddaughter told him that on four occasions an attempt was made on his life. It was no joke to avow unpopular opinions a century ago. No wonder Priestley thought it best to end his days in America.

Beza, in his history of the Reformation in France (Geneva, 1580) says that a parrot that had been taught to say "Fi de la messe!" was arraigned before the Inquisition at Toulouse, condemned, and publicly burnt by the executioner."

The Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser has thought fit to rather summarily close the discussion on "Has Christianity had its Day?" suppressing some passages as blasphemous in the letters of "True Blue," which it nevertheless justly speaks of as "ably and logically expressed."

Hazlitt records that when the Persian Ambassador was at Edinburgh, an old Presbyterian lady, more full of zeal than discretion, fell upon him for his supposed idolatrous belief, and said: "I hear you worship the sun!" "In faith, Madam," he replied, "and so would you too, if you had ever seen him."

The Bishops of Melbourne and Ballarat have directed the clergy in their dioceses to refuse to officiate at any marriage of persons divorced under the new Victorian Act, or to issue marriage licences to such parties. The clergy are always stout supporters of the law while it serves their turn, and turbulent law-breakers when it does not. The action of the Australian bishops may do something to render civil marriages more common.

M. Bouchor, the manager of the famous marionette performances in Paris, announces that he is preparing a new piece entitled, "The Mystery of the Nativity," which is to be performed entirely by these wooden figures, and produced with scenery, costumes, and music designed and composed for the occasion. We are assured that though the Virgin holding the infant Jesus will appear in the last act, she will not be made to speak, though she will sing a cradle song It seem that the traditional comic personages of the mediæval "moralities" will be represented by "Asmodeus the demon," who will deliver a humorous discourse. The action will be comprised in four tableaux, representing the stable in Bethlehem, the shepherds in the fields, the star of the Magi, and the Adoration.

No doubt the marionette play will be far more amusing than the passion play at Oberammergau, which is a dreadfully serious business. The old passion plays which used to import some humor into the characters of Satan, Judas, and Caiaphas, were suppressed, and that at Oberammergau is nearly the only one left which is regularly performed, viz., every Sunday in summer every ten years, it is said in accordance with a religious vow in consequence of being spared from a plague.

Scenic representations played a large part in religion formerly, and seeing that to this day they go through the performance of a crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem at Easter, it may be questioned whether the ancient performance of lamentation for the death of the sun-god and joy at his resurrection did not give rise to the story. Myth is often founded upon ritual.

Herr Meyer, the villager who is to take the part of J. C. in the Oberammergau Passion Play, suffers like some other gentlemen who go into training. He has been used to attending the village inn, drinking beer and playing at skittles; but these habits are considered *infra dig.*, and the poor fellow is obliged to leave them off until he ceases to be Jesus Christ and once more becomes plain Jacob Meyer. For our own part, however, when we reflect on J. C.'s partiality for wine, and how he manufactured seventy-five gallons in five minutes, we incline to think that public opinion is unnecessarily hard on his histrionic successor.

Mr. James Neate, the secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, has been trying desperately to obtain a hall for a course of free Secular lectures in the East of London, but he has everywhere met with refusal. The Hope Town Hall was "engaged." The Morley Hall was "built to specially promote the cause of Christianity." It is therefore

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available for Celestine Edwards, the black preacher, to attack Freethought, but not for a Secularist lecturer to defend it. St. Andrew's Hall is under the control of the vicar, who curtly "regrets he cannot" etc. St. John's School-room is also unavailable. Victoria Hall likewise is "not available for the objects of the Secular Society."

The Christian gentleman who sent Mr. Neate the information as to Victoria Hall is not a sworn enemy of discussion, only he likes it all on one side. He "encloses a little book," which he commends to Mr. Neate's notice. It is a pamphlet by a lawyer, who rejoices in the ironical name of Lamb, and its title is *Unbelief, England's Greatest Sin.*

We hope the Bethnal Green Branch will advertise this bigotry. A neat tract, working in these letters of refusal with pointed comments, should do good in the East-end. It is well that the public should know how respectable citizens are treated by the proprietors of halls in that district.

The Literary Society of South Shields is a sensitive body. One of the members of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. inserted an advertisement in one of the local papers. "respectfully informing" the members of the Literary Society that Mr. Foote was going to lecture last Sunday morning in the Free Library on Shelley. Nothing whatever was said about the other lectures. However, the Literary Society—or rather its orthodox members—could not stand it, and another advertisement was inserted, informing the world that the Society was not responsible for the first advertisement, as if any sane person supposed it was. The manœuvre did not spoil Mr. Foote's audience. Even the rain did not do that. We therefore condole with the Literary Society, and regret that its members are too exalted to hear what was relished by the Shelley Society. Perhaps, after all, the fussy bigots whose bristles were drawn out by the advertisement, would be surprised to learn that more than one passive member of the National Secular Society is in their midst.

Henry Rouse, the skipper of a Lowestoft fishing-boat cruising off Cornwall, has more religion than is good for him. He went through the streets of Newlyn with a Bible under one arm, flourishing his hat with the other, and warning the people of the coming end of the world. He frequently knelt in the streets and offered up prayers. He found his way to Penzance, where being followed by a crowd he was arrested and charged with being a wandering lunatic. It seems he had previouly suffered with too strong a dose of the Holy Ghost and was locked up in Plymouth last year.

A medical man, who made a foolish speech after one of Mr. Foote's lectures at Cardiff, has started a monthly magazine called *Body and Soul.* He devotes a good deal of space to criticising the lecture on "The Gospel of Secularism," and is especially surprised that the Freethinkers did not cry when Mr. Foote told them that, in his opinion, death was an eternal sleep. This is a fair sample of Dr. Williams's sense, and everyone will understand why we do not comment any further on his remarkable criticisms.

The Rev. Walter Walsh, of Newcastle, did not attend Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture, "A Defence of Atheism," although he was specially invited. Nor will he hold a public debate with Mr. Foote. But he appears to like discussion all the same. Now Mr. Foote is in London again the reverend gentleman is going to reply. He has issued bills announcing that he will defend his own lecture and reply to Mr. Foote's this afternoon (May 18). Probably he will demolish the Atheist, but at the same time it is unfortunate that he shrinks from meeting the Atheist face to face. If he prefers a written debate, we shall be happy to put the *Freethinker* at his service.

Stanley, it appears, owes something to the superstition of the Arabs. His white cap, designed and made by himself from a piece of tenting as a protection against the sun, was always recognised as a talisman or charm. The Jewish phylacteries ordered Deut. vi., 8, are also of the nature of talismans.

Another action against Dr. Barnardo was heard last week at the Queen's Bench. It was brought by a Catholic mother, who had placed her child with Dr. Barnado, but now wants the boy brought up a Catholic. It appears that the woman was so little particular that she had the child baptised at a Protestant church, just (as she explained) because a neighbor's child went, and sent it to a Protestant school because it was one minute's walk nearer than the Catholic school. Now the priests have taken up the case her religious scruples are aroused and she wants the child back. The case well illustrates Mr. O'Donovan's recent article on the traffic in souls.

A person applied at Bow Street for a summons against Sir T. Phayre, the chairman of a meeting of the Protestant Reformation Society at Exeter Hall who because the applicant said to a speaker "Don't overlook the ruined souls" rose in an excited manner and incited the people to turn him out. He was gripped by the throat and ejected, this being the usual way in which Exeter Hall Christians turn the other cheek. The summons was not granted.

The London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews has been holding its annual meeting. The society's expenditure last year was £35,455 but it wisely withholds the number of its converts.

A large majority of the Prussian Upper House has voted in favor of the separation of Jews and Christians in public schools, owing to the Christians being outnumbered in some of the higher educational institutes. While Christians outnumbered Jews there was no cry for a remedy.

John the Baptist Freund was charged with causing a crowd to assemble at Exeter Hall, by waving a flag and blowing a small trumpet. He said his was a small crowd compared to what surround the Salvation Army, and hoped his offence would be overlooked on account of his endeavor to preach the truth. He was bound over to keep the peace, which, if it means holding his peace, John the Baptist Freund will find very difficult.

Mr. T. G. Barry sent a letter, headed "Warning," to the *Grimsby News.* He bewailed the dreadful fact that shocking infidel lectures were announced outside the Hall of Science, and hinted that some mark of God's displeasure would fall upon the town if the authorities did not enforce the Blasphemy Laws against these profane wretches. Grimsby, however, is not so easily frightened as it used to be, and the authorities are in no hurry to get some of the most respected citizens thrown into prison. Mr. S. Alward and Mr. J. W. Wittering have given Prophet Barry a good dressing in the *News*, and there the matter is likely to rest.

By the way, if Prophet Barry is really anxious to put down "blasphemy" in Grimsby, there is a short and easy way of doing it. Let him pray to the Lord for help, and then go into the Hall of Science, and imitate Samson, who slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. Prophet Barry has the necessary weapon, and, with a proper supply of inspiration, he should be able to demolish all the "infidels" in Grimsby.

"Where are the dead?" was the subject of a sermon by Mr. Isaac Pitman at Bristol last Sunday. We very much doubt if he has any firsthand information on the subject, but "no matter, the time *will* come," and when the veteran phonographer joins the majority he will be able to preach, if at all, with greater authority. "Where are the dead?" is a subject on which a dead man would be the most convincing preacher. But, as the Bible says, the dead know not anything, unless they are too discreet to blab.

Hypnotism, which the Theosophists regard as proving the existence of soul, is being played very low in Paris. Dr. Luys has found that men can be fascinated like larks, by revolving colored glasses. After watching for some time they drop off into immobility, the retina having first been affected, and afterwards the whole nervous system. When completely under the spell they are made to go through the usual antics; and it would seem, from the reasoning of some folk, that when a man has been hypnotised, and made to play the fool, it is clearly demonstrated that he has an immortal spirit.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 18, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 7.30, "Is there a Future Life?'

May 25, N. S. S. Conference at Manchester.

June 1, Hall of Science, London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months. 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

T. W. READE.—Certainly you are eligible as a member of the N. S. S. We have asked Mr. Forder to send you a form to fill in.

A. WHEELER, W. Lappage and others, omitted to mark their envelopes with "Lecture Notice." Their communications were sent on to Mr. Foote in the North of England, and were thus too late for last week's *Freethinker*. We beg the secretaries of Branches to observe this rule, which is not a very onerous one.

J. MILTON.—Mrs. Besant's new belief is called Theosophy. You should read her pamphlet, *Why I became a Theosophist*, and also Mr. Foote's three pamphlets on the subject, if you want to know what it is all about.

J. SPENCER.—Your experience in hospitals is not novel. Those institutions are wretchedly sectarian. Of course a copy of the *Freethinker* is enough to throw the sisters into hysterics.

G. ARMITAGE.—Mr. Foote did not mean to suggest that Mr. Walsh's religion was a matter of £ s. d. Mr. Walsh talks like an honest man, and no doubt is one, only he lets his emotion run away with his reason.

W. HUNTER.—Mr. Bradlaugh's health is very much improved, but he is not his old self yet, and we hope his friends, political and freethought, will not press him to try his strength before he has fully recovered. Thanks for the cutting.

J. PARKER.—Thanks for cutting and enclosure.

BRUNO.—We cannot answer medical questions. Write to Dr. Allinson, 4 Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Thanks See Sugar Plums.

JAMES NEATE.—The East-end of London is more bigoted than we thought. It is really surprising in such a working-class quarter of London.

A. J. F.—The father's bigotry is contemptible, but we hope your friend will be able to adjust himself to his new circumstances. Even a father who wants to force his opinions down your throat is better at a distance.

W. H. JACKSON.—Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, and if possible *Supernatural Religion*. Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, Strauss's *Old Faith and the New*, and Mirabaud's *System of Nature*, are also worth your attention. Glad to hear you circulate six copies of this journal in the house where you are employed, and that you have made several conversions during the last month or two.

W. HOLLAND.—Thanks for the batch of jokes.

C. P.—The tract is one of the multitude of silly things issued by Christians. It is hardly worth our notice. No young man it could influence has brains enough to be a Freethinker.

W. NICHOLS.—There is no such danger. Mr. Forder might be able to supply you with a copy of the Owen-Bachelor debate.

C. BUSSIE.—Omitted by accident, but acknowledged this week. Thanks for the book of engravings.

REX REGES.—The Rev. Mr. McFarlane was quite right. The man who can read the Bible without seeing that Jehovah was a purely national god must have a twist in his brain.

W. A. NEWCOMB, 320 Westminster Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, has a large collection of *Freethinkers, National Reformers*, and other Freethought literature, which he will be happy to send to any Branch for distribution. This correspondent is thanked for his good wishes.

R. HASTINGS. Stuff and nonsense! Secularism does not deny moral responsibility, if that means the law of duty. Certainly it does not teach that delicate children should be slaughtered. Your Christian friend is trying to impose on you.

FREETHINKERS' BENEVOLENT FUND.—E. Harriman (Liverpool), 2s. 6d.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—T. Parker, 1s.

J. J. BYRON.—We take it that, in the note you refer to, Shelley is only expressing the logical force of that particular argument. There is no destruction of matter in the disappearance of the moon's atmosphere. It is absorbed by the satellite, which is like a big cinder.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec. North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—Newcastle Branch, 8s.; Mr. Gillespie, 2s.; J. Brown, 2s. 6d.; H. Sanderson, 2s.; A Friend (per Mr. Peacock) 10s. 6d.; collected at Mr. Foote's Newcastle lecture, £1 3s. 1d.; Peter Weston, 17s. 6d.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer London Secular Federation, acknowledges 2s. 6d. from A. Moss.

BRENO.—The name shall not be divulged. Kuenen's *Religion of Israel*.

J. ROBINSON.—Pleased to hear that you and your wife, who heard Mr. Foote for the first time at Newcastle, were so delighted. If every reader of this journal were to subscribe not less than five shillings a year to the N. S. S, a large income would be realised, and the cause would progress with leaps and bounds.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Liverpool Citizen—People's Press—Freedom—Christian Life—Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal—Christian Herald—Twentieth Century — Knowledge — Hertford Monthly Magazine—Body and Soul—Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser—Liverpool Citizen—Cornish Telegraph—Echo—Postmen's Gazette—Secular Thought—The Glasgow Herald—Northern Daily Telegraph.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Fifth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
W. Holland	0	2	6	W. O.	0	5	0
C. B.	1	0	0	J. H. Ridgway	0	2	6
J. Robinson (qrtrly)	0	1	3	J. Partridge	0	2	6
E. L. G.	5	0	0	James Laing	1	1	0

ANNUAL CONFERENCE N.S.S.

The Reception Committee will be in attendance at the Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester, on Saturday, the 24th inst., and on Sunday morning from 9 o'clock, to receive delegates.

Delegates, on arriving in Manchester, are requested to take the tram for All Saints, which church is only two minutes' walk from the hall.

Delegates requiring lodgings will please inform the undersigned, stating whether they prefer private or hotel accommodation, and if for one or more nights.

Arrangements are being made for luncheon after the morning sitting, and also for tea at the close of the afternoon sitting, and we shall be pleased if friends intending to partake of same will kindly notify to that effect.

Arrangements have also been made for a limited number to view the workings of the Manchester Ship Canal, on Whit Monday, commencing at the Salford Docks, and inspecting the works along the Canal (about three miles) to Barton Docks, assembling at the Secular Hall at 10 a.m., and returning to the Hall after the inspection for tea, etc. Tickets, including railway fares and tea, 2s. each. Delegates and friends who intend taking advantage of this opportunity *must* send in their names to the Secretary, the number being *strictly limited*.

A. HEMINGWAY, Hon. Sec.

25 Higher Chatham Street, Manchester.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-night (May 18) at the London Hall of Science on "Is There a Future Life?" The lectures now begin at half-past seven.

Mr. Foote's lecturing tour in the North closed on Sunday night. During the preceding week, after the Sunday lectures at Newcastle, he visited North Shields, Middlesboro, Sunderland, Darlington and Dipton. Most of the lectures were followed by discussion, especially at Middlesboro, where the proceedings ended at a late hour. Some of the Christian champions were great curiosities. One declared, at Middlesboro, that St. Paul was one of the three most learned men that ever lived Mr. Foote innocently asked him who were the other two, and the reply was "Milton and Shakespeare." Shade of Ben Jonson! It was a wonder the ghost of Rare Old Ben did not appear, and swear a rattling Mermaid oath.

Sunday morning at South Shields was "a caution." The rain poured down spitefully. But notwithstanding the deluge a very fair audience assembled to hear the lecture on Shelley. The afternoon meeting was still better, and, the weather clearing up, there was a first-rate house at night. Altogether the North Eastern Secular Federation is well satisfied with Mr. Foote's visit, and is full of hope for the cause of Secularism in the district. New members are being enrolled, persons of means and influence are joining the movement, subscriptions are flowing in more rapidly, every branch of the work is being developed, and the press is taking notice of the cause as one that can no longer be ignored.

For some time the Sunderland Branch has been languishing. There was great difficulty in obtaining a hall for lectures. But the Assembly Room is now available again for week nights, and perhaps for Sundays. Under fair conditions, in so large a town, the Branch should flourish.

The South Shields Branch is fortunate in two things; first, in having a man like Mr. Peacock in its service, and secondly in having the use of the large hall of the Free Library, which is conveniently situated in the leading thoroughfare. Mr. Peacock, Captain Duncan, and some other members of the Branch are public characters, and they do much to liberalise the town. Two members of the Branch reside at Jarrow. John and Henry Sanderson are well known there, and widely respected. But we must stop. The fine Freethinkers in that district—men of whom any cause might well be proud—are too numerous to be recounted.

Mr. Bradlaugh, like a wise man, will spend the Whitsuntide in fishing. We hope he will catch health. He urges the Freethought party to muster strongly at Manchester, and certainly it is important that the Conference should be a great success, for our enemies are making much of Mr. Bradlaugh's enforced resignation, and trying to persuade the public that our cause is expiring. Of course this is great nonsense, and the sooner the public is plainly disabused the better. The Conference agenda, which we printed last week, will show that there is a possibility of striking out new lines of propaganda and organisation. Mr. Foote's proposals have been well thought out, and they demand the attention of every member of the National Secular Society.

John Burns did not like to tackle Mr. Bradlaugh, and we are not surprised at his reluctance to meet the old gladiator in the arena. But why did he throw out a challenge? John Burns is a good, honest, hard-working labor-leader, but he is not a Bradlaugh. We hope he will keep his head, be on his guard against flatterers, and avoid hobnobbing with Cardinals and Bishops. He ought to know the real object of the leaders of the Black Army when they coquet with the leaders of the Army of Labor.

Dr. Dodel-Port's book, *Moses oder Darwin*, has reached a third edition, which will number 5,000 copies. Dr. Dodel-Port is professor at Zürich University, and eminent as a botanist all over the world. He is a staunch Freethinker and evolutionist.

Freedom, of New South Wales, speaks of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* as "characterised by that faithful and patient research customary in Mr. Wheeler's writings."

"We are glad to learn that Mr. Foote's 'Letters to the Clergy' are about appear in a separate volume; they contain some of Mr. Foote's best writing, and should be in the hands of all Freethinkers who are gifted with the faculty of enjoying really good literature."—*Stockwhip*.

The Belgian Conference of Freethinkers at Joliment was a great success. *La Raison*, their monthly organ, edited by M. Leon Fournement, now circulates 5000 copies.

The Rev. R. S. Long, who has returned from a mission to Burmah, laments that translations of Ingersoll are now found in that country. Mr. Long was stationed at Rangoon, where we send occasional parcels.

The *Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal* inserts a very temperate and forcible letter from Mr. Arthur J. Field, defending the right of Freethinkers to lecture in Finsbury Park. Such letters are a real service to the cause.

The announcement we inserted last week as to the course of Free Lectures at the Hammersmith Club, was premature. The four lectures will be delivered on Thursdays, June 5, 12, 19 and 26, by Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. G. Standring, Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. G. W. Foote. One result of the lectures, it is hoped, will be the starting of an open-air lecture station.

Bournemouth is a fashionable watering place, and of course it has been very difficult to get the *Freethinker* there. But it is now exposed for sale in a newsagent's window at No. 1 The Avenue, the most aristocratic promenade in the town. One of our readers, who has had to get his weekly copy of this journal by post, went into the shop and bought two copies to give away. The next day he wanted another copy, but the newsagent had sold out. No doubt, if the seller is not intimidated, the *Freethinker* will soon have a fair circulation in Bournemouth, and do something to liberalise that hotbed of bigotry and hypocrisy.

The Manchester Secular Hall Company holds its annual general meeting this morning (May 18) in the hall at Rusholme Road. We are sorry to see there is a loss of £16 on the year's account, and we hope the directors and the honorary secretary (Mr. G. Payne) will succeed in inducing the shareholders to clear off the mortgage, the interest on which is a serious burden. The Branch is at present paying a reduced rent. We fear it has suffered from the loss of some old workers.

Viktor Lennstrand's lecture on *The God Idea*, for which he was sentenced to six month's imprisonment, has been translated into English by a Swedish gentleman. Mr. Wheeler has slightly revised the English, and the pamphlet is published by Mr. Forder at twopence.

"H. P." (Henry Porter) has done our cause a service by replying to a Catholic slander of Giordano Bruno in the *North Lindsey Star*. Freethinkers should press our views in their local papers whenever an opportunity occurs.

A Mohammedan mission to convert the Americans is rather a startling project. But this is what Moulvi Hassan Ali is proposing to large crowds at Hyderabad, and the faithful are actually responding with subscriptions to defray the Moulvi's expenses.

The French Freethought Federation now comprises 77 societies, besides individual adhesions. Its establishment was one of the results of the Paris International Conference of last September.

James Allen, one of the wealthiest men in Stark county, Ohio, died last month, leaving a will in which he said: "I wish that no advocate of the contemptible and blasphemous doctrine of eternal punishment be permitted to talk at my funeral. I desire that the speaker be a Freethinker or Universalist."

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for May gives a portrait and notice of Mrs. Matilda Joslyn Gage, the President of the American Women's Liberal Union. Prof. J. B. Buchanan writes on Bibliolatry, and among other interesting contents is the exposure of a myth regarding the bad ends of thirty-six infidels which is being circulated in the States.

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RELEASE OF MR. LENNSTRAND.

Our readers in all parts of the world will rejoice to know that Viktor Lennstrand, the brave champion of Freethought, in Sweden, is once more free. His liberation was however dictated by fear. Upon being visited in prison last week by his brother, Mr. Axel Lennstrand, that gentleman was seriously alarmed and declared that his brother was being murdered by the imprisonment. Every force was set in motion to obtain his liberation, and aided by a lady of literary reputation, our friends succeeded in obtaining his pardon within four days. The authorities were fully aware that had serious consequences ensued to Mr. Lennstrand, as there was too much reason to fear from his delicate and nervous constitution, there would have been a storm of indignation throughout the land. Mr. Lennstrand, our readers will be happy to learn, seems now thoroughly recovered, though the doctors urge that he should take complete rest for a while in some country place. He appends to a note from our good friend Captain Otto Thomson, with whom he is now staying, at 25 Bryggargatan, Stockholm, the following letter:—

"At last out from prison. I send you my most hearty wishes and thanks for all you have done for me and my cause during my long captivity. As soon as I am quite composed and strengthened both in body and mind, I will do all that I am able to do in order to hold the awakened interest alive. Please forward my warmest thanks to the Freethinkers of England.—Yours fraternally, sincere friend,

Viktor E. Lennstrand."

It remains to be seen what will be done with the remaining prosecutions against Mr. Lennstrand. It is certain his release is a triumph to the Freethought cause, and they can no longer cause serious apprehensions.

ARE CLERGYMEN FRAUDS?

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

Are clergymen frauds? This is a delicate and difficult question to answer justly. No general statement can be made of any class of persons without qualification. Some clergymen are frauds and some are not. So much may be said without qualification; without stopping to define the word fraud. There are some bad men among clergymen, as there are in any class of persons. But many clergymen are good men, in a general way, and some of them are very good men, both in general and in particular. In striving to answer the question I have propounded, I mean to leave out of the discussion the confessedly bad men among the clergy. I will not take into consideration the ministerial common, every-day liars, thieves, drunkards and libertines. There is no doubt that there are such ministers even among the very well-known and highly paid clergy. That these are frauds goes without saying, and some of them escape general condemnation and disgrace even when it is pretty well understood by many that they are impostors.

But it would not be fair to condemn an entire class of persons because some of them are notoriously bad. I intend, therefore, to discuss the question: whether the average respectable and respected priest and minister is a fraud even if he is ordinarily honest in his business transactions and clean in his sexual relations.

What do I mean by a fraud? In speaking of ministers I mean one who does not believe what he preaches, or one who does not preach what he believes, or one who conceals his doubts, or one that does not live according to what he believes or professes to believe. A fraud is an insincere man, and inconsistent man, a man without the moral courage to live up to his professions or to confess that he does not do so.

With this definition in mind let us look at facts with regard to clergymen. I will try to keep within the range of those things which are generally understood to be facts. It will not be necessary to go into the inner consciousness of the ministers and attempt to pass judgment upon their motives. No person is capable of judging another person's motives. I leave motives out of the question entirely. I do not inquire whether clergymen mean to be frauds, or whether they know that they are frauds. I merely inquire whether they *are* frauds.

It is a fact that clergymen, as a rule, do not believe in the precepts of Jesus Christ, and do not conform to them in their own lives. I will not discuss the question as to whether those precepts are true or false, wise or unwise. I merely say that the orthodox clergymen proclaim that Jesus Christ was God and at the same time they deny the truthfulness of most of his teachings and the wisdom or practicability of his manner of life. They declare that he was the "way, the truth and the life," but they turn from the way, reject the truth, and will not follow the life. Jesus forbade the laying up of treasures on earth, forbade taking anxious thought for the morrow, commanded to sell all one's goods and give to the poor. The average minister declares that Jesus is his master, his guide, and his God, but he invariably takes the highest salary he can get, he insures his life, he is no more apt to give his money to a tramp than is anybody else. Jesus forbade the use of titles. All clergymen have one title, at least, and set great store by it, and some of them are so greedy for the supposed honor of having more than one that they are quite willing to wink at any device by which it can be obtained from a college, in some cases actually buying it. Jesus was a very simple-minded man in his religion. He believed in praying for what we need. He said that sickness would be healed by prayer, that snake bites would be cured by prayer, that mountains would be removed by prayer. The modern clergyman believes no such thing. The Jesus-like Faith Healers have no bitterer enemies than the clergymen. There is not a minister in the United States, I venture to say, who would show that he believes in the teaching of Jesus by letting a rattlesnake bite him.

Please understand that I am not defending the teachings of Jesus. I am simply saying that clergymen pretend that Jesus was God and yet they do not hesitate to declare that his teachings are not to be followed. If they would speak right out and say that Jesus is wholly unreliable as a teacher, although he was God, all would be fair. We would then understand that the God of the clergymen was an ignorant and impracticable crank, and we would know just what to do.

But the clergyman flares up in a moment if you intimate that Jesus did not know what he was talking about. He will tell you that Christian civilisation is built upon principles exactly the reverse to those inculcated by the Galilean, and if you ask him why he does not live according to those teachings he will tell you that they were not practised in this day and generation, because the weather is colder here than it was in Palestine, and to follow out the precepts of Jesus generally would interfere with the admirable arrangements of the Charity Organisation Society; and if ministers did not have titles nobody would know who are the genuine articles and who are irregular.

You are all familiar with the various explanations clergymen give of why they do not follow the teachings of Jesus, but the real reason is because if they did they would be poor, and they would not be respectable, and they could not enjoy those worldly honors that are so dear to vain and worthless people. The real reason why the ministers do not follow Jesus, although they worship him, is because it is so much easier to worship him than it is to follow him. It is fashionable to worship him but it is vulgar to follow him. The reason why they do not follow him is because they are frauds.

I know that there are hundreds of clergymen belonging to the Universalist and Unitarian churches who would say that all this does not apply to them because they repudiate the deity of Jesus and openly say that his teaching is impracticable. But they are frauds, too, because they call themselves Christians. They deny that Jesus was the Christ and yet call themselves Christians. This they would not do if it were not that the name Christian carries with it a certain amount of respectability by which they wish to profit.

Another fact is that there is hardly a clergyman in existence who does not preach for the truth that of which he himself doubts the truth. Observe the way I put this. There is many a minister who will tell you that he believes in the existence of God, or the divinity of Christ, or the vicarious atonement, or the reality of heaven and hell. But if you ask him whether he ever *doubts* these things he will be obliged to tell you that he does. He may tell you that the Devil makes him doubt or that doubt arises out of his own sinful heart, whatever that may mean. But he doubts, nevertheless. If he would go into the pulpit and tell the

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people that he believes in the existence of God and all these other things but he also doubts whether what he says is true or not, he would be and honest man. But because he hides his doubts and preaches his beliefs as if they were certainties, he is a fraud.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE BLIND MAN AND THE FLEA.

A Fable.

"Why dost thou so trouble me,"
Said a blind man to a flea.
"Know'st thou not that I am blind?
Prithee other refuge find.
All night long I'm kept awake
Through the itching thou dost make;
All day long I writhe in mind
Through thy capers so unkind.
Prithee nimble little flea,
To some other refuge flee.

Said the flea, "No, no, not I;
Don't you think it. I'm too fly.
Here I'll stay, and here I'll hatch
My sweet brood, *for you can't catch*.
God, who everything does well,
Meant that I with you should dwell.
I'm the finger of our God,
Bow beneath his chastening rod."

Then the blind man thought awhile,
Till his face beamed with a smile:
"Yes, I've got it," thus he cried,
"Wretched insect, you're defied.
Science-given turpentine,
'Neath whose breath all insects pine,
Water clear and cleansing soap,
Powders strong with you shall cope.
Yes, I've got it! I'll be damned,
Holy Boss, your finger's jammed!

(Moral to be worked in here.)

Alfred Lovett.

SATAN v. JESUS CHRIST.

In Mr. Quaritch's collection of MSS. there is a famous illuminated manuscript written by one Bishop Anton Ruettel in 1480. It is called Belial, and describes a lawsuit between the Devil and Jesus Christ. J. C. has so greatly damaged the Evil One by coming into the world and saving sinners who would otherwise have fallen victims to the E. O's favorite fires, that he forthwith brings an action for damages against Christ. There is a count in damages for every soul.

Good old Bishop Ruettel went about his work in a very accurate and methodical way. The plaintiff and defendant in the case each have a lawyer. Lucifer appears as counsel for the Evil One, and Moses is lawyer for Christ. Moses, by the way, is depicted with the Mosaic horns of wisdom on his head, and they are quite as diabolical looking as the genuine diabolic horns of Lucifer himself.

Solomon is the Judge and sits supreme above both angels and devils. He can hardly be considered an absolutely impartial judge, since he permits the greatest laxity of speech to Moses, but holds Lucifer strictly to the courtesies of the court-room.

The witnesses, who are various—imps, lost souls and the parties themselves to the suit—are sworn on the Holy Scriptures, just as they are to-day. The effect on a first-class cantankerous devil from the seventh hell of administering to him an oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God," to all of which proper sanction is given by a kiss to the Scriptures, is amusingly depicted by the artists. The devils, little and big, swear and kiss the Bible, and then, with their faces still awry, go on the witness-stand and tell what they know.

Moses hectors and bullies the Devil's witnesses on cross-examination in fine lawyer-like style, and whatever he says seems to go with the Court. As for Lucifer, who has Old Nick for his client, he is as courtly and suave as you please, never once forgets himself, and even in defeat, and with the taunts of Moses still ringing in his long ears, is still the courtly, polished Devil. Of course Solomon non-suits the Devil and sends him back to hell.

BEATITUDES OF THE HOLY SINNERS.

(Appointed to be read in a loud tone of voice in the Church of the Holy Sinners, on the first Sunday in the calendar of Saint Dives, and fifty-one Sundays after that, and three times a day, before, after, and during services, and at other times when convenient and there is a big crowd present. To be read in all the churches that expect or hope to collar the shekels of the ungodly, or rake in the scads of the good, in the year of grace 1890.)

Now there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

Blessed forever be his memory; for he hath this day given 95,000 dols. to the church societies, and hath 4,000,000 left for himself.

Shout his name mightily, and let it appear in four-line pica at the head of each column.

Blessed is the man who can give his cheque for three figures; his seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

But more blessed is he who can make it four; his name shall be written in the records and printed in the minutes of the association, and graven with the pen of a cunning scribe upon the chronicles of the conference. Yea, they shall call him Mister in the synod and Doctor in the convention.

But thrice blessed is he who can make it a ten and five noughts; his horn shall be exalted with honor; he shall be known in the congregation and on 'change, where he sit'eth with the elders of the land. Yea, when he goeth forth a horn shall be blown before him, and when he giveth a dollar a gong shall be beaten in the sanctuary.

Lazarus shall behold him afar off, and make ready to vacate the premises in Abraham's bosom.

Abraham shall hear of it, and shall greatly enlarge his bosom, and have it newly furnished and re-upholstered throughout. Selah!

The praise of our lips shall set him on high; if it be so that he cannot read, then will we call our colleges after him; and if it be that he signeth his name with a "mark," then we shall endow chairs of Egyptology and Sanscrit literature in his name.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM.

Jack o' Nanny's was out walking one day when he came across the curate of the village church. The curate had only been a few months in that district, so he did not know the character of all the inhabitants. He stopped Jack one day and told him he had never seen him at church since he came into that neighbourhood, and asked if he would come. Jack turned his eyes towards the curate and said—"Nawe, I'st not come. I've nobbut been twice, an' booath times they made a fool on me. Th' furst time aw went they slat some watter in me face, an' th' second time teed a gurt bouncin' woman raand me neck whear shoo's fast yet; an' I can't get shut ov her. It's not good enough. Let them goa at likes."

LOOKING AT THE FUTURE.

Deacon Jones: "Mr. Holiman, that sermon of yours bewailing the mad rush for riches which characterises the present generation was the most beautiful thing I ever heard. Your pulpit efforts are getting better and better, and we trust that you may continue with us many years to inculcate in our community the lessons of humility and meekness which you exemplify so powerfully in your own life."

Rev. Mr. Holiman: "Yes, Deacon, I shall only be too glad to remain with you. But—er—my expenses, you know, are pretty heavy, and I've received a very flattering call from another parish, I'm getting along in life where I ought to be putting by something for old age."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Young man," said an apostle, solemnly, "do you realise that when you retire at night you may be called before morning dawns?" "I hope so; I'm a young doctor, and I need encouragement of some kind."

At a Sunday school a teacher asked a little boy if he knew what the expression "sowing tares" meant. "Course I does," he said, pointing to his little breeches, "there's a tear mother sewed. I teared it sliding down hill."

"I landed a cargo on the wharf of a Turkish town not far from Constantinople," said an old sea captain. "It was towards evening, and I suggested to the Mohammedan gentleman in charge of the quay that a guard be placed over the goods. 'Have no fear,' he declared, stroking his beard, 'there is not a Christian within forty miles.'"

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Arthur B. Moss, "The Bible and Common Sense."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Mr. Rossetti, "What has Christianity Done for the World?" Social evening every Tuesday. Thursday evening, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs Thornton Smith, "Miracles."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Is there a Future Life?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Christianity and Woman."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Christ's Ascension."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Rossetti, "Is Christianity of Divine Ori in?"

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "What is Freethought?"

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Shams and Delusions."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3, Mr. J. Rowney, "Freethought and Christ."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "Holy Matrimony, Part I."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are They True?" May 21, Mr. F. Haslam, "Civilisation, its Rise and Progress."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Romans xiii., 1, 2."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Men who are Rising."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 6.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. E. Calvert, a lecture

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 11, a debate between Mr. Cohen (Spiritualist) and Mr. Elflein (C. E. S.) on "Transmutation of Species"; 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Westminster Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Truthful Christians."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. George Standring, "Faith and Freethought."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. J. Clarke, 11, "The Future of Religions"; 3, "The Childhood of Jesus"; 7, "Anthropomorphism."

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, an important business meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. Charles Reynolds, "The Relation of Socialism to Freethought."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Resurrection: a Reply to Prebendary Row."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans, "Man's Place in Nature according to Paley and Darwin." Free.

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, a meeting of Sunday Music League 3, special meeting of members to consider the taking of new premises.

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 3, "How the Bible was Made Up"; 7, "Christianity and Civilisation."

Sheffield Branch N.S.S.—Members' and friends' first outing of the season, to Catcliffe, by invitation of Mr. J. Nelson. Meet at Midland Station at 1.45 for Rotherham train.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, a business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—May 18, (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 22, Hammersmith Club (free); 25 Manchester (Conference). June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green, (evening), Camberwell; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—May 18, Failsworth. June 8, Manchester.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham—May 18 (morning), Mile End Waste; 25 (morning), Battersea. June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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STANLEY ON PROVIDENCE.

BUCKLE, the historian of Civilisation, points out that superstition is most rampant where men are most oppressed by eternal nature. Wild and terrible surroundings breed fear and awe in the human mind. Those who lead adventurous lives are subject to the same law. Sailors, for instance, are proverbially superstitious, and military men are scarcely less so. The fighter is not always moral, but he is nearly always religious.

No one acquainted with this truth will be surprised at the piety of explorers. There is a striking exception in Sir Richard Burton, but we do not remember another. From the days of Mungo Park down to our own age, they have been remarkable for their religious temperaments. Had they remained at home, in quiet and safety, they might not have been conspicuous in this respect; but a life of constant adventure, of daily peril and hairbreadth escapes, developed their superstitious tendencies. It is so natural to feel our helplessness in solitude and danger, and perhaps sickness. It is so easy to feel that our escape from a calamity that hemmed us in on every side was due to a providential hand.

Whether Stanley, who is now the cynosure of all eyes, began with any considerable stock of piety, is a question we have no means of determining; but we can quite understand how a very little would go a very long way in Africa, amid long and painful marches through unknown territory, the haunting peril of strange enemies, and the oppressive gloom of interminable forests. Indeed, if the great explorer had become as superstitious as the natives themselves, we could have forgiven it as a frailty incident to human nature in such trying circumstances. But when he brings his mental weakness home with him, and addresses Englishmen in the language of ideas calculated for the latitude of equatorial Africa, it becomes necessary to utter a protest. Stanley has had a good spell of rest in Egypt, and plenty of time to get rid of the "creeps." He should, therefore, have returned to Europe clothed and in his right mind. But instead of this he deliberately sits down and writes the following rubbish for an American magazine, with one eye on God above and the other on a handsome cheque below.

> "Constrained at the darkest hour humbly to confess that without God's help I was helpless, I vowed a vow in the forest solitudes that I would confess his aid before men. Silence, as of death, was round about me; it was midnight; I was weakened by illness, prostrated by fatigue, and wan with anxiety for my white and black companions, whose fate was a mystery. In this physical and mental distress I besought God to give me back my people. Nine hours later we were exulting with a rapturous joy. In full view of all was the crimson flag with the crescent, and beneath its waving folds was the long lost rear column."

Danger and grief are apt to make us selfish, and no one would be hard on Stanley for showing weakness in such circumstances. But he rather glories in it. The danger is gone, and alas! the egotism remains. Others perished miserably, but he escaped. Omnipotence took care of him and let them go to the Devil. No doubt they prayed in their extremity as heartily as he did, but their prayers were unheard or neglected. Stanley was the lion of the party. Yes, and in parading his egotistic piety in this way, he is in danger of becoming a *lion comique*.

There is something absolutely farcical in Stanley's logic. While he was praying to God, millions of other persons were engaged in the same occupation. Agonised mothers were beseeching God to spare their dear children; wives were imploring him to restore the breadwinner of the family to health; entombed miners were praying in the dark depths of coal pits, and slowly perishing of starvation; shipwrecked sailors were asking for the help that never came. Providence could not, apparently, take on too much business at once, and while Stanley's fate trembled in the balance the rest of mankind might shift for themselves.

But the farce does not end here. Stanley's attitude was much like Jacob's. That smooth-skinned and smooth-tongued patriarch said that if God would guarantee him a safe journey, feed him, clothe him, find him pocket money, and bring him safe back again—well, then the Lord should be his God. Stanley was not so exacting, but his attitude was similar. He asked God to give him back his people (a few short, killed or starved, did not matter), and promised in return to "confess his aid before men." Give me the solid pudding, he says, and I will give you the empty praise. And now he is safe back in Europe he fulfils his part of the contract, and goes about trumpeting the praise of Omnipotence; taking care, however, to get as much cash as possible for every note he blows on the instrument.

Even this does not end the farce. Stanley's piety runs away with his arithmetic. He reminds us of a Christian lady we heard of the other day. She prayed one night, on going to bed, for news from her daughter, and early the next morning a letter came bearing the Edinburgh post-mark. This was clearly an answer to her prayer. But a sceptical friend showed her that the letter must have been posted at Edinburgh before she prayed for it. Now Stanley reasons like that lady. Nine hours is no time in central Africa. The "long-lost rear column" must have been near, though invisible, when Stanley struck his little bargain with the Almighty. Had it been two or three hundred miles off, and miraculously transported, the hand of Providence would have been unmistakable; but in the circumstances its arrival was natural, and the miracle is obviously a creation of Stanley's heated brain. He was "weakened by illness" and "prostrated by fatigue," and the absurdity was pardonable. We only protest against his playing the child when he is well and strong.

That it is childishness, and not humbug, we are willing to believe. Still we confess to a certain suspicion. Stanley's denunciation of the Quakers as connivers at slavery is so utterly grotesque as to require something more than ignorance as an explanation. It looks as though he had sufficient pliability

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to truckle to the prejudices of his patrons, and this reflects a sinister light on other of his utterances.

Stanley is not the only sinner in this line. The Grand Old Man himself is quite as ready to take God's name in vain. Jumping out on the platform at Ipswich for a five minutes' speech, he said that "neither the wisdom nor the folly of man is strong enough to separate these countries [England and Ireland] which the Almighty has joined together." With these words before us we should say that human folly is strong enough for anything. Mr. Gladstone enrols the Almighty as a member of the Liberal party. He makes God a Home Rule Unionist, and "with the help of God," his new colleague, he promises to make Pat, Sandy, Taffy and John Bull "a united people." We wish him success, but what does he mean by saying that the Almighty has joined England and Ireland together? If the Almighty has done anything, he has clearly separated them. The St. George's Channel is broader than the straits of Dover, and, talk as we will, the dividing sea makes two nations. Mr. Gladstone may, if he pleases, thank the Almighty" for preserving him to such a green old age. That is a personal matter, and it is simply a question of taste whether a lucky man should thank God effusively in the presence of his unlucky neighbors. But flying publicly in the face of geography, ethnology, and other sciences, is not an edifying spectacle; and when an eminent statesman presses God into a political partnership, we may be pardoned for thinking of Hamlet's description of a politician. Is it not strange that those who uphold the Blasphemy Laws are so ready to tell us how God would vote in a contested election? G. W. FOOTE.

THE LAST WORDS OF EPICTETUS TO HIS SON.

By Voltaire.

[Originally published in the *Recueil Necessaire*, a collection of heretical tracts, mostly by Voltaire, issued at Leipsic in 1765, and afterwards published with the imprint, Londres, 1768. Unaware of any previous translation, I have somewhat freely rendered this dialogue.—J. M. Wheeler.]

Epictetus. I am dying; I expect your tender memories, not useless tears. I die content, since I leave you virtuous.

His Son. You have taught me to be so, but you know what troubles me. A new Palestinian sect seeks to implant in me remorse.

E. Remorse appertains to scoundrels. Your hands and your soul are pure. I have taught you virtue, and you have practised it.

S. Yes; but this new sect announces a new virtue to me unknown.

E. What sect is this?

S. It is composed of Jews who sell old clothes and philtres, and clip the coins at Rome.

E. The virtue which they teach is apparently false coinage.

S. They say it is impossible to be virtuous without clipping the prepuce, or without being plunged in the water in the name of the Father by the Son. It is true they are not of accord in this. Some desire circumcision, others not; some think the water necessary, others omit it; but all say it is necessary to give money.

E. What! money? Doubtless one should with his superfluities succor the poor who cannot work, pay those who cannot gain their livelihood, and divide his necessaries with his friend. This is our law, our morality; thus have I done since freed by Epaphroditus, and thus have I seen you do also, with a satisfaction which renders my last moments happy.

S. The teachers of whom I speak exact far other than this; they desire brought to their feet all that one has, even to the last farthing.

E. If it is thus, they are robbers, and you are bound to give them up to justice.

S. Oh no! These are not robbers. They are merchants who give you the best bargain in the world for your money; for they promise you eternal life; and if in putting your money at their feet, as they order, you keep only enough wherewith to eat, they have the power to make you die suddenly.

E. These are assassins from whom society must be purged forthwith.

S. No, I tell you, they are magicians, who have wonderful secrets and who kill with words. The father, say they, has bestowed this grace through the son. One of their proselytes, who smells horribly but who preaches with much success in garrets, told me of one named Ananiah, who having sold his land to please the son in the name of the father, carried all the money to the feet of a magician named Barjona, but having kept in secret enough to buy necessities for his child, he was punished with instant death. His wife followed. Barjona killed her likewise in pronouncing a single word.

E. My son, here are abominable people. If this is true, they are among the most infamous criminals on the earth. They have told you ridiculous stories. You are a good fellow, but I fear lest you turn out a simpleton.

S. But father, if one wins eternal life by giving all one's goods to Simon Barjona it is clear one buys it cheaply.

E. Believe me, my son, eternal life, communion with the Supreme Being, has nothing in common with your Simon Barjona. The good and great God who animated Cato, Scipio, Cicero; the father of gods and men, has not, doubtless, remitted his power into the hands of a Jew. I knew these people were among the most superstitious of Syria, but I did not know they carried their insanity so far as to call themselves the prime ministers of God.

S. But, my father, they continually work miracles. You sneer, my father. You shrug your shoulders.

E. Alas! One who is dying has little desire to laugh, but you force me, poor child. Hast thou seen the miracles?

S. No; but I have spoken to men who have spoken to women who say that their gossips have seen them. And then the fine morality of the Jews who are circumcised and are washed from the feet even to the head!

E. And what are the moral precepts of these people?

S. It is, firstly, that a wealthy man cannot be a well-doer, and that it is more difficult for him to get to the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, so that all the rich should give their goods to the beggars who preach this kingdom. Secondly, that the fools and poor in spirit are blessed. Third, that those who neglect to hear the Church should be detested like a tax-collector. Fourth, that if any man hate not his father and mother, and wife and children and brethren, he has no part in the kingdom. Fifth, that they bring not peace but a sword. Sixth, that when one makes a wedding feast, one forces the passers by to attend, and casts into outer darkness those who have no wedding garments.

E. Alas! my son, a little while ago I was on the point of laughing, and now I feel you make me die with indignation and grief. If the wretches of whom you speak seduce the son of Epictetus, they will seduce plenty of others. I foresee frightful evils on the earth. Are these possessed people numerous?

S. Their number increases daily. They have a common fund from which they pay certain Greeks who write for them. They have invented mysteries. They exact an inviolable secret. They have instituted inspired ones who decide upon all their interests and who will not suffer that those of the sect recognise or plead before the magistrates.

E. An *imperium in imperio*. My son, all is lost!

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CAN MAN OFFEND GOD?

CHRISTIANS of all denominations believe that it is possible to offend Deity. They allege that God is looking down from heaven upon his creatures and is frequently displeased at what he beholds. The orthodox hold that man began to manifest an offensive spirit very early after his creation; in fact on the very first day of his existence; and then maintain that on account of Adam's alleged sin all mankind deserve to be punished. "If," say these orthodox gentlemen, "God made man, surely he has a right to punish him when he sins."

Now in the first place I deny that it is possible for man to sin against God; and if it were possible, I should hold that if it were true that the God who made man is omniscient and omnipotent he would have no right to punish the creatures of his manufacture.

Observe how I propose to demonstrate these two positions. First let us understand what is meant by sin against God. All Christians will admit that sin against Deity implies that man does something that God does not want him to do. But if God is Almighty how can man resist the all powerful? To say that man can offer opposition to the all powerful will of Deity, is to say that the finite can overcome the Infinite; which is a contradiction in terms and an absurdity.

Nor is it conceivable that an infinitely good God would permit a wicked act to be performed, since his goodness, being allied with infinite power, would prevent not only the deed itself, but the thought that would give rise to it. But if it were possible for man to sin against God, by what right would he punish him? If a man makes a watch that will not go, does he blame the watch or himself for its imperfections? Suppose I made a machine which, when set in motion, killed somebody. Would the machine or I be held responsible for the result? Besides, God is not only the manufacturer of human machines; he is also the author of the materials out of which they are composed. If there be any inherent defects in the material, he is conscious of it, and can supply the remedy. Moreover, I hold that it is impossible to injure an infinite being, and, as all sin implies injury, it is impossible to sin against God, or even to offend or annoy him in the smallest degree. In truth, if God could be either pleased or annoyed, or influenced in any way by the conduct of his creatures, he would of all beings be the most miserable.

Imagine what he would behold if he looked down from heaven upon his creatures and saw and heard all that was going on on this terrestial globe! He would hear millions of lies told every hour of the day. He would see the strong crushing the weak, the lion devouring the lamb; the iron heel of imperial tyrants trampling on the rights and liberties of the people. He would watch the poor in their hovels herding together like beasts; hear the children's cry for bread, see the starving child die upon its mother's breast, while in the palaces of the rich he would see nothing but splendor, luxury, and wanton waste. He would see the drunkard's home, hear the foul words and see the brutal blows given to the poor half-starved wife. He would watch the licentious man in the house of infamy, and listen to the prurient talk of painted harlots. He would see the burglar laying his plans; and watch the murderer as he lifted the assassin's dagger to destroy the poor unfortunate. He would understand the statesman's ambition, and be behind the scenes when position and place were given to time-servers. He would understand the causes of wars, and behold thousands of innocent lives destroyed for the glorification of ignorant and heartless kings. He would see asylums in flames and hear the moans of madmen in despair. Vessels would be wrecked before his eyes, and trains collide, and he would hear the sufferers' prayers and feel their sorrow. Indeed, in imagination, he would suffer all the agonies and experience all the joys of mankind. Billions of prayers would be offered up to him from the various races of mankind, and he would have to discriminate between them, to determine which among them, if any, were worthy of answer. In truth he would be so fully occupied in hearing and seeing the comedies and tragedies of life, that he would have no time for action, and probably his mind would get so distracted with what he saw, that at times he would, like Juliet, propose to "dash out his desperate brains."

Was I not right in saying that such a God would be the most miserable of all creatures? A good man who had the power to stop these calamities would be impelled to do so. Will a good God be less kind?

Away at once with such absurd ideas of God; dispel them for ever from the human mind. Learn that man cannot offend God, cannot sin against an Infinite being. But while it is impossible to sin against Deity it is possible to sin against our fellow man. We can offend him; we can sin against him; we can do him injury. And once the sin is done it is irrevocable. Remember that it is written indelibly upon the book of nature from which no leaves can be torn and nothing expunged. With this truth burned into his brain the Freethinker should strive day by day to work earnestly and faithfully in the service of man; for man needs our service—while God does not.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

A PROTEST FROM TOYNBEE HALL.

DEAR SIR,—I shall esteem it a favor if you will find a place in an early issue of your paper for the correction of certain inaccurate statements concerning the Toynbee Library, contained in the *Freethinker* of May 4th, to which my attention has just been directed.

As librarian I can speak with absolute knowledge of the facts in stating:

(*a*) That "Freethought works" are *not* "gradually creeping into the library." I would fain believe that the expression "gradually creeping" was a slip of the pen, for, to say the least of it, it is not a pleasant phrase.

(*b*) That "Freethought works" are *not* "much sought after," if by "*much*" it is intended to convey that many or even several persons make such request.

(*c*) That no discussion has ever been held in the Library Committee as to the admission of the *Freethinker* within the library.

(*d*) That no vote has ever been taken in Committee on the question of admitting the *National Reformer*. True it is that an offer to supply it *gratis* was kindly made by one of the readers, but by unanimous agreement of the Committee it was decided to decline the offer.

Only a few months previous to that, a proposal was made to place on the table the *Pall Mall Budget*; that proposal too was negatived. the Committee being of opinion that *newspapers* and *controversial journals* are not within the scope of the purposes of this library.

A printed catalogue of the library is in course of preparation. As soon as that is issued, nay, this very day, in the manuscript catalogue open to the inspection of any person, the public may ascertain for themselves what are the contents of the library.

Permit me, sir, to add, in justice to our work here, that that work is neither *for* nor *against* "Freethinkers" as such, nor indeed is it for or against anything but what the best men of all parties would most wish to help or to hinder.—Yours truly,

SAM. HALES, Librarian.

Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, E.

[We appear to have been slightly misinformed. At the same time we fancy the worthy librarian has somewhat exaggerated the error. If *all* works of a controversial nature are excluded from Toynbee Hall Library, it must be deficient in some of the chief works of the leading men of the age.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

First elder (at the kirk "skailin'"): "Did ye hear Dougal More snoring in the sermon?" Second elder: "Parfec ly disgracefu'! He waukened 's a'?"

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ACID DROPS.

Sir Harry Verney, speaking at the Bible House, said that Stanley, being asked to name what he would like as a present before starting for Africa, asked for a Bible—as though he couldn't have bought one for a shilling. During his wanderings Stanley read that Bible through three times. So Sir Harry Verney says, and the Bible House folk are in raptures. Of course they forget the story of the Gothic Bishop who would not translate the fighting parts of the Old Testament into the language of his people lest their sanguinary passions should be inflamed beyond all bounds.

We suppose it will be said that the Bible is at the bottom of Stanley's success. But how about the rifles and the gunpowder? If Stanley had nothing better to trust to than the blessed book, the natives (every man of them God's image) would have eaten him, and perhaps have cooked his best joints with his Bible.

We are disappointed in the Rev. Walter Walsh of Newcastle. We understood he was a gentleman, but he loses his temper like any vulgar Christian. Replying to Mr. Foote's lecture on "A Defence of Atheism," last Sunday evening in his own chapel, Mr. Walsh said he had given his reasons against entering into a public debate, and his special reasons for not meeting Mr. Foote he would not give there. We beg to tell Mr. Walsh that this is the merest insolence. We also venture to observe that while Mr. Walsh's objection to discussing with Mr. Foote does not prevent his answering him in his absence, there are many sensible Tynesiders who will see through such a thin pretence.

Mr. Walsh let the Christian right out of the bag at the end of his discourse. He declared that the philosophy of the National Secular Society was "a kind of jackal philosophy, which lived by snarling at and worrying and rending the constructive thoughts of abler and nobler men"—Mr. Walsh himself for instance. All this shows he is badly hit, and when he takes to calling names we agree with him that it is time he retired from the controversy. It was none of Mr. Foote's seeking. Mr. Walsh obtruded himself on the Newcastle Secularists, thinking to "bring them to God." His object, it appears, was exhortation and not discussion, and he has come to grief. He does not like discussion, and the Secularists can dispense with his exhortation.

In leaving Mr. Walsh, as he desires to be left, for ever, we ask our readers to give a candid judgment on the whole matter. Mr. Walsh wanted to show Atheists that they were wrong. They asked him to debate the subject with one of their representatives in a friendly way. He declined. Then we offered to put the *Freethinker* at his disposal for a written discussion. Again he declines, and leaves the "jackals" in disgust. Now, we ask whether the Secularists have not shown perfect fair play, and whether Mr. Walsh has not displayed a childish egotism and ill temper.

Emperor William has been insisting that he reigns by the grace of God. So did Charles the First, but he had his head cut off So did Louis the Sixteenth, and he lost his head—what there was of it—in the same way. The grace of God is an excellent thing till you put it to the proof, and the young Kaiser may yet learn it by experience.

Mr. Ben Tillett, the real organiser of the Dock Laborers, whose claims are apt to be overshadowed by those of more showy figures, in addressing a big meeting outside the East India Dock gates on Sunday morning, said (we quote from the *Echo*)—"Talk of the 'sweet by-and-bye'—what they wanted was not promises but performance, money down on the nail now; something here as a pledge of the better hereafter." Right in substance, Ben, but wrong in expression. So far from the good of this life being a pledge of a better hereafter, it is the people who get least of it who look for the sweet bye-and-bye! Just inquire among the rich and the poor, and see for yourself.

Mr. W. W. Wills, a local preacher of Musbury is a person of curious taste. At a funeral at Axminster he thought it his duty to attend and give at the grave a long oration on the sinful life of the deceased, who it appears had avoided Mr. Wills and his ministrations, as we should fancy most persons will do in future.

Mr. Edward Davy was going to the Tabernacle to hear Spurgeon. On the way he stopped to listen to another trader in mystery. This gentleman was doing the purse trick, and Mr. Davy bought two purses for very much less money than he believed was in them. But on opening the purses he found the shillings were halfpence and the half-crowns were pennies. This incensed his pious soul. The large profit he calculated on, at the vendor's expense, turned out to be a bad loss. Not all Spurgeon's eloquence could allay his virtuous indignation, and the purse-trick performer was indicted for larceny, but the law said "No, Mr. Davy, you made a bargain and you must abide by it." No doubt Mr. Davy will remember that gentleman in his prayers.

Stupidity and Bigotry met and kissed each other, as they often do, in Exeter Hall on Tuesday when that pious alderman Sir R. N. Fowler presided over the anniversary meeting of the British Society for the propagation of the Gospel among the Jews. Rarely is a questionable society matched with so fitting a chairman.

The Manchester *Sunday Chronicle* tells, in its graphic way, of a romance in real life which has just happened in that city. Mr. Aaron Howard, a devout Manchester fishmonger and staunch churchman, recently gave a peal of bells and illuminated clock and a window illustrating Aaron the High Priest, to the parish church of Blackley. He died just before the bells were set pealing, and it was discovered that this wealthy churchman had three daughters, whom he had turned out of home and who had a desperate struggle for existence, two of them being in domestic service. They now come into a fortune of thirty thousand a piece, and may put up memorial windows to their father with the inscription, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Near to the top of Highgate Hill is a handsome edifice known as St. Joseph's Retreat. It is a fine Roman Catholic church, costing a goodly sum, much of which has yet to be paid. The process of raising the wind is illustrative of the credulity and humbug which is doing so much for Catholicism. Circulars are issued in England, Ireland and America, offering 50,000 shares at one dollar, or four shillings English. Shareholders are divided into three classes. Those who take one share are entitled benefactors, those who take five shares are zelators, those who take twenty are founders.

£500 is offered in bonuses to the faithful who dispose of shares. The touter who sells most gets £100, the second £50, the third £25, the fourth and fifth £10; the next twenty-five get £5 each, while one hundred and eighty will have £1 for selling shares. The bait to the buyers is largely spiritual. Every one who subscribes a dollar will have a share "in all the masses, communions, prayers and good works offered up in St. Joseph's Church for as long as it will last." Moreover, 1,000 masses will be offered up for all benefactors.

Zelators will, in addition, get five books of photographs and a medal of the Holy Father, while the founders may each call himself Fundator, and will have his name inscribed in a splendid volume, which will be presented to the Holy Father. Moreover, like the man and his wife in Grimm's stories, Mr. Fundator may have a wish, and "Holy Mass will be said for his intention in the new church." Well, it is a foolish world.

Dr. Martineau's latest work on *The Seat of Authority in Religion* will be sad reading for the orthodox. He accepts Vischer's view of the Apocalypse as "a Jewish apocalypse, with Christian interpolations, set in a Christian frame." He says the Fourth Gospel "has its birthday in the middle of the second century, and is not the work of a witness at all," while the Synoptic Gospels are only "compiled and edited." The Book of Acts is the work of a writer who stood at "a distance from its inner conflicts," and "gives a distorted and highly ideal representation" of the primitive history of the Church, while the "vain attempts" of the first disciples to "solve the mystery" of Christ's personality, have "left us the unfortunate legacy of a Christian mythology." In other words—for this is what it comes to—the New Testament records are works of imagination.

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Dr. Martineau is just as plain-spoken on another subject. After a list of the highest human qualities, he writes: "When I pass through Church history in search of these. I doubtless find them, but in such sparse and partial gleams from a wilderness of passion and of wrong, that secular history itself, though less inspiring in its supreme heights, is less dreary on its ordinary levels, and less dreadful in its darker depths."

God's tender mercies are over all his works, especially the human ones. A few days ago a ferry boat was crossing the Oder from Slawikau to Thüze, carrying forty-two children just returning from comfirmation. By some accident it overturned, and as Providence winked just then, all the children were precipitated into the river and thirty-six were drowned. Moral—Don't go to confirmation or be particularly careful how you go home afterwards.

In an article on Mr. R. L. Stevenson's vindication of Father Damien, the leper hero, the *Speaker* makes some excellent remarks on General Gordon. "The first portraits of Gordon," it says, "were all in treacle. His eyes were always cast heavenward, and he thrust his Bible on you like a certificate of character. It seemed wicked to think of him singing, smoking, falling into a passion, doing a stupid thing. Then, in due time came the blessed truth that he was capable of all these enormities. We were permitted to see him in his futile rages, his grievous lapses from common sense, in his inexpressibly silly commentaries on the Book of Genesis, in his childish attempts to identify the Forbidden Fruit with something that grows on an island of the Seychelles. From that background of human frailty his true greatness stood—fresh, clear, and bright. The courage, and the faculty of his management of the ever-victorious army, found a splendid foil in the fiddle-dee-dee of his theory of the Fall. The grandeur of his death at Khartoum was a bill of indemnity for all the pettiness of his taunts to the Mahdi in that curious system of theological controversy by cartel which they kept up from their respective sides of the wall. Gordon became one of us by this revelation of his weaknesses; and it was stimulating in the highest degree to know that one of us might, upon occasion, become so much like one of the angels. But if he had been left all angel from the beginning, as the chromo-lithographers had drawn him, the sense of brotherhood which gave the sole interest to the study must have been altogether lost."

The London *Echo* prints a curious extract from the parish magazine of All Saints, Clapham Park. Here it is in all its naked loveliness: "Unmarried workers are requested not to marry for some little time, as we cannot afford to lose their services, as we have lost many lately. If marriage is a blessing, workers should continue their work in thankfulness; if a curse, in penance for their folly. The caution is particularly addressed to the ladies, who seem to be the offenders, judging both by parish experience and by Bible history—which latter, with many an Eve and Jezebel in its annals, mentions no case of a man leading his wife astray."

Had the parson who penned this exquisite flattery of the ladies lived sixteen hundred years ago, he would doubtless have cried "hear, hear!" when a certain Christian Father called woman "a malignant she ass."

Of course the Bible mentions no case of a man leading his wife astray. And why? Because men wrote it.

Mr. W. H. Hurlbert's *France and the Republic* is one long libel on the country of Voltaire. This gentleman's animus is easily seen in his references to religion. He calls the republican Mayor of Amiens a "rampant Atheist, and a cotton-velvet bagman of blasphemy." "The doctrine of the Third Republic," he declares, "is that all Frenchmen must be Atheists." Even the clerks in the Ministry of Worship are "all of them now, doubtless, good Atheists." Well, we are very glad to hear it; and if Atheism necessarily puts Mr. Hurlbert in such a ferocious temper, we hope he will never cool down.

A scurrilous paper, supposed to be run in the interests of religion, gives a paragraph from the *Daily Graphic* with this comment: "Secularists who want to know where the water of the flood went, will find a part of the curiosity satisfied if they read the last two sentences. *Freethinker*, copy if you dare!!"

We do copy the paragraph, as our readers may be interested in seeing what is considered a confirmation of the legend of the Flood. Here it is: "The second volume of the 'Report on the Scientific Results' of the Challenger's voyage has recently been published, and it is no whit less interesting than its predecessor. The deep sea is full of wonders. There are fish living 2,600 fathoms down; some blind, others almost eyeless, which are so compressed from the weight of the water, that when brought to the surface their bodies expand. Three miles down there is no light and no change of temperature. Being no light there is no vegetable growth, and the fish feed on each other—at least so many of them as have teeth probably do so. Those without teeth no doubt feed on animalculæ. From Professor Tait's experiments it seems that at a depth of six miles the sea is compressed about 620 feet. May this compression long continue: for should it cease something like 2,000,000 square miles would be inundated."

Who after this will see any difficulty in getting all species of animals into the ark, and providing them with proper food and temperature, and landing them above the snow line on Mount Ararat? Who after this can doubt that God repented of his own handiwork, and showed his loving-kindness in drowning nearly all creation, including "beasts and fowls of the air," for human sin? Who will henceforth wonder at what became of all the water which covered all the highest hills under heaven.

We have called the paper a scurrilous one, and our epithet is warranted by its attack upon Dr. Allinson (presumably because he is known to be a Freethinker) treating a paper, the *Rising Sun*, which contained his biography, as though it was edited and written by himself, when really it was issued by a vegetarian entirely unconnected with Dr. Allinson.

Dr. Westcott, the new Bishop of Durham, like a true disciple, of the meek and lowly Jesus, has gone through the blasphemous farce of "enthroning." After the completion of the ceremony his lordship preached a sermon from the text, "Brethren, pray for us." He receives a bigger salary than the Prime Minister, and perhaps he doesn't know how to spend it. Hence he desires the prayers of the brethren. We suggest however, that he should apply to the poor curates of his diocese. They would help him to get through his salary.

Alfred Carter has been studying for the Wesleyan ministry, but his brain does not seem strong enough for that. He has asked the Queen for some money, and offered to marry her. The magistrates regard him as a lunatic, and have handed him over to his father for safe custody.

South Missouri preacher reported by *Life*: "Now, my brethren, having disposed of that ar lyin' hepocritical cuss, who runs the Methodist church across the way, I'll continue my discourse on 'peace on earth, good will to men.'"

The Virgin Mary is reported in the *Tablet* to have appeared to two peasant women at Castel Petroso a remote mountainous village of Southern Italy. The B. V. M. seems like her son only to show herself to believers. To sceptics the family trait was evasiveness.

Oberammergau seems to be demoralised by the profits of the Passion Play. The performers and the villagers reaped such a golden harvest in 1880 that they lived in indolence for five years. Then want and discontent ensued, and the second half of the decade has been spent in looking forward to the next raking in of the shekels.

How entertaining this must be to the cynic! Thousands of well-to-do Christians flock to Oberammergau to see the drama of the Crucifixion enacted. Probably their faith is a little weak, and they want to have the "agony and bloody sweat" and the "cross and passion" of their Redeemer performed before their eyes. What a pity it is all simulation! If the villager who acts Jesus Christ were only crucified in reality, the bull fights of Spain would sink into commonplace spectacles, and half the idle classes of Europe

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would flock to Oberammergau for a strong sensation. But s all simulation, and when the play is over J. C. goes on drinking and playing skittles.

The Religious Tract Society's income last year was £211,675. What a lot of money for waste paper!

London seems to have acquired a good clown in the Scotch Spurgeon. The Rev. J. McNeill has been holding forth against preaching in a gown. He says a minister should preach with tongue, eye, hands, and feet. Yes, but how about *head*, Mr. McNeill, how about *head?*

The Scotch Spurgeon advocated plain speaking. Christ, he said, had in his work a splendid *abandon*. Well, he certainly did let out in ferocious style now and then. But his chief case of *abandon* was on the cross, when he cried out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

How the men of God differ! The Rev. Fleming Williams told the Congregational Union that "the new tenderness and sympathy that was finding expression in social channels was melting away out of the land all the societies that were formed by Mr. Bradlaugh's influence years ago." But Mr. Williams is an emotional gentleman. with no corresponding powers of perception and intelligence, and the wish is the father to most of his thoughts. A very different verdict is given by Mr. Spurgeon. Addressing the annual meeting of his Colportage Association, he referred to the 500,000 people who assembled in Hyde Park the other Sunday, and remarked that probably not one per cent. of that multitude gave any attention to religion. There were entire streets where not one of the inhabitants attended any place of worship. Infidelity was also bolder than ever.

Mr Spurgeon appears very anxious to break up the association of his old students, some fifty in number, who preferred to stand by the Baptist Union. Some, it is true, have been excommunicated beyond all hope of forgiveness, and cut off from even personal intercourse. Others who were considered more hopeful have had a final chance of returning to the Spurgeonic fold. A few in this latter category have each received a letter from Mr. James Spurgeon, holding out hope of pardon; but they prefer impenitence, if that means liberty of conscience, to the Calvinistic yoke which it was sought to impose upon them. —*Christian World.*

Bigotry and Bible reading go together. It is therefore not surprising to read that there is an energetic circulation of the blessed book in the country which has disgraced itself by imprisoning Viktor Lennstrand. The Swedish Bible Society, since its formation, has distributed 338,607 Bibles and 730,505 New Testaments.

At the recent conference of the Congregational Union, the Rev. Robert Mansergh produced two gaily colored handkerchiefs, bearing striking sketches of beer-bottles and spirit glasses, which were being sent out to Africa in vast quantities by Glasgow merchants to advertise their business. The members of the firm thus bent on alcoholising the negroes for a profit are *all Christians.*

Dr. Parker complains that when Dissenters get £1,000 a year they go over to the Church of England. We sympathise with the Doctor. It must be hard to lose the birds that are best worth plucking.

Dr. Parker protests that, as a Liberationist, he will never associate in destroying the Church Establishment with men who wish to destroy religion. But what of that? He will vote the same way as they do, and that is all they want of him.

The Dissenters protest against the proposed religious census next year. Perhaps they are afraid that a lot of indifferentists will put themselves down as belonging to the Church of England. It can hardly be that they are moved by a perfect hatred of State recognition of religion, for do they not keep up the Blasphemy Laws, and do they not support Bible reading in Board schools?

The College Committee of the Free Church of Scotland in their report upon the alleged heresy of Professors Dods and Bruce, with Scotch caution say there is ground for anxiety on the subject of their beliefs but not ground for a prosecution. The professors have themselves made statements, Dr. Marcus Dods giving mild instances of what he had called the inaccuracies and immoralities of Scripture. Professor Bruce holds that "Inspiration does not inderdict the hypothesis that the Evangelists may in some cases have modified the form of the Lord's words, for good and worthy reasons."

The Sabbatarian Laws in Indiana have been brought into play against an automaton, which was convicted at New Haven of acting when a nickel was dropped into the slot. The proprietor was fined fifty dollars for not stopping the hole on Sundays. God's feelings, we suppose, were damaged to the extent of fifty dollars. That automatic machine will never get to heaven!

FLO'S LETTER.

"Dear God, the baby you brought us
Is awful nice and sweet,
But, 'cause you forgot his toofies,
The poor little thing can't eat.
That's why I'm writing this letter
A purpose to let you know.
Please come and finish the baby;
That's all. From little Flo."

The Manchester Corporation declines to grant permission to one of our readers to give a band performance on a Sunday afternoon in Alexandra Park. No matter, the time *will* come.

Last week we told of a Middlesboro Christian who said that St. Paul, Shakespeare and Milton were the three most learned men in history. This week we have to tell of a similar piece of nonsense, perpetrated by one who should know better. Mr. Augustus Birrell, a very much overrated "literary gent," who, owing to the accident of the choice of a Scotch caucas, sprang suddenly into a seat in Parliament, was one of the speakers at the recent Liberation meeting in Spurgeon's Tabernacle. In the course of his speech he named what he considered the three greatest events in history. The first was the birth of Christ—of course. The second was the Hegira of Mahomet. The third was—well, we will give the reader five thousand guesses, and bet him ten to one he doesn't name it. The third greatest event in history was—but wait a bit, it is too good to hurry over. Nobody but a Scotchman would ever think of it at all. "Ah," cries the reader, "it was the battle of Bannockburn, or the opening of the Forth Bridge." No, guess again. You give it up? Well, here it is then. It was the Disruption of the Scotch Church!

O canny Augustus Birrell, you spoke as a Scotchman and a Liberationist. But very likely as a Scotchman, pure and simple, you have a shrewd suspicion, which it would not do to give tongue to in Spurgeon's Tabernacle before the hosts of Dissent, that the day will come when the Disruption —ay, and the very existence—of the Scotch Church will be a matter of archæology, and when the birthday of Robert Burns will be looked upon as the greatest event in Scotch history.

Then as to the birth of Christ. Some centuries before that event three hundreds Spartans died in the Pass of Thermopylæ to give the Greeks time to rally against the Persian hordes. Afterwards was fought the battle of Marathon, and the little army of Grecian freemen broke the pride of Persia, and scattered its power to the winds. Yes, Mr. Birrell, the battle of Marathon was a very big event. Had the Greeks lost, Asia would have overrun Europe, and perhaps Christ himself would never have been heard of.

CHRISTIANITY AND MORALITY.—When we realise the true position of Christianity in the world; when we admit, on the strength of plain facts and figures, that it has only existed during a relatively brief period of the whole history of the race, and then only amongst a small minority; that it has broken up into numerous and utterly discordant sections, that it has decayed as knowledge has increased, and that a vast majority of the race has got on very well without it, it is hopeless to assert that morality is caused by a belief in Christianity.—Leslie Stephen, *Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1888.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

May 25, N. S. S. Conference at Manchester.
June 1, Hall of Science, London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 3, Camberwell; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

SOUTH PECKHAM AND WEST HAM.—Your Guide Notices were sent to Stonecutter Street. The Editorial address is 14 Clerkenwell Green. Unless notices are sent to the proper address there is sure to be delay.

P. W. BARKER.—You must see that we cannot give you names of our subscribers that "we are not free to publish." They are sent to us in confidence, and confidence means telling *no one*.

BLUE-JACKET.—The personalities of the journal you send us are beneath contempt. We discuss principles, not persons.

DOLF.—Good, but hardly good enough. Besides, the incident is no longer fresh.

H. ROWDON.—You forgot to stamp your letter. No, the magistrate cannot go behind the witness's declaration that taking an oath is contrary to his religious belief. Mill's *Utilitarianism* is published at 5s.

D. C. B.—Your letter to the *Glasgow Herald* should do good. It is gratifying to see the press gradually opening for such communications.

W. A.—"Pat and the Parson" fails in reproducing the Hibernian dialect.

THE friend in Berlin (Germany) who sent the *Freethinkers* to Mr. Smith, Liverpool, for distribution, is thanked and assured that his wishes shall be carefully carried out.

H. SMITH.—The matter shall be mentioned at the Conference.

W. HOLLAND.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. NEATE desires to correct a misstatement in his last Lecture Notice. Mr. Elflein is *not* a member of the Christian Evidence Society.

J. SAUNDERS.—Nobody knows how far Jonah travelled, and there are no whales in the Levant. But if a whale did get Jonah on board, the animal must have been frightened and pained. A harpoon in him would be nothing to it. Reckoning the animal started off at twenty miles an hour, and kept it up for three days and nights, he must have covered—well, you can reckon it yourself. Thanks for the cuttings. We are glad to hear the Reading Freethinkers were so pleased with Mr. Robertson.

F. C. P. states that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at another newsagent's in Bournemouth,—at 141 Old Christchurch-road. There also it is difficult to get a copy unless you go early.

T. THURLOW.—Yes, it is quite right to exclude from any of our open-air platforms a Christian who is systematically abusive. Some of that creed think they have a vested interest in insult, and it is time they should be taught a lesson.

W. C. JOHNSON.—Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on the laws relating so Blasphemy and Heresy gives what you require. We may ourselves draw up something brief on the subject.

INCOG.—You will no doubt breathe freely now you have resigned the post which obliged you to teach what you did not believe. The world is wide, and honest livings are not so scarce but that an energetic Freethinker will find one.

G. FRASER.—You should return the Christian compliment at Reading by distributing Freethought tracts. We are just preparing a fresh supply.

T. SHORE.—Much obliged. See Sugar Plums.

J. F. WATSON, secretary of the Sunday Cricket Club (92 Upton Park Road, Forest Gate) throws out a challenge to any Branch of the N. S. S. for "a home and home match."

J. BANNERMAN.—Apply to J. Brumage, 38 Sydenham-terrace, Fratton, Portsmouth. The Branch meetings are held in the Wellington Hall. To join the N. S. S. yon have to put your name to a printed form and pay the subscription.

P. J. WALSH.—Your suggestion has been pressed before. A collection might well be made at the outdoor lectures.

H. CALASCA.—Thanks for the cuttings. Mr. Walsh must have played very low if he urged that, because Mr. Foote said that philosophically *every* thing was natural, he was therefore an advocate of vice. The very report before Mr. Walsh showed Mr. Foote to have said that *natural* and *unnatural* were purely *moral* distinctions. In the face of this, Mr. Walsh was positively dishonest. But what can we expect from these professional soul-savers?

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—East Devon Mail—Accrington Chronicle—Newcastle Daily Leader—Newcastle Chronicle—Grimsby News—Seafaring—Der Lichtfreund—Wolsingham Parish Magazine—Tailor and Cutter—South Wales Echo—Loyal American—Lucifer—Sunderland Echo—Worcestershire Echo.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Sixth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
W. C. Johnson	1	1	0	G. S. H.	1	0	0
A. Carter	1	1	0	G. Alward	1	0	0
J. H. E.	0	10	0	Incog.	0	1	0
J. Moffat	0	7	6	R. Birtwistle	0	2	0
W. R. (per Mr. Bradlaugh	1	0	0	C. N.	0	1	0

SUGAR PLUMS.

Notwithstanding the fine warm weather there was a capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Is there a Future Life?" Discussion was invited, but only one gentleman arose and he was a questioner. He wanted to know which was the safe side, and his primitive state of mind caused a good deal of laughter.

To-day (May 25) the National Secular Society's Conference takes place at Manchester. The morning sitting opens at half-past ten. Every member of the National Secular Society has a right to attend, and speak and vote. Other Freethinkers can watch and listen from the back seats or the gallery. In the evening there will be an open meeting addressed by various speakers.

Mr. Wheeler will attend the Conference in order to report for the *Freethinker*. Our readers may look forward to a full, though not a tediously minute, account of the proceedings.

The Council of the London Secular Federation held a special meeting at the Hall of Science on Thursday evening, May 15, to discuss the Agenda of the N.S.S. Conference. Mr. Foote thought it better not to attend the meeting. Being president of the N.S.S., he did not wish to lay himself under the suspicion of pre-influencing the votes of the London Branches; and, in the second place, he did not think it right to anticipate the explanations he will have to make before the whole Society. The agenda was thoroughly discussed, and most of Mr. Foote's proposals were cordially approved. About the first proposal for altering the annual subscription there was a division of opinion, but a majority were in its favor. Some of the objections to it, as reported to Mr. Foote, were founded upon a misconception, and will probably disappear at the Conference.

Mr. Foote's four-nights' debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann is a present running through *Secular Thought*. Mr. Watts, the editor of that journal, seems to find debates good copy.

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He is himself a veteran debater, and has crossed swords with many Christian champions in America. We have just received a written debate he held recently with the editor of the Halifax *Evening Mail*. It makes a big pamphlet, priced at a quarter of a dollar. Mr. Watts more than holds his own in this discussion on Secularism. He demolishes his opponent.

READ THE "FREETHINKER" 1D. Published at 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C. Order of your Bookseller.

This is a fac-simile of a stamp which Messrs. Ireton and Co. have produced for Miss Vance, who desires to advertise us by thus marking her paper, envelopes, etc. Any reader who feels disposed to go and do likewise will be supplied by Messrs. Ireton and Co. with the complete apparatus for 2s. This is a wonderfully cheap and we think effective way of advertising us.

We have just issued from our publishing office a little volume which every Freethinker should possess. It was written more than a hundred and fifty years ago by Anthony Collins, the father of English Freethought, a man whose character was equal to his intellect, which is saying a great deal. He was a personal friend of the great John Locke, who praised his love of truth and moral courage as superior to almost any other he had ever known, and by his will made him one of his executors. Many works in defence and illustration of Freethought proceeded from his active pen. The one we have reprinted is his masterpiece, and it goes to the root of the matter. It deals with the doctrine of Free Will, and, on the admission of Professor Fraser, the learned Editor of Berkeley, it "states the arguments against human freedom with a logical force unsurpassed by any necessitarian." Professor Huxley also, speaking of Collins's encounter with Dr. Samuel Clarke, the famous theologian, says that the Freethinker "writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning."

Mr. Wheeler has contributed to this reprint a full and very interesting account of Collins's life and works, and Mr. Foote has supplied some annotations. The price of the volume is one shilling. A small number of copies, printed on superfine paper, and well bound in cloth, are priced at two shillings.

Should this reprint meet with a favorable reception—and we can hardly doubt that it will—it will be followed by some other reprints of the "Fathers of Freethought."

Mr. John M. Robertson's articles on "Christ and Krishna" in the *National Reformer* have been reprinted and are now published in a two shilling volume which should receive attention of all interested in the disputed question of the influence of India upon Christianity. We shall shortly notice the work at greater length.

Among the signs of the spread of heresy among women may be mentioned a novel *The New Continent* by Mrs. Worthey, published this year by Macmillan and Co., apparently called out by Robert Elsmere. It depicts the progress of the heroine from the Broad Church influences of Maurice, Hinton, and Kingsley, *via* Matthew Arnold and Wm. Kingdon Clifford to Positivism, or as she calls it Human Catholicism.

Among the fresh letters of Keats just issued by Mr. Buxton Forman there is one which contains the following: "Parsons will always keep up their character, but as it is said there are some animals the ancients knew which we do not know, let us hope our posterity will miss the black badger with tri-cornered hat."

The Italian Liberals are preparing to erect a monument in Rome to Arnold of Brescia, who was burnt by the Inquisition in 1155 for the crime of denouncing the corruption of the clergy. This will be another thorn in the side of the Papacy which now laments that it cannot escape from its past. Thus does the whirligig of time bring its revenges.

The titles of our streets when they soar beyond the commonplaces of High, King, Church or Chapel, usually register the names of some landlord or jerry-builder unknown outside the district of his property. They manage these things better in France, where the thoroughfares call to mind the existence of men who have been a glory to the nation. We see by a new decree the names of the eminent Freethinkers; Danton, Paul Bert, and Pierre Larousse are among those given to different Paris streets.

The number of *Fritankaren* which announces Viktor E. Lennstrand's release, contains a translation into Swedish of Mr. Wheeler's recent article on Christianity and Civilisation, made by Captain Otto Thomson.

No doubt there is room for much Freethought work in India, and we are pleased to see the *Cosmopolitan*, of Calcutta, is continuing its useful work. The fourth number now before us, reprints articles by Messrs. Foote, Wheeler, and Ball, as well as original ones from the pen of the editor and others.

The French drama "Mahomet," which was prohibited at the instance of the Turkish ambassador, has been printed. It seems that the author, with a reckless disregard of history and probability, makes the prophet of Arabia commit suicide and in his last moments embrace Christianity.

Mr. Hyndman is more courageous or less prudent than Mr. Burns, and he is going to debate the legal eight-hours question with Mr. Bradlaugh. From the papers we see that propositions are drawn up on both sides. The discussion will be looked forward to with great interest.

A correspondence on the truth of Christianity has been appearing in the *Grimsby News*. We hope our friends will keep the ball rolling.

The Yorkshire Secular Federation had a picnic on Sunday at Bingly. After tea the company went into the heart of the town and held an open-air meeting. Mr. White delivered a stirring address, which was listened to by a large crowd. Arrangements are being made for another excursion to Shipley Glen on June 8.

Mr. M. D. Conway is in England again. He discoursed at South Place Chapel last Sunday morning, and his dry humor refreshed the congregation after Dr. Coit's greater solemnity. Speaking of Mde. Blavatsky, Mr. Conway said that he saw her in India, and asked her what the "miracles" of Theosophy were all about. What was the meaning of plucking jewels and broaches out of flowers, and tea plants growing out of chairs? The astute lady replied "It is all glamor, all pretence." Mr. Conway thinks her frankness was intended to prevent the investigations he proposed to make, which might have produced a bad effect on the ignorant disciples downstairs.

THE HALO OF THE SCAFFOLD.

A rollicking, reckless villain I've been,
And now—unwillingly guest of the Queen—
The prison knell I with longing await,
For the gallows-trap is but heaven s gate.

I've put out the light of more people than one.
And got nabbed at last long before I had done;
Yet I care not a jot for my well-deserved fate,
For the gallows-trap is but heaven's gate.

My partner, Will Cracker, they strung up last Spring;
To heaven he flew upon angelic wing;
In the regions of bliss I shall soon join my mate,
For the gallows-trap is but heaven's gate.

The chaplain declares that to glory has passed
All the hanged who for mercy have cried out at last;
So I'll soon mix with saints in a happier state,
For the gallows-trap is but heaven's gate.

A. Guest.

Who is the Rev. W. Jacomb of Willesden, advertised in the *Tailor and Cutter* as "late Secularist lecturer" who will conduct a gospel meeting in the Tailor's Lecture Hall, off Regent Street? His fame never travelled so far as to reach our ears.

A Falkirk Christian felt a call from the Lord to kill every woman he met. Armed with a stout stick, he chased a woman in Comely Park Terrace, and beat her badly about the head before he could be secured. On being seized he shouted "Hallelujah, praise the Lord." Evidently the poor man was born three thousand years too late. As an ancient Jew, during the conquest of Palestine, he would have been in his element.

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THE GOSPEL OF FACT.

Part II.

Fact is strength. The man who accepts the Gospel of Fact as his guide can neither believe in, nor have any fear of, anything with which neither he nor anybody else has any acquaintance. Standing on the pedestal of the Gospel of Fact, its disciple can calmly look the world in the face, and examine the dogmas and the theories of his fellows by applying to them the infallible test of reason.

Before reason everything not in strict accordance with fact will vanish away. The first thing that will go is the belief in inspired books. The inspired books in which men believe and trust cannot stand the test of reason, even were we assured that there was such a being as could inspire the writers of them. As to the origin of those books all is uncertainty. The only evidence offered of their inspiration is the books themselves. This evidence is absolutely worthless. We would not for a moment accept it in a history or a biography. We should have some facts to back up the assertions of the books themselves; without those facts the assertions are absolutely worthless. The inspired books purport to deal with actual facts, and, accordingly, we are as much bound to have those alleged facts supported by corroborative evidence as we have in the case of Cæsar's narrative of the Gallic wars. But nobody knows who wrote the Bible or the Gospels; nobody knows when they were written; nobody of whom history has any knowledge ever experienced anything like the Bible occurrences; in a word, nobody knows anything for certain about the Scriptures except that they exist, and that they assert that they are inspired, or are believed to be inspired, which is much the same thing. Their authenticity, therefore, being impossible of proof, and incapable of proof, the inexorable Gospel of Fact brushes "inspired" literature aside as so much rubbish.

The Bible being rejected, the Bible God of necessity goes with his inspired book. His history and character as painted by his "prophets" would damn the Bible, even if strong evidence were advanced in proof of its authenticity. To think that a being who could make this world out of nothing would be such a failure when he made angels and men is inconceivable. To imagine him making angels who turned out rebels, and making man who disobeyed him almost as soon as he was made, is to have the most unqualified contempt for his character. From the time when he is alleged to have made hell for man, and man for hell, until he is alleged to have sentenced his own son to death, his record is that of a divine Czar, with the success of the human Czar left out. A fickle tyrant, a brute, and a failure, this scarecrow of the skies would, were he possible and existent, deserve nothing from men but contempt and rebellion. But the Bible evidence of his existence, and the character in which he is therein painted, are in themselves infallible proofs that he is a myth.

But there are people that reject the Bible who still say that there is a God. These do not profess to know so much about his sayings and doings as those who accept the Scriptures as divine truths. They want to explain the origin of the universe, and they do it by saying that God made it. They cannot explain God, or give any definite opinion about him. To these people God is a convenient refuge when their minds fail them in trying to imagine the origin of the world. Belief in him is soothing to timid minds, as it is self-satisfying to those for whom the mystery of the world's origin is too much.

But when we apply the teachings of our Gospel of Fact to the God of the Deist, we shall find that he is no better than a mere guess at the origin of what is really incomprehensible. Once the Bible is rejected there is no justification for dethroning reason in considering the existence or non-existence of a supernatural being. It is inconsistent to apply reason to the Bible without applying it to God afterwards. If reason is applied to the Bible, it must also be applied to God. There is no possible justification for any other course.

Immediately reason is applied to the assertion that there is a God, God disappears. By thought we may not be able to add a cubit to our stature, but by thought we can dethrone a God. For God is incomprehensible. We cannot possibly conceive such a being as a God. The human mind is incapable of the thought. What the mind is incapable of thinking, and what it has no evidence whatever of, is not a fact, and is almost unworthy of being speculated upon even for a moment. The Gospel of Fact only allows what is *known* to be true, and nobody *knows* that there is a God. Far from knowing, nobody can even conceive him, no matter how he tries. It is no use to say that without a God there would be no world. The world is *a fact* of which we have absolute knowledge, even if we are ignorant of its origin. It does not help us a bit to endeavor to explain the inexplicable by alleging that an incomprehensible being is the explanation. This is only making confusion worse confounded.

When people talk of believing in a God they must ignore fact and reason, the latter because reason forbids belief in a God, the former because there is not the smallest particle of evidence that such a being exists. Out of infinite space no word, no token, has ever come that a God dwells among the stars. If he is there he takes care to keep dark and to reveal nothing. In infinite space there is no room for him. Where he could be, and how he could come into being, and what could be his motives, are all unknowable and unthinkable. Did he exist he would never have let us be undecided about him, nor have given us minds that cannot form an idea of his existence. Did he exist he could never be so cruel as to cause and maintain the sufferings of human beings. A being who could run a world could make the lot of man less free from pain and misery. No; reason, our only criterion, forbids us to think that God exists. He is unthinkable, unknowable, a mere invention, a bogey,—anything and everything, that speculative minds may imagine, but never a Fact!

J. O'Donovan.

(*To be concluded.*)

ARE CLERGYMEN FRAUDS?

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(*From the "Twentieth Century."*)

[concluded.]

There are a great many ministers who preach what they do not believe and many more who do not preach what they believe. When they cease to believe in a dogma of their church they keep silent upon that point instead of giving up their salaries and leaving the church. But I have tried to put the case in the most favorable light possible.

Clergymen have a way of juggling with words that is very dishonest. They will say they believe in the *divinity* of Jesus, because divinity means anything or nothing to them. The fraud consists in trying to make other people believe that they mean the *Deity* of Jesus.

I once saw a young clergyman examined for installation. In his examination paper he said that he believed in the divinity of Jesus. But one of the most influential ministers in the council asked him if he meant that he believed in the Deity of Jesus The poor fellow was so scared that he said he did. It so happened that I had been talking to him on that very subject, and he told me that he did not believe in the Deity of Jesus but he believed in the divinity of Jesus, and when I asked him what he meant by the divinity of Jesus he did not know. But he said before the council that he believed in the Deity of Jesus. He was a liar. But he is one of the most what they call "active" clergymen in his denomination. The last time I heard of him he was begging

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for 150.000 dollars with which to build a billiard room and tenpin alley as an annex to his church.

How do you suppose those very liberal Episcopal clergymen, of whom we all know, get along while they go through their Prayer Book service, which declares that Jesus was born of a virgin and that children are regenerated when they have the baptismal water put upon them? Why, some of them say that the word virgin was sometimes applied to any married woman who was faithful to her husband; and as for baptismal regeneration, they say that is what the church teaches, not what they believe. They simply read the service; that is all. But do you believe that any man on this green earth would higgle and quibble and whip his conscience into justifying such humbug if there were not some worldly advantage to be gained by it?

Every one knows that there are a great many priests in the Episcopal church who do not believe in the Thirty-nine Articles, a great many ministers in the Presbyterian church who do not believe in the Westminster Catechism, a great many ministers in the Baptist church who do not believe in the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, a great many ministers in the Methodist church who do not believe in the Book of Discipline, a great many priests in the Roman Catholic church who do not believe in the infallibility of the Pope. All these ministers and priests are frauds; they are hypocrites, although that is an ugly word to apply to anybody; because they encourage people to think that they *do* believe in all these things, and if many of them were put before an authoritative examining committee they would say they believe in them.

Nobody will or can truthfully deny these facts, and whatever may be the motives of these clergymen in thus living their false lives, however they may have succeeded in making themselves believe that what they are doing is right, I think I am safe in saying that if some worldly advantage were not to be gained by their doing as they do, they would act differently.

It is not a pleasant nor an easy thing for a man to stifle his convictions or pretend to believe what he does not believe. There are very few joys that are comparable to the joys of freedom. There is hardly any pleasure so great as that of speaking your mind, honestly and truthfully. And no man would forego that pleasure unless he was tempted to do so by safety from physical pain, or freedom from poverty or social ostracism. Nobody can possibly believe that clergymen would conceal their real opinions if money and power and respectability were to be obtained by speaking them.

It is proverbial that clergymen will confess in private conversation what they will not confess in the pulpit, that they will talk more freely about their doubts among each other than before their congregations, that they will sympathise with a heretic in private and denounce that same heretic in public. Everybody who has had private conversation with clergymen knows that this is true, and everybody knows that it could not be true of men who were thoroughly honest.

But the saddest part of the whole business is that the laymen of the Christian Church all know that everything I have said is true, but they do not seem to care. Of course, knowing their ministers as well as they do, they cannot respect them as they would if the clergymen were thoroughly honest men, but they pretend to; they become partakers of the sham; perhaps because the clergy are their faithful friends in all their legal and respectable dishonesties.

This leads me to say that I could forgive the clergymen all their intellectual immoralities much more easily than I can forgive them for their persistent enmity to the poor. Whatever may be said of Jesus of Nazareth, as he is portrayed to us in the four Gospels, it must be admitted that all his sympathies were with the poor. It is plain to me at least, that he was not God. It is equally plain to me that he did not understand why the poor were poor; he did not understand economics as that science is coming to be understood, after all these centuries of experience; his solution of the problems incident to wealth and poverty—that the rich should give their possessions to the poor in charities—is not the true solution of these problems. But he loved the poor, he lived among them, he was one of them, and all his fault-finding and denunciations were directed toward the rich. His heart was in the right place.

But the modern clergyman praises the intelligence and enterprise of the rich and blames the poor for being poor. He accuses them of indolence, intemperance and unthrift. The clergymen of to-day are the defenders and apologists of land monopoly, money monopoly, machinery monopoly and transportation monopoly. If a rich employer and a poor employé are members of the same church the clergyman will be for the rich employer and against the poor employé. There is hardly a clergyman who would not be delighted to have the most greedy monopolist in the land join his church. The causes of poverty are now well understood, but the clergymen are in favor of continuing those causes.

It may be said that they are ignorant. That is true to a great extent. But they have no business to be ignorant. The very fact that Jesus was the poor man's friend while they are the poor man's enemies ought to startle them into the recognition that something must be wrong with their position. They cannot possibly be ignorant of the fact that churches run away from poor districts as men run from a plague. They cannot possibly read the story of their Master, as they call him, and not see the immense difference between what he was and what they are. If they can—if they are so ignorant as that—they are not fit to teach and lead the people.

I wish to say again that I know nothing of the motives of these men. They may be perfectly conscientious for aught I know to the contrary. Nothing is easier than for a man to debauch his conscience and then follow in its horribly diseased condition. But I am firmly convinced that facts indicate that clergymen, as a class, are shamefully dishonest men, intellectually. They are—and this is the kindest thing that can be said of them—blind leaders of the blind, and as long as the people follow them they will continue to fall into the ditch of poverty and superstition.

HUXLEY ON PERSECUTION.

Professor Huxley's paper on "Government" in the current number of *The Nineteenth Century* is a very thoughtful production. He argues neither in favor of socialism or individualism but against *à priori* method. So far from being content with the present lot of the workers, he says if the increase of knowledge, the winning of greater dominion over nature and the wealth which follows that dominion are to make no difference to the extent and intensity of want, with its concomitant physical and moral degradation among the masses of the people, he would hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away, as a desirable consummation. If he believed the socialistic schemes would attain their desired end, he would gladly devote the remainder of his days to their advocacy. But he sees a cardinal defect in all such schemes in that they ignore the population question. On the subject of the sphere of government he has the following words on the influence of Christianity:

"One heritage of old Roman statecraft, at any rate, passed bodily over to Catholic churchcraft. As soon as the Church was strong enough, it began to persecute with a vigor and consistency which the Empire never attained. In the ages of faith, Christian ecclesiasticism raged against freedom of thought, as such, and compelled the State to punish religious dissidence as a criminal offence of the worst description. The ingenuity of pagan persecutors failed to reach the shameful level of that of the Christian inventors of the Holy Office; nor did the civil governors of pagan antiquity ever degrade themselves so far as to play the executioner for a camarilla of priests. The doctrine that the authority of the State extends to men's beliefs as well as to their actions, and, consequently, is conterminous with the whole of human life; and that the power of the State ought to be used for the promotion of orthodoxy and the extermination of heterodoxy is, in fact, a necessary corollary of Romanism, which, however disguised by prudence when the Papacy is weak, is sure to reappear when it is strong enough to dispense with hypocrisy. In the sixteenth century, the theory and practice of a thousand years had so thoroughly incorporated intolerance with Christianity, that even the great reformers held firmly by this precious heirloom of the ages of faith, whatever other shards of ecclesiastical corruption they might cast aside. Happily, the pretensions to infallibility of sects, who differed only in the higher or lower positions of the points at which they held on to the slope between Romanism and Rationalism, were so absurd that political Gallios have been able to establish a *modus vivendi* among them."

"An old salt is a man who has for many years followed the sea, I believe?" "Certainly." "I know of a woman who never went to sea, but who is the most famous old salt the world ever knew." "And who is it?" "Lot's wife!"

Young curate (on a parochial visit): "You go to Sunday School, little girl?" Little girl: "Yeth, sir," Y. C.: "I hope that the little girls and boys whom you meet there never do or say anything naughty?" L. G.: "Well, thir, Bobby Brown said yethterday that Bill Thomath was a damn fool, but then he *ith*, you know."

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CORRESPONDENCE.

GENESIS I., 16.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read in your able leader on Gladstone's rhapsodies anent Genesis,—"The sun and moon were *two great lights*, and the stars were thrown in with an—*also*." Of course you quote from the faulty English translation. Permit me to add for the information of your numerous readers, not conversant with the Hebrew text, that no such a sentence as, "*He made the stars also*," occurs in the vernacular. Literally translated verse 16 reads thus: "And then made Elohim two instruments of light, great ones; the light, great for the rule of day, and the light little for the rule of the night, *and reflectors*." (*i.e.* stars.) It clearly shows what a poor idea the concoctor of this silly fable had of the innumerable worlds, revealed to *us* through the telescope. In Hebrew *two words* dispose of those innumerable worlds,—more important than the sun, moon and our planet. Our sun is only a speck in the infinite expanse,—a mere drop in the universal ocean. The clergy justly alarmed at the rapid and enormous progress of the human intellect, try to make this clumsy biblical fiction dovetail in with modern science, but in vain.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Mr. Dipper, "The Resurrection—Did it Happen?" Social evening every Tuesday. Thursday evening, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "A Future State."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris "Freethought: What it Means."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Capt. C. Pfoundes, "The Ethics of Buddhism."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Barbarities and Absurdities."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Jesus and his Beliefs."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. G. Spiller, "In the Year of our Lord 1890."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, a lecture.

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Mission and Teachings of Christ."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "Miracles." May 28, at 8, Mr. W. Heaford, "Miracles."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy. "Religion and Science."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 11, Mr. F. Haslam, "Dr. Draper's *Conflict between Science and Religion*."

Westminster Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "The Evolution of Religious Ideas."

COUNTRY.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, a lady Freethinker, miscellaneous recitals.

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Why Call ye me Lord?" Train for Manchester leaves central station at 9 a.m.

Newcastle—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Mr. C. J. Hunt, 11, "Life and Death"; 3, "Mind and Matter"; 7, "Free Will and Responsibility." Monday, 26, Tynemouth Sands, "The Christian Creed." Thursday, 29, Gateshead (Sunderland Road end), "Christianity and Secularism." Blyth (in the open air) May 27 and 28. Tea provided in Society's Rooms, Newgate Street, after the Sunday afternoon lecture.

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, musical and other recitals, by several ladies and gentlemen.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London S.E.—May 25, Manchester (Conference). June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green, (evening), Camberwell; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—May 18, Failsworth. June 8, Manchester.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—May 25, Liverpool. June 1, Sheffield; 15, Birmingham.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—May 25 (morning), Battersea. June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 22.] SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

FARRAR'S REPLY TO INGERSOLL.

WHAT a swarm of Christian apologists flutter round Colonel Ingersoll! He is a perfect nobody; he has no learning, and no brains to speak of; nothing he says is new, and it has all been answered before; in brief, he is a smart pretender, a showy shallow-pate, and every sensible Christian should leave him alone. But somehow they *cannot* leave him alone. He requires no answer, but they *will* answer him. He is not worth a thought, but they shower their articles upon him. Meanwhile the Colonel smiles that great, genial smile of his, and never loses his temper for a minute. He knows his own strength, and the strength of his cause, and he knows the meaning of all this pious *blague*.

Judge Black tilted at Ingersoll, and would not try a second round. Then came Dr. Field, then Mr. Gladstone, then Cardinal Manning, then Dr. Abbott and some smaller fry, and now comes Archdeacon Farrar with "A Few Words on Colonel Ingersoll" in the *North American Review*. Dr. Farrar is a prolix gentleman, with a style like a dictionary with the diarrhœa, and his "few words" extend to fifteen pages. All he has to say could have been put into a third of the space. On Mr. Gladstone's admission, Colonel Ingersoll "writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy." Archdeacon Farrar writes effeminately, with a vehemence that simulates strength, and a glare that apes magnificence. He revels in big adjectives and grandiose sentences, and is a striking specimen of literary flatulence.

This is not a complimentary description, but the Archdeacon has invited it. To prove the invitation we quote his opening sentence. "Although the views of Colonel Ingersoll," he says, "lie immeasurably apart from my own, he will not find in this paper a word of invective or discourtesy." Now this sentence is loose in style and false in statement. "Although" implies that invective and discourtesy might well be expected by anyone who differs from Dr. Farrar. "Immeasurably" is nonsense, for Colonel Ingersoll and Dr. Farrar both have definite views, and the difference between them is easily ascertained. "Discourtesy," at least, is infelicitous. Dr. Farrar speaks of Colonel Ingersoll's "enormous arrogance of assumption"; of his looking down "from the whole height of his own inferiority;" of thousands of intellects that, compared with his, are "as Dhawalaghari to a molehill." Here is "courtesy" for you! But this is not all. With his customary extravagance of language, the Archdeacon speaks of "those *myriads* of students of Holy Writ, who probably know *ten thousand* times more of the Scriptures than Colonel Ingersoll." What delightful good breeding! It seems that the Christians have so long enjoyed the right of "immeasurably" abusing Freethinkers that they fancy themselves quite polite when they are impudent enough to invite a kicking.

Let us now see what Dr. Farrar's "few words" amount to. He accuses Ingersoll of asserting instead of arguing, of indulging in "the unlimited enunciation of immense generalities," of "tossing aside the deepest and most permanent convictions of the vast majority of mankind as though they were too absurd even to need an answer," and generally of putting forth arguments which have been killed by the theologians, and really ought to feel that they are dead, and to get decently buried. Dr. Farrar evidently regards Ingersoll as a sceptical Banquo who indecently haunts the supper-room of the theological Macbeth.

But when he condescends to details the Archdeacon cuts a sorry figure. He takes some of Ingersoll's "immense generalities" and tries to explode them, with shocking results to himself. Here is number one.

I. *The same rules or laws of probability must govern in religious questions as in others.*

This would have been regarded by the great Bishop Butler as an axiom. But Dr. Farrar is not a Bishop Butler, so he calls it "an exceedingly dubious and disputable assertion." Revelation appeals to man's *spirit*, and Colonel Ingersoll ignores that "sphere of being." He is therefore like a blind man arguing about colors, or a deaf man arguing about music. In other words Dr. Farrar cannot *prove* the truth of his religion. He knows it intuitively, by means of a high faculty which Ingersoll does not possess, or only in an atrophied state. But this piece of fatuous impudence is far from convincing. Besides, Dr. Farrar is shrewd enough to see that the sceptic may reply, "Very well, then, what is the use of your talking to me?" Consequently he falls back upon the contention that the evidences of Christianity are "largely historical." But instead of adducing these evidences, and firmly defending them, he flies back immediately to his special faculty. "Men of science tell us," he says, "that there are ultra-violet rays of light invisible to the naked eye. Supposing that such rays can never be made apprehensible to *our* individual senses, are we therefore justified in a categorical denial that such rays exist?" Certainly not. Those ultra-violet rays of light can be *demonstrated*. They *are* apprehensible, though not to the naked eye. The analogy, therefore, is perfectly fallacious. Nor would anyone but a hopelessly incapable logician have adduced such a *mal à propos* illustration. Dr. Farrar is affirming the existence of a spiritual faculty as common as sight, and whose absence is as rare as blindness, and he adduces an instance of a fact which is only known to specialists.

II. *There is no subject—and can be none—concerning which any human being is obliged to believe without evidence.*

This proposition of Ingersoll's is indisputable. Dr. Farrar allows its truth. But he says it "insinuates" that Christianity is believed without evidence, and this is "outrageous and historically absurd." We will not discuss "outrageous," but we venture to say that "historically absurd" is a great absurdity. Nothing is clearer than that the mass of mankind,

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whether Christian or heathen, *do* believe without evidence. Their religion is simply a matter of education, and their faith depends on the geographical accident of their birth. Dr. Farrar may deny this, but every man of sense knows it is true.

We will not follow Dr. Farrar's tall talk about "the divine beauty of Christianity," the "unparalleled and transcendent loveliness" of Christ, and the "*proved* adaptation" (heaven save the mark!) of Christianity "to the needs of every branch of the human race." All this is professional verbiage. It is like the cry of "fresh fish!" in the streets, and is perfectly useless in discussion with Freethinkers.

III. *Neither is there any intelligent being who can, by any possibility, be flattered by the exercise of ignorant credulity.*

Dr. Farrar cannot deny this, but again he complains of insinuation. What right has Colonel Ingersoll to stigmatise as *ignorant credulity* "that inspired, inspiring," etc. etc.?

IV. *The man who, without prejudice, reads and understands the Old and New Testaments will cease to be an orthodox Christian.*

Dr. Farrar flies into a passion over this proposition, though the Catholic Church has always acted upon it, and tried to keep the Bible out of the people's hands. He also flies off on the question of "what is an orthodox Christian?" Colonel Ingersoll, he says, would probably include under the word *orthodox* "a great many views which *many* Christians have held, but which are in no sense a part of Christian faith, nor in any way essential to it." But who constituted Dr. Farrar the supreme authority on this question? Colonel Ingersoll judges for himself. He follows the sensible plan of taking the Bible as the Christian's standard. After that he takes the accepted and published doctrines of the great Christian churches. He is not bound to discuss the particular views of Dr. Farrar. Indeed, it is ludicrous that at this time of day, nearly two thousand years after Christ, a discussion on Christianity should be stopped to settle what Christianity is.

V. *The intelligent man who investigates the religion of any country without fear and without prejudice will not and cannot be a believer.*

Ingersoll's opinion may be unpalatable to Christians, though they would endorse it with regard to every religion but their own. His language, however, is perfectly courteous. Having to convey such an opinion, he could not have chosen less irritating words. But this moderation is lost on Dr. Farrar, who bursts into a characteristic storm of sound and fury.

"*Argal*, every believer in any religion is either an incompetent idiot [did you ever know a *competent* idiot?] or a coward with a dash of prejudice! If Colonel Ingersoll really takes in the meaning implied in his own words [really!], I should think that he would have [grammar!!] recoiled before the exorbitant and unparalleled hardihood of thus branding with fatuity, with craven timidity, or with indolent inability to resist a bias, the majority of mankind, as well as the brightest of human intellects. Surely no human being can be taken in by the show of self-confidence involved in such assertions as this! It is as useless to combat their unsupported obstreperousness as it is to argue with a man who bawls out a proposition in very loud tones [could he bawl in *soft* tones?] and thumps the table to emphasise his own infallibility. We have but to glance at the luminous path in the firmament of human greatness to see thousands of names of men whose intellect was, in comparison with the Colonel's, as Dhawalaghari to a molehill, who have yet studied each his own form of religion with infinitely [infinitely?] greater power than he has done, and have set to their seal that God is true."

Hallelujah! But after all this sputter the question remains where it was. Dr. Farrar is too fond of "words, words, words," and like Gratiano he can "talk an infinite deal of nothing." He would do well to study Ingersoll for a month or two, and prune the nauseous luxuriance of his own style.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

PRAYERS.

In a very acute and philosophical pamphlet on *Prayer*, issued this year at Belfast, it is contended that prayer arose in savage times from the supplication for life by the vanquished to the victor. It was the natural and necessary result of a state of perpetual warfare. There is much to be said in favor of this theory. The very forms of prayer usually show a slavish spirit. The able author might have adduced the strong testimony of gesture language, the earliest of all forms of conveying thought and feeling. The attitudes of prayer are the attitudes of abject submission, the hands together as if bound or powerless, the petitioners on their knees, or as with the Mohammedans prostrate with face to the earth. Bowing at the name of Jesus; indeed all bowing is a sign of submission.

The Hebrew root of prayer signifies to bend, and we have the old form of prayer in the statement (Josh vii., 6), that Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord and put dust upon his head. We are told too of the Lord swearing that every knee shall bow before him (Isaiah xlv., 23.) But although the pamphlet alluded to gives the core of the matter, there is another aspect of prayer which I think is overlooked by this able and original writer. It is that of its being a spell or incantation, whereby one may obtain power over spirits. Early religion is all magical. The relations of cause and effect are ill-defined and the power of words exaggerated. Much prayer may, it seems to me, be traced to a development of the belief in the efficacy of words as charms or spells to obtain the wishes of the utterer. The Jews used the words of the Lord as an amulet. They were bound as the frontlet between the eyes and fastened upon the doorposts of the house, just as verses of the Koran are used as talismans among the Mohammedans. Belief in the power of names as spells is found in all religions,* and is preserved in Christian baptism "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." The names are charms to ward off evil spirits. Prayer-books are collections of spells, as well as petitions, for blessings, fine weather, success in war and other desired objects.

Prayer in its early phases was a humble request for personal advantages. Even in the relation of master and slave there is often the disposition of the latter to gain mastery. Prayers became the means of controlling the unseen powers. Much of this is still found in current religion. Even Tennyson says:

> "More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of."

From being as flexible as requests to a living chief, prayers stiffened into traditional formulars whose repetition required verbal accuracy, and whose nature practically assimilated more or less to that of magical charms. We find this especially in all liturgies in dead languages. Here the more unintelligible the prayer the more holy. Repetition itself has a merit. The Hindu cried Om so many thousand or even million times, and this repetition was believed to give power over the gods. The Catholics have their *kyrie elisson* copied by our formulars, Lord have mercy upon us, and Good Lord deliver us! The Catholics have copied their rosaries from the Buddhists, and keep their unintelligible prayers right by "telling their beads." But the Buddhists in their praying wheels, have brought mechanical piety to perfection. The prayer-mill was originally a "chakra" or symbolising wheel of the law, but has become a cylinder mounted on an axis which by each rotation is considered to repeat

* See Gen. xxxii. 29; Lev. xxiv. 11—16: Jud. xiii. 13; Matt. viii. 16; Acts iii. 16, iv., 6; Philip ii. 9, 10. Those who desire further information on this point are referred to my essay on Rumpelstiltskin, *Freethinker*, April 21, 1889, and the notes to the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* or Jewish Life of Christ.

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the sentences written upon the papers it is filled with, usually *Om mani padme houm* (O the jewel in the lotus). This prayer-mill, turned by wind or water power, will "pray without ceasing" while the owner sleeps. But we have plenty of mechanical praying in our own churches.

"Supplication is the marrow of worship," said Muhammed, and the devotees of Islam carry out his theory. Among the Moslems, says Dean Stanley, "prayer is reduced to a mechanical act as distinct from a mental act, beyond any ritual observances in the West. It is striking to see the figures along the banks of the Nile going through their prostrations, at the rising of the sun, with the uniformity and regularity of clockwork; but it resembles the worship of machines rather than of reasonable beings." We doubt, however, if there is anything more perfunctory about Moslem worship than the bobbing down of the head and "smelling the hat" when the Protestant worshipper enters his pew. Among the sayings of Muhammed with reference to prayer was the curious one that "God accepts not the prayers of a woman arrived at puberty unless she covers her head." Covering the head was a sign of modesty and submission.

Whatever opinion we may have of the origin of prayers it is certain that reliance upon them is worse than futile. It is disastrous in that it hinders self-help, which is the great condition of progress. Christianity, as the writer of the pamphlet alluded to remarks, "intervened like a glacial period of ignorance between the time of Aristarchus and Epicurus to that of Newton and Darwin." As men become assured of the immutability of natural law they will cease praying for daily bread and co-operate with their fellows to assure it for themselves.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE GOSPEL OF FACT.

Part III.

To say that nature had its origin in a God is only like saying that the moon is made of green cheese. Saying so does not mean that it is so. God is contrary to Fact, and consequently in putting our gospel into practice must be altogether ignored. As a no-fact let him be!

The Gospel of Fact when it inculcates belief in nothing except what we actually know, teaches us to fall back on our own resources and to be self-reliant. The great question to be considered is not what was the origin of man so much as what is to be done with him. We see him the victim of ignorance, pain, and poverty; we see him the slave of an imaginary being; we see him wasting much energy to conciliate that being, through fear of punishment and hope of reward; and we see him believing in all sorts of lies and absurdities, and subordinating his interests in this world of fact to his supposed interests in the shadowy world beyond the grave. If he only could be brought to see it, the Gospel of Fact is good tidings indeed for deluded and suffering mankind. It teaches men that Gods and Devils are pure inventions and absurd impossibilities, and it aims at emancipating them from their slavery to both. It teaches them to devote their energies to the affairs of this world, and to leave the affairs of the other world to rogues, cowards and fools. It warns them to beware of everything contrary to fact, and reminds them that lies and absurdities are poor things to work a world with.

The problem of how to make the most of this world is quite complicated enough without introducing the concerns of another world of which we know nothing, and in which reason forbids us to believe. We know quite enough about life when we know that it is inseparable from pain and misery, and that it must end in the grave. A soul is as inconceivable as a God. Nobody has had ever any experience of such a thing as a soul, either of his own or anybody else's. As there is no harbor in space for a God, neither can there be for a soul, and to think of a soul —a spiritual nothing—flying through billions upon billions of miles of space to its supposed home beyond the stars, is preposterous, and it only requires a little reflection to convince anybody of its ridiculousness. The soul, then, should have no concern for man; his body is quite enough for him to care for, and difficult enough too.

In a word, the Gospel of Fact teaches that to make the most of life should be the great aim of man, and to make the most of it in accordance with the dictates of reason. To live as happy as possible; to do as much good to others as is possible; to endeavor to leave the condition of man better than they found it; and to give a helping hand to the cause of Progress—these are the aims of the followers of the Gospel of Fact, the godless men to whom a present life is everything, a future life nothing at all.

These principles of the Gospel of Fact may sometimes be claimed to be the product of that other Gospel which is *not* the Gospel of Fact; but claiming them does not make them so. The followers of the Christian Gospel have not a monopoly of goodness, of practice of kindness. Goodness, and justice, and kindness, are facts, natural facts, as inseparable from many men as the shape of their countenances. They are qualities implanted in human hearts by the process of evolution, and far from being the outcome of any Christian Gospel teaching, they are in reality tenets of the Gospel of Fact that were drawn on by the pious liars and dreamers of two thousand years ago. The Gospel of Fact has nothing to acknowledge to the Gospel of Christ—it is rather the other way.

To educate the young without frightening them about gods and devils; to teach them to be useful and to be just; to inculcate feelings of brotherly love—these are the great ambitions of the Gospel of Fact. To dispel ignorance; to extirpate poverty; to relieve pain; in short to secure everything that we know to be good, and to banish everything that we know to be hurtful—these, too, are the aims and the ambitions of the Gospel of Fact. To the religious person with the hope of reward beyond the grave, happiness here may seem a poor substitute for the "consolations of religion." But when the "consolations of religion" are proved to be shams; when everything outside this world has really no concern for us; and when the grave and eternal rest is the goal of humanity, the substantial happiness capable of being secured in this life is a thing not to be despised. If men could be induced to look facts in the face, and consider nothing but facts, death would lose its terrors, and the departed would be followed to the grave with genuine regrets, tempered with no false hopes of meeting in another world than this; while the certainty of parting for ever when Death comes on would make men kindlier towards each other, and would of itself help on civilisation towards that goal of perfection which is the ultimate aim and hope of the Godless Gospel of Fact.

J. O'Donovan.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

Held at Manchester, on Whit-Sunday, May 25.

"ALL SAINTS?" was the inquiry of the stranger delegates to Manchester, and the congregation of Secular saints in that city had worked well to decorate their hall and accord their visitors a good reception.

The proceedings commenced by Mr. Foote taking the chair at half-past ten precisely. Having stated the conditions of the Conference, he called on Mr. Forder to read the roll. Delegates were present from Belfast, Bradford, Brighton, Bolton, Birmingham, Ball's Pond, Blackburn, Cardiff, Camberwell, Darlington, Lower Darwen, Deptford, Dublin, E. London, Finsbury, Farsley, Grimsby, Hawley, Halifax, Hamilton, Heckmondwicke, Huddersfield, Hull, Hyde, Hyde Park, Lincoln, Liverpool, Manchester, N. W. London, Newcastle, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Rochdale, South Shields, Staleybridge, Swindon, West Auckland, Westminster and Woolwich. Several of these places were represented by two or three delegates, and in addition individual members attended not only from the surrounding districts, but from all parts, one lady travelling all the way from Saltash, Cornwall, in order to be present at the gathering.

The minutes of last Conference having been taken as read, the President read the Report of the Executive as follows:

EXECUTIVE'S REPORT.

This year, for the first time, the Executive has been obliged to fix the meeting-place of the Society's Conference. Four places were nominated—Newcastle, Huddersfield, Bradford, and Southampton; but the Branches in those towns had not been consulted and it was found, on inquiry, that neither of them was prepared to make the necessary arrangements. In these circumstances the President took the responsibility of immediate action, which was endorsed by the Executive at a special meeting. The Manchester Branch was communicated with, and promptly acceded to the request that the Conference should be held in this city. Had the Branch been without a hall of its own the difficulty might have been graver. It is to be hoped, therefore, that in future, when any town is nominated for the Conference, there will be no omission of the preliminary duty of obtaining the concurrence of the local Branch.

Unfortunately this is not the only circumstance of an exceptional nature. The Conference lacks the presence of two familiar figures. Stricken down by a perilous illness, Mr. Bradlaugh felt obliged to resign the presidency, which he has held for so many years, and which it was hoped he would continue to hold for many years to come. His resignation was formally tendered and accepted at a general meeting of members, held at the Hall of Science, in London, on February 16. Mr. Bradlaugh himself nominated Mr. G. W. Foote, one of the then vice-presidents, as his temporary successor, and the nomination was accepted unanimously. Since then your old President has partially recovered his health. He is now spending a brief holiday in Scotland, whence it is hoped he will return with recruited strength. In resigning the presidency, he has not severed his connexion with the National Secular Society. He has accepted a life membership, and will always be ready to place his wide experience and ripe judgment at the service of his successors.

The other familiar figure now absent is Mrs. Besant, who has resigned her connexion with the Society. Her reasons for this step have been already published. The Executive was unwilling to lose the co-operation of a lady so long and so shiningly connected with Secularism, but Mrs. Besant's resolution was unshakeable, and the Executive had no alternative but to accept her resignation.

After these misfortunes, which it would be idle to regard as anything but grave, it is a relief to find that the Society has in some respects a hopeful prospect. There is, to begin with, an increase in the Society's membership. Last year it was reported that 492 new members had been enrolled; this year the number amounts to 709. The Treasurer's balance sheet shows also a financial improvement, partly due to increased income and partly to diminished expenditure. Last year's General Fund was £84 3s. 1d.; this year's is £115 14s. 8½d. Last year's Propagandist Fund was £52 16s. 8½d.; this year's is £56 18s. 5½d. Last year's Benevolent Fund was £27 11s. 9½d.; this year's is £37 10s. 8d. The total account shows a balance of £45 12s. 3d. in advance of the previous year.

On the proposal of Mr. Foote, the Executive authorised the formation of a Central Fund, for the purpose of extending the Society's work. Up to the present the sum of £58 11s. 8d. has been subscribed. This will be carried forward into the new year's account, the appeal and the object being alike prospective. A constant effort should be made to swell this Fund. Hitherto the Secular party has subscribed handsomely in times of persecution and excitement. Henceforth the party will be asked to subscribe regularly for the regular work of the Society. Every member should feel it incumbent upon him or her to devote a definite sum yearly to the Society's objects. It is only thus that a voluntary Society, existing solely for the maintenance of a cause, can hope to carry on its organisation and propaganda.

The balance-sheet also shows a sum of £34 19s. 4d. collected for the Swedish Prisoner's Fund. Of this £30 6s. 10d. has been remitted, and a balance of £4 13s. 4d. is held at the disposal of the Swedish committee.

Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant have handed over to the Society a number of shares in various Secular Hall Companies. A statement on this matter will be made in the course of your proceedings, and the shares will be offered for sale, if the Conference endorses the view of the Executive that it would be better to dispose of these shares than to hold them.

During the past year eleven new Branches have been formed at Reading, Hamilton, Dublin, Woolwich, Gibraltar, Bombay, Trinidad, Barbados, Finsbury Park, Edmonton and Farsley. The Reading and Woolwich Branches are growing in number and in strength and doing excellent work. The Dublin branch, but just started, is represented here to day. There are now two Branches in Ireland. Before long it is hoped that further efforts will be made to carry the light of Freethought into the darkness of Irish superstition.

One Branch, the Central London, has been wound up, as no longer necessary in the changed conditions of the metropolis. Another, at Bristol, has become defunct, after outliving its usefulness. But such an important centre of population is not to be neglected. The Organisation Committee has already taken steps for the formation of a new Branch, and Messrs. Foote and Forder are to visit Bristol for that purpose.

The Organisation Committee, established by a vote of the last Conference, has proved successful. It has helped to form new branches and strengthen old ones, and in many ways has given a business turn to otherwise haphazard work. Its members have been Messrs. R. O. Smith, G. Standring, W. H. Reynolds, W. Smith, and G. W. Foote, the last acting as chairman, and Mr. R. Forder as secretary.

Special thanks are due to the ladies and gentlemen who have administered the Benevolent Fund. They are brought face to face with distressed Freethinkers, and there is universal praise of their tact and sympathy in the performance of difficult duties.

Your Executive has distributed, directly and indirectly, a good deal of Freethought literature during the past year. The stock of Tracts is now running low. They have been overhauled by the Organisation Committee. Some of them are obsolete, and the Committee recommend the publication of a fresh supply suited to present requirements.

Throughout the country there is a welcome tendency among the Branches towards the union which is strength. The London Secular Federation continues to do excellent work. During the past year it has inaugurated a new policy of free lectures in various parts of the metropolis. The course at the Hall of Science was very largely attended, and the lecturers —Messrs. Robertson, Standring, and Foote—were opposed by special representatives of the Christian Evidence Society. The Federation's second annual dinner was also a great success, and its summer excursion to Epping Forest was another step in a genial direction. It is pleasant to record that the Federation takes very little from the Branches. Its income is derived from subscriptions that would otherwise be unavailable, and after no niggardly expenditure, it is still able to boast of a handsome balance.

The example of London having proved contagious, other Federations of Branches are being formed. The North Eastern Secular Federation, which was assisted by a grant of £3 from the Executive, has put new life into the movement in the Tyneside. A great number of lectures have been delivered, literature has been distributed, and social gatherings have knit the Branches together. Messrs. Brown, Peacock, and their colleagues, may well be gratified with the result of their efforts.

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ACID DROPS.

Sir Andrew Clark was the big gun at the annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society. He professed to have reached "the quiet haven" of Christianity through "seas of doubt." We suspect they were very calm seas, as calm as the haven itself. Perhaps Sir Andrew Clark will tell the world when he was in doubt, what kind of doubt it was, and how he left it behind him. This would be more interesting, and far more useful, than a vague general statement of the "converted infidel" order.

The second gun was Professor Beet, to whom Mr. Foote addressed one of his Letters to the Clergy. This gentleman talked about Mr. Herbert Spencer's "power behind the universe," and seemed to think that this power—which, if anywhere is not *behind* but *in* the universe—proved the truth of Christianity. But any logic does for a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society.

Professor Beet's remarks on Scripture ought to be printed as a Tract and widely circulated by the Christian Evidence Society. According to the *Christian World*, he said that "no one reverenced the Bible more than he did. But our faith did not rest upon the authority of that Word. We must fight now, not on the authority of Holy Scripture, but we must go back to the open grave of Jesus Christ and see there his resurrection." Allowing for the inadequacy of a summarised report, it seems evident that Professor Beet sees the "inspiration" of the Bible is a played out doctrine. Christians must throw it over and stick to Christ. Anyhow they must stick to the Resurrection. They must look into the open grave of Christ. In other words, the world must be dwarfed to a grave, and humanity to a resurrected corpse.

The *Tablet*, the principal English Roman Catholic paper, has been celebrating its own fiftieth anniversary by giving an account of the progress of Popery in England during the half century. It claims that the number of churches, chapels and stations, which in 1840 amounted to 457 for England and Wales, and 65 for Scotland, in all 522, has been multiplied threefold, the figures for 1890 being 1,641, 1,312 being for England and Wales and 329 for Scotland. The number of priests has increased from 624 to 2,791. Religious orders have increased still more rapidly, and altogether it says the Church counts possibly two millions of the population.

The Catholics possess in the United Kingdom some fifty-four colleges, several of which are missionary colleges bent on the conversion of England. When will Freethought have its college endowed to equip young soldiers for the war with superstition?

Mr. Gladstone says that he looks with apprehension on the Government's arrangements with Rome. So do we. No fewer than twenty-three new Catholic dioceses are to be formed in India, all to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Calcutta, and officially recognised by the British Government. Thus Rome crawls in the Empire and waits to bite the hand that foolishly cherished it.

The Rev. H. V. Brown, senior curate of the parish church at Wycombe, cut his throat last week. The usual verdict of temporary insanity was returned.

The Rev. J. W. Hedgland, rector of the united parishes of St. Stephen and St. Martin, Exeter, died suddenly on Sunday at lunch, after having gone through the morning service at St. Stephen's Church. A big moral, with reflections on the visitation of God, ought to be worked in here, but we leave it to our readers.

The curate of All Souls, Bolton, has bolted. He was to have been married in a few days. "Much sympathy," says the *Evening News*, "is expressed with the young lady who has been so heartlessly deserted."

Some day or other the Malthusian propaganda will reach the clergy. Meanwhile they go on adding vigorously to the population. Mrs. Horsley, wife of the vicar of Holy Trinity, Woolwich, recently died at the age of thirty-five. According to a report of the funeral in a local paper, she 'leaves seven young children."

One of our readers says that the "Rev. W. Jacomb," advertised as "a late colleague of Mr. Bradlaugh," was a prominent member of the Eleusis Club in 1882. He was never known to lecture on Secularism. By trade he was a tailor. In '84 he got "converted" and found an easier way of getting a living.

Dr. Sinclair, Archdeacon of London, deplores that in the religious press "the spirit of faction, intolerance, and misrepresentation is most rampant. There the entire want of charity and the bitter invective against those who differed were in sad opposition to the brotherly love that should prevail." Very true; but Dr. Sinclair and others forget the saying that the tree is known by its fruits.

The Rev. A. J. T. Johnson, now pastor of the Free Christ Church, North Fitzroy, Australia, is charged with having, when a missionary at Millstone Lane, Leicester, England, run away with a Mrs. James, with whose husband he lodged. It is said he caused an announcement to be sent to Leicester that he had been taken to a lunatic asylum in America. His congregation has decided that he should be dismissed.

A burglar was shot at St. Louis. He turned out to be H. Y. Kunolt a zealous church-goer, and director of a Y. M. C A. who had been leading a double life of piety and burglary. A similar case has happened at Montchair, New Jersey.

When a panic occurs in a church we see how little superiority religion imparts to its votaries. Such an occurrence is just reported from Hildesheim. The villagers were assembled in the church to pray for the cessation of the hailstorms which were injuring their crops. While they were thus engaged the church was struck by lightning. Four persons were killed on the spot, twenty were seriously injured, and four blinded. Immediately there was a panic among the congregation, and in the mad rush for the doors four little children were crushed to death. Such an incident is at once a cogent proof of the efficacy of prayer, and a striking testimony to the consoling and sustaining influence of religion.

Some wealthy French Jews have offered the Pope £40,000 for the Vatican copy of the Hebrew Bible. It weighs about three hundredweight. The price is a big one for such heavy literature.

A stranger who has been visiting Bournemouth has been telling the town, through the *Guardian*, that it is altogether too good on Sunday. The yachts lie idle, the Hallelujah Chorus is unheard in the Pleasure Grounds, the policeman outside the pier hears not the call of the newspaper boy, and the very children paddle not in the water on the Sabbath. Worldly people will be apt to spend their shekels at less pious watering-places.

The Rev. C. Lacy, Rector of Allhallows London Wall who has recently died, during half a century received some £85,000 for holding what is practically a sinecure. The living was £1,700 per annum and the resident population under 500.

We are rather amused at the virtuous indignation of the Congregational Union against the "tyranny" of the Church in our public schools. The members of that body desire to keep the parson out, but they want to keep the Bible in. That is the point at which they preach "rest and be thankful." They don't see—because they won't see—that they are only seeking to shift the line of religious privilege. If they wanted perfect freedom, they they would go in for pure and simple secular education, leaving religion to be taught independently.

The *Christian Commonwealth* appears to have lost faith in the Temperance agitation. "The hope of the 'present distress' is that the churches may be driven to prayer throughout the land and to call for Divine deliverance from the threatened doom of the nation." Well, let the churches "pray without ceasing," and see if it makes any difference to Goschen's next budget.

O Lord, who hast said that wine cheereth God and man

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who didst turn seventy-five gallons of water into wine at Cana in Galileo, and who didst inspire thy holy servant Paul to advise his beloved Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake, look down upon the distress of this nation, banish drink from our midst, and make us all teetotallers like thyself. Amen.

This is how temperance prevailed when there was no other guide but the Bible. The following entry is found in the town records of Woburn, Massachusetts:

To Mr. Jonathan Poole, Esq., for subsisting the ministers, messengers, and gentlemen at the time of Mr. Jackson's ordination over the Congregational Church, 1729.

	£	s.	d.
To 433 dinners at 2s. 6d. a dinner ...	54	2	6
Suppers and breakfasts, 178	8	18	0
Keeping 32 horses four days	3	0	0
Six barrels and a half of cider... ...	4	11	0
Two gallons of brandy and two of rum	1	16	0
25 gallons of wine	9	10	0
Loaf sugar, lime juice, and pipes ...	1	15	0
	£83	12	6

At the Plymouth Annual Meeting of the Church Missionary Society, the Rev. J. Vernall, who has recently returned from Africa, said that outside his own church he had counted 20,000 cases of gin brought there by the Europeans for the natives. Another missionary had told him that in his district he had seen thousands of young African girls drunk outside the European canteen. The rev. missionary then went on to speak of the curse of idolatry, but we doubt if he convinced even his hearers that African superstitions are worse than their Christian importations.

Moody has a strange method of gauging the growth of scepticism. He says it is declining in America; in fact, it is almost dead. True, Ingersoll is getting a big audience in the *North American Review*, and his writings are read with avidity by all classes. True, Freethought papers are multiplying and increasing in circulation. But what of that? Moody gets very few "infidel" questions from young men after his meetings, so "infidelity" is clearly played out. The Yankee revivalist overlooks the probable explanation of the fact he adduces. Very likely the young men troubled with doubts have found the uselessness of applying to Moody.

A very curious and suggestive sentence occurred recently in the correspondence of the *Times* from India. It told how a native police officer wrote to the Government authority, "A new Deity has appeared on the Swat frontier, the police after him." This officer is evidently a praiseworthy functionary. New deities are constantly arising in the East, where any man with a box of good pills can obtain the reputation of a prophet. Their followers soon lead to tumult and disorder, and a wise government will do as much to discourage the appearance of deities as possible.

Some intelligent functionary in Palestine may have sent a similar intimation to the government at Rome. But time was more propitious for the development of deities then.

J. C. said he would come again like a thief in the night, but the exact locality where he would turn up is as difficult to determine as the spot he ascended from. Suppose he has appeared on the Swat frontier and the police are after him! It was always an unfortunate family.

The West-end London Wesleyan Mission contrives to go to the Derby at other people's expense. Mr. Nix, the leader of the party, says, in the *Methodist Times*: "Next week we want £50 or £60 in money, some hams, plenty of blue ribbon, suitable tracts, and a stock of New Testaments." A few hampers from Fortnum and Mason's might also be acceptable.

Hugh Price Hughes has been cadging in Edinburgh for money to convert the people in West London, which he calls the wickedest place out of hell. The *Scotsman* gives him a scathing article, and calls upon the Edinburgh folk to discountenance this preposterous humbug.

There is a remarkable fitness in some things. The quarters of the Army Chaplain at Woolwich are designated "L."

The London correspondent of the *Liverpool Daily Post* relates an anecdote concerning the recent consecration of a church. The ceremony was performed whilst the building was still in a very unfinished state; the western doors not being in position a curtain was substituted, bearing the passage, "I was glad when they said unto me We will go unto the house of the Lord." The sermon was long and dull, and the congregation, leaving before its close, tore the curtain at the door in going out, the result being that the text ended with the word "go." The correspondent adds that the story is doubtless true, as it is told by a high church dignitary. M'yes!

The critics say that at the Oberammergau Passion Play, the part of Judas is overdone and causes laughter. The visitors when they obtain their bills will think that the whole performance smacks over much of him surnamed Iscariot.

In the Passion Play as now produced, the part of Mary is acted by a girl of twenty-two, while her son J. C. is a man of forty-eight. This is justified by the pictures which make the B.V.M. ever young, and is there not in the Bible the case of Ahaziah who was two years older than his father?

It is said that Barnum will give a good price to the Oberammergau peasants if they will repeat their performance in New York. When the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem is completed some enterprising impressario will exhibit a Passion Play of the Crucifixion on the spot. The days of reverence are over.

According to a writer in the *World*, Mr. Best, assistant to Dr. Bramwell the hypnotist of Goole, has, by suggestion, produced the same phenomena of blood flowing as in the case of Louise Lateau, one of the most famous of modern Catholic miracles. This is all very well in the interests of science, but what does the girl who was experimented on think about it?

There is a town in America called Ingersoll. It was founded by one of the orator's admirers. At present it only contains one Freethinker, but Mr. J. E. Remsburg has just been lecturing there and perhaps a few more Freethinkers are growing. The American Secular Union ought to bombard that town.

A Catholic book firm in Ottawa has been trying to prove that Victor Hugo's works are immoral. With this view they refused to fulfil a contract, and the recreation has cost them 700 dollars and costs. Judge Davidson gave a decision in favor of common sense, and the Pope's *Index Expurgatorius* won't be recognised in Ontario.

How hard it is to make Christians play fair! For a long while the American clergy have been denouncing Sunday newspapers as violations of "the day of rest." But their real reason was a very different one, and the *Christian Advocate* has blurted it out. "If no Sunday work," it says, "were required of employers in getting out a Sunday paper, it would still be an evil. It hinders people from attending church."

Miss Close, the chief nurse of the Newcastle infirmary, nearly fell a victim to diphtheria. Happily she recovered, and is once more able to attend to her duties. This event is naturally referred to in the Infirmary Report for 1889. But how funnily it reads!—"Through the blessing of Providence, and the skilful and constant exertions of Dr. Philipson and Dr. Oliver, Miss Close was restored to comparative health." Providence, Dr. Philipson, and Dr. Oliver may join hands and say "*We* did it."

According to Canon Liddon, faith is health, and doubt is disease. But faith in what? Of course the Canon would reply "Faith in *my* creed, sir." Those, therefore, who agree with Canon Liddon are healthy; and those who differ from him are diseased. A modest creed!

THE ANTIPODES.—Baden Powell records that three views were taken by great Christian authorities as to the existence of Antipodes. St. Augustine declared the belief unscriptural, Lactantius pronounced it absurd, while St. Boniface said there might indeed be Antipodes, but that they would all without exception be damned.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 1, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London; at 7.30, "Mr. Gladstone on the Jew-Book."

June 8, Gladstone Radical Club, and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 3, Camberwell; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. DORG.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope Mr. Clarke will be a successful propagandist in South Lancashire.

G. WILDMAN.—We agree with you as to the value of open-air lecturing.

J. BROAD.—The clergy are not fond of discussing. We are always ready to debate with a representative Christian, but we cannot throw out special challenges.

T. R. FOX.—There is no error. The bridge over the Wear was made from Paine's *model*. He did not construct the bridge.

G. WARREN.—The financial matter will be decided at once by the L. S. F. sub-committee. Lecturers who lose their tempers should be politely but firmly admonished to keep cool. A friendly word in private is best.

W. MANN.—It shall be included if possible. Giles's *Hebrew Records* would help you.

G. HILL.—Many of our readers, we hope, will lend *Bible Contradictions* about. They will no doubt find the same happy results as you have. Thanks for the jokes.

A. W. BARBER.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Your suggestion is a good one. We have long had it in our mind, and we hope to carry it out. Glad to hear you appreciate "the way in which matters of immediate interest are turned to account in the *Freethinker*."

A FREETHINKER.—We are overcrowded with matter at present. Your questions for Stanley might be multiplied.

J. T. CONGREVE.—Your criticism is not just. We are neither Optimist or Pessimist, but Meliorist. Things are neither so bad nor so good as they might be, and they can be improved. Anyhow it is worth a trial. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" would be all right if man were all stomach. But he isn't—a fact you have overlooked.

W. T. L.—Pleased to hear of Mr. Snell's success in Regent's Park. What subscription do you refer to? We have not noticed it.

J. E. BASCOMBE—Dr. Farrar's article is having our attention.

F. SIMPSON.—Hastings's falsehoods have already been exposed in our columns. We cannot do the dirty task over and over. These pious soul-savers are always shaky in the matter of dates and places.

BRENO.—There are good reasons against pursuing the matter. They were contained in your own letter some weeks ago.

H. CALASCA.—Thanks for the cuttings. You will punish Mr. Walsh most by taking no notice of him.

P. H. ECHLIN.—We echo your wish that there were many such open Freethinkers as Dr. Allinson.

J. FENWICK.—We are much obliged to you for your trouble.

J. E. ROOSE.—Shall appear.

J. FERGUSON.—We have read the book you mention. We gave the Rev. R. F. Horton a reply in *Letters to the Clergy*. He says now that "the Atheist is simply a fool." But he knows better than to debate with one.

W. BUSSEY.—The "converted infidel" game is getting played out. When religious history is impartially written, it will be recorded that Christian champions were the biggest liars that ever trod the earth. The other nineteen cases are as true as you yourself know the twentieth to be. Glad you are so delighted with *Letters to the Clergy* and our replies to Gladstone, and also that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is improving in your district, partly through your own generous efforts.

J. BARTRAM.—No doubt Mr. Foote will visit the Tyneside again before Christmas.

W. HYDE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

JOSEPH BROWN AND J. TULLIN.—Your letters in the Newcastle *Leader* will do good, but, for our part, we decline to devote any more paragraphs to the Rev. Walter Walsh, who has completely lost his temper, and is discharging his venom in a manner that shows how hollow were all his professions of amity. Like many other Christians, he is good-tempered while he has everything his own way.

REX REGES.—We should say that the allusions in the three passages you quote from F. W. Robertson are to Shelley, Byron, and Laplace.

X. Y. Z.—(1) Buddhism, as taught by its founder, is a godless system. Professor Max Müller himself admits this. (2) The Inquisition did not exist for many centuries after the time of Constantine, but he inaugurated the system of persecution, of course at the instigation of the clergy. (3) Pope Joan is regarded by most scholars as a mythical personage, but there are some who assert her existence. (4) You could join the N. S. S. as a passive member, and your name would not be published.

W. R.—We are obliged for your letter and cuttings.

C. FREAKE.—Your letter arrived on Wednesday morning. We have broken our rule for the sake of the Branch, but this cannot be repeated.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Melbourne Age—Open Court—Evening Standard—Coming Man—Bournemouth Guardian—South Eastern Herald—La Montana—La Concordia—La Antorcha Valentina—El Progreso—La Aurora del Libre-Pensiamento—La Avanzada—Independent—Independent Pulpit—Newcastle Leader—People's Press—Seafaring—Leicester Daily Mercury—Modern Society.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Hall of Science, London, this evening (June 1) in reply to Mr. Gladstone's new article in the June number of *Good Words* on "The Office and Work of the Old Testament." This article is the most peculiar thing Mr. Gladstone has yet perpetrated. He deals with the Fall and the Mosaic Law.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a special article by Mr. Foote, entitled "Mr. Gladstone on the Fall of Man." As the article will be carefully written we hope our friends will take extra copies for circulation.

Now the fine weather is coming upon us, and people are moving about the country, it would be well for the friends of the *Freethinker* to distribute as many copies as possible. People are not so busy at the seaside, or in the towns when they get out of doors, and the summer is the very best time for circulating anything you want people to read.

The Manchester Conference of the National Secular Society was a very striking success. There was an unusually large attendance of delegates; from Hull and Grimsby in the east, Plymouth in the south, Cardiff in the west, and Newcastle in the north, not to enumerate the intermediate places. Happily the weather was perfect, and the spirit of the Conference was no less bright and genial. No one who watched the proceedings could help concluding that they augured well for the future of the Secular movement. No sign was there of decay; none of lassitude or apprehension; the universal feeling was one of hope, nay of assurance.

Mr. Foote's proposals were all adopted after full and impartial discussion. They will in time revolutionise the Society. Henceforth, to begin with, the terms of subscription will make a direct appeal to the honor and generosity of the members. Every person who joins the Society will be told this—"The subscription is optional; we don't take less than a shilling, but we leave you to decide how much more you will give." On the other hand, instead of the entrance barrier being four shillings, it will only be one shilling. This should admit a larger number of members, and of course you must get people inside before you can do anything with them.

We need not dwell upon the other proposals which will be found in our report. They will involve a great deal of work for the Executive, but the enthusiasm of the true lovers of a

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great cause is apt to rise instead of sinking before such demands. Fortunately the Executive has had some fresh blood infused into it in the shape of new vice-presidents, and we dare say it will be equal to heavier calls upon its time and energies.

Mr. Forder was, of course, re-elected as secretary; but, unfortunately, he was obliged to announce that he would not seek re-election next year. His health is two precarious, and he feels himself unequal to the work. A competent successor will be difficult to find. Mr. Forder has been secretary for fifteen years, and is thoroughly acquainted with every part of the Society's business. He is also a genial man, with a host of friends, and hardly a single enemy.

Verily, verily—as the Scripture says—this is an era of changes. But Secularists must not be daunted by difficulties. Wailing over the inevitable is a foolish waste of time. We must recognise it, once for all, and go on with our work.

The Manchester Branch worked very hard to prepare for the Conference. Ever so much labor was spent on the hall, which was very greatly improved. All the arrangements for the delegates' dinner and tea were made in the underground kitchen by the lady members, some of whom were obviously fatigued. They wouldn't have worked half so hard for good wages. They put their hearts into it for the good old cause.

The London Secular Federation's new course of Free Lectures will be given on the Thursday evenings in June at the Hall of the Hammersmith Club, No. 1 The Grove. Mr. A. B. Moss leads off on June 5, his subject being "Religious Guide Posts." The following lectures are—June 12, Mr. G. Standring, "Freethought and the Church"; June 19, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Dishonesty of the Church"; June 26, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Freethought and Christ."

Freethinkers who were present at the two nights debate on the birth of Christ between the Rev. F. W. Ford and Mr. J. M. Robertson were well satisfied with the Freethought champion. We fancy this can hardly be the case with the few Christians who listened to Mr. Ford. That gentleman was urbane and candid, but he virtually gave up the case. He refused to defend the virgin birth, allowed it was ill-vouched for, and only contended for a vague undogmatic Christianity, which could scarcely be distinguished from any other religion. Mr. Robertson had an easy task, but it is difficult in these days to get a Christian minister to come forward and really defend the old creed.

Dr. T. R. Allinson has just joined the National Secular Society. There are several medical men on the Society's books, but they cannot all afford to be known. Dr. Allinson is able to defy Mrs. Grundy, ay, and Mr. Bumble too.

Mr. Lees is taking the secretaryship of the Camberwell Branch. Mr. Lappage is resigning, not through any loss of interest in Secular work, but through the pressure of other engagements.

Mr. J. Clarke contemplates moving from London to the north, probably to Manchester, where he would be in the centre of a district that could be worked without extravagant railway expenditure. Meanwhile, for a few weeks, he is anxious to lecture as frequently as possible in London.

M. Rénan has spoken out with dignity, but with firmness, against the bull-fights going on in Paris. He sees that such exhibitions must degrade the spectators by appealing to the savage within them, and he utters a protest in the name of humanity. It is worthy of notice that the people who flock to the circus to witness these performances belong to the classes who are loyal to the monarchy and the Church.

A letter of Voltaire's, at a recent London sale, fetched £43. It was a characteristic one. The great heretic declared that persecutors were the enemies of God and man, and that all good men were of one church.

The brochure on *Prayer* alluded to by Mr. Wheeler in his article can we believe be obtained from the Ulster Secular Society, Belfast. It is written by a very able gentleman who contributed some of the most striking pamphlets to the series of Freethought tracts issued some twenty years ago by Thomas Scott of Ramsgate.

A new indictment has been issued against Dr. Voelkel of the *Neues Freireligiosès Sonntags Blatt*, for lectures delivered in Berlin. He treats this his fifth prosecution lightly, expecting it will break down like previous ones.

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Waco, Texas, keeps up its standard of excellence in bold Freethought articles.

Messrs. S. Alward and J. W. Wittering are ably defending Secularism in the columns of the *Grimsby News*. Their principal opponent last week was a Mr. F. Stebbing, who makes a tremendous point. Mr. Alward said, "I believe that humanity is in the heart. Why not in the kidneys? asks Mr. Stebbing. When Vauvenargues, one of the finest of French moralists, said, "All great thoughts spring from the heart." Mr. Stebbing, had he lived then, would have asked, "Why not the big toe?" Yet this gentleman gives himself airs of great "spiritual" superiority over his "materialist" opponents.

Mr. Bradlaugh did a good bit of work in talking out Mr. Pearse's bill for the registration of midwives. There may be differences of opinion as to whether these ladies should be registered, but what friend of personal freedom and religious equality will approve the following clause?—"Every woman applying to be registered as a midwife shall bring proof of being a good moral character, as certified by a magistrate or clergyman, or some other minister of religion, in the town, parish, or hamlet in which she lives." Why should midwives have to carry about a certificate of moral character any more than doctors? And would not sky-pilots' certificates be given on sectarian grounds? The best certificate a midwife can have is the recommendation of her clients.

A Spanish friend sends us a number of Freethought papers from Spain, the names of which appear among "Papers Received." It is a notable fact that, while Catholicism is succeeding among Protestants in Germany, England and North America, it is declining before Freethought in Spain, its chief stronghold, as well as in other Catholic countries.

Obituary.—Among deaths announced in the *Athenæum* is that of Mr. George Hooper, a veteran journalist. As "Eugene" Mr. Hooper contributed largely to the *Reasoner* and was connected with the *Republican* and the *Leader*, established by G. H. Lewes. From 1868 to 1871 he edited the *Bombay Gazette*, and on his return became a leader writer in the *Daily Telegraph*. He wrote much on military history and has left important books on Waterloo and Sedan.

On Sunday, June 1, the Portsmouth Branch take their first excursion by water. They will go to Hythe, near Southampton, calling back to Warsash for a crab tea. A good muster is expected. The steamer leaves the pontoon at nine o'clock sharp.

North Eastern Secular Federation.—I beg to acknowledge the following subscriptions:—Jacob Roos, 1s; Franty Roos, 1s; David Pearse, 1s; John Pearse, 1s; Michael Platt, 1s; John Robinson, 1s; A Friend, 1s; Per Mr. Peacock collected at Mr. Foote's evening lecture South Shields 18s. 6d.; Mr. Clements 2s. 6d.; D., 5s; B., 5s; Hanis, 1s.; Saunderson, 2s; collected at Mr. Clarke's South Shields lecture, 8s. 3½d. Mr. Chas. J. Hunt, 4s. 6d. Collected at Mr. Hunt's lecture at Chester-le-Street, 4s. 1d. Collected at Mr. Hunt's lecture at South Shields, 3s. 0½d. Further subscriptions are requested.—Joseph Brown, hon. sec., 86 Durham Street, Bentick, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Schoolboy Bibliana.—"Paul was one day on the road to Damascus, with a warrant to take up the Christians. He rode upon an ass. When he came to a lane, his ass it would not go; so he beat it, and it ran against the wall and bruised his foot, and he smote it very sore, and began to curse it, when an angel appeared to him in the way. And the ass opened his mouth saying, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.'"

At a prayer-meeting not long ago in the mission hall in the town of S. the missionary requested all those who wanted to go to Heaven to stand up; so every one in the hall rose except one man, who was fast asleep. He then requested those who wanted to go to the other place to stand up, and with the bustle of the rest sitting down it wakened up the sleeper, who heard the last of the sentence—"stand up." Getting up, rubbing his eyes and looking all round, he says—"Well, parson, I don't know exactly what we are voting for, but you and I seem to be in a hopeless minority."

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

(Continued from p. 256.)

Federations are also forming in South Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire. All such attempts at improved organisation should be assisted, whenever possible, by the Central Executive.

Two of the Society's vice-presidents are engaged in Freethought work at the antipodes. Mr. Joseph Symes is editing the *Liberator* and lecturing at Melbourne, where the Secular Society, mainly through his efforts, has become the possessor of handsome premises. Mr. W. W. Collins is lecturing and editing *Freedom* at Sydney. There also the Secularists, after being driven by bigotry out of a public hall, have secured premises of their own. Mr. Wallace Nelson, another emigrant from England, is vigorously lecturing at Brisbane and conducting a Freethought paper called the *Stockwhip*.

Mr. W. W. Collins has figured in connexion with an important case tried in the Supreme Court of New South Wales. As publisher of Mrs. Besant's pamphlet on Population, he was found guilty of "obscenity" by a stipendiary magistrate, but this decision was reversed by the Supreme Court on appeal, and the senior judge, Mr. Justice Windeyer, delivered a striking judgment, completely vindicating the full and free discussion of the population question. The National Secular Society, of course, has no special interest in any particular solution of this problem, but it is bound to welcome every fresh triumph of the freedom of the press.

Probably owing to Mr. Bradlaugh's visit, there is a revival of Freethought activity in India. The new Branch of the National Secular Society at Bombay promises well, and a new Freethought journal, the *Cosmopolitan*, is established at Calcutta.

The Swedish Utilitarian Society, founded on the same lines as the National Secular Society, has been in close communication with your Executive. The imprisonment of Mr. Viktor Lennstrand for "blasphemy" led to an appeal by the Swedish Freethinkers for assistance from their English brethren. Your Executive voted the sum of £2 10s., and opened a special subscription, which has softened the hardship of Mr. Lennstrand's imprisonment, and helped to tide his journal, the *Fritankaren*, over a difficult crisis. Happily Mr. Lennstrand is once more a free man. His health was so seriously endangered by his imprisonment that the authorities were afraid to carry out his infamous accumulation of sentences. Mr. Lennstrand and his gallant colleagues, especially Captain Otto Thomson, deserve the greatest admiration for their courage and ability. It is reassuring to know that Swedish juries are not disposed to convict Freethinkers. A verdict of Guilty, and a sentence of imprisonment, can apparently only be obtained in the courts where juries are dispensed with.

In England the Blasphemy Laws are still unrepealed. Mr. Bradlaugh does not see a prospect of making any headway with his Bill if reintroduced in the present House of Commons. Whether it would be right, or worth while, to press for a more partial measure of justice, in the form of a Bill to enable Secular Societies to receive legacies or other endowments, it would be for a Conference of this Society to determine.

This report must not close without mentioning the International Freethought Congress held at Paris in September. Your Society was represented by Messrs. G. W. Foote and J. M. Robertson. Mr. J. M. Wheeler represented the London Secular Federation, and delegates attended from the following Branches:—Halifax, Nottingham, N.W. London, E. London, Southgate, Westminster, Deptford and Finsbury.

During the week in which the Congress held its sittings, it members were accorded a public reception at the Hotel de Ville by the Municipal Council of Paris. The speeches of the President and the vice-president of the Council, replete with the most pronounced Freethought, together with those of the spokesmen of the Congress, were fully reported in the official organ of the municipality. This memorable fact, in conjunction with the immense demonstration at Rome on the unveiling of the statue of Giordano Bruno, marks the great advance of Freethought in Europe, and is full of encouragement to the friends of Freethought in every part of the world. It shows that, in the country of Voltaire, the hardest part of the battle is over; that Freethought is no longer a persecuted suppliant there, but able to lift it head in the highest places, and to speak with confidence and dignity.

On the motion of Mr. Bridges, of Birmingham, seconded by Mr. Settle, of Halifax, the report was adopted unanimously.

Mr. W. H. Reynolds then read the treasurer's report, which showed improved balances on each fund, having a total of £210 3s. 10d. in hand.

The adoption of the report was moved by Mr. Holstead (of Bolton) and seconded by Mr. Lees (Camberwell) and carried unanimously.

Mr. Foote having ceded the chair to Mr. W. H. Reynolds,

Mr. Bater, in a eulogistic speech, moved that Mr. G. W. Foote be President for 1890-1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilson (of Banbury) and carried with acclamation.

Mr. Foote said: Fellow members of the National Secular Society, you have just conferred on me a distinguished honor. Since February 16 I have been holding the temporary presidency of the Society in circumstances necessarily of a more or less melancholy and trying nature. I begin to feel what it means, and to see that Mr. Bradlaugh has not been lying on a bed of roses. I have felt some of the thorns and expect to feel more. I think I owe a duty to tell in what sense I regard the duties of this post. I do not regard the presidential office as simply that of a chairman. The President of a Society such as this must look around him and ahead of him. If a lecturer and writer he is in a better position to judge of the party's needs than any person with a less open horizon. I think I see that the National Secular Society needs changes to adept it to new conditions. Having no longer Mr. Bradlaugh as active leader, we must adapt ourselves to that loss. This is an age of many organisations and appeals to society. I am convinced our work must be conducted more energetically. Having no gift of prophecy, I can speak but for myself, and promise that I will at least try, and hope to have the hearty co-operation of the party as Mr. Bradlaugh had it. I am prepared for grumbling. Next year I shall have to give an account of the work, and I trust you will then be as unanimous in approving that work as you are now in electing me.

Mr. Foote then moved that the following names as vice-presidents:—G. Anderson, Daniel Baker, Prof. Ludwig Büchner, W. W. Collins, P. A. V. Le Lubez, W. Pratt, W. H. Reynolds, Dr. E. Schlaeger, Thos. Slater, R. O. Smith, Geo. Standring, J. Swaagman, Joseph Symes, E. Truelove. He omitted the name of Mrs. Bonner, as that lady had sent a letter he would desire the Secretary to read.

Mr. Forder then read the letter expressing Mrs. Bonner's deep regret that she would be unable to attend to the duties of the office.

Mr. Foote stated that as the Executive had undoubtedly been weakened perhaps someone would like to move that additions thereto be made a matter of urgency. This being proposed and seconded, Mr. Foote first took the motion placed on the agenda by the Finsbury Branch that Mr. J. M. Wheeler be elected as Vice-President. This being seconded and supported was carried.

Mr. Wheeler in returning thanks for the honor, proposed the name of W. J. Birch, author of the *Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, as that of a gentleman who had with pen and purse supported the publications of Hetherington, Southwell and Holyoake. The motion was seconded by Mr. Truelove, who testified to Mr. Birch's great services in the past. The motion was carried. Upon the motion of various delegates, the names of Mr. N. B. Billany, Mr. J. E. Brumage, Mr. A. B Moss, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Mr. J. Umpleby and Miss E. Vance, were also added to the list of Vice-Presidents. Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. Angus Thomas were also proposed, but both these gentlemen declined on account of pressure of other work.

Mr. Reynolds was then unanimously elected treasurer, and Messrs. J. Early and C. Herbert auditors.

Mr. Forder, on the motion of Mr. Foote, was unanimously elected secretary, and in replying mentioned that, owing to ill-health, this was the last occasion he should be re-elected. He expected he should be obliged to go abroad before they next met.

Mr. Forder then read the announcement as to the surrender of certain shares held in various Secular Societies by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant and after some discussion, the motion of Mr. Reynolds that a list be offered for sale in the Freethought papers, and that tenders be invited to be sent in and dealt by the Executive, was accepted.

The time approaching the end of the morning sitting, it was decided that precedence be given to the motion of the Birmingham Branch, "That in future no person shall hold the office of President for more than three years in succession." This was moved by Mr. Morley, seconded by Mr. Bridges, and supported by Mr. Ridgway and others, but, although

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the proceedings were carried over to the afternoon sitting, it found little support in the Conference, and when the vote was taken only eight or nine hands were held up in its favor.

Mr. Foote, in proposing a series of five motions, said these were only part of a scheme which he hoped to carry out. He felt it best to proceed with some regard to existing arrangements. The first motion was the keynote to all that followed. It was "That the yearly subscription of membership be altered to a minimum of one shilling, each member being allowed to fix his subscription in excess of that amount according to his means and inclination." This Society was not like a friendly society, a trades union, a co-operative society, or any organisation based on self-interest. It was based on the very reverse. Self-interest would say, Have nothing to do with it. Every one who joins does so because he or she approves of the Society's principles, and wants to do something for their recognition. Their basis should govern their appeal. Hitherto they had worked too much on a purely commercial basis. Not being in debt was a dictate of prudence, but they did not want to regard all their affairs in a business light. It would be absurd to say that one Branch that was strong should not support another that was weak. Every one would see that was a violation of the spirit that should animate them. The object of the Society was the propagation of its principles. We want to include as many as possible, and to get as much as we can, and we want a system that will hinder no one, and give scope for those who do give. Up to the present the four shillings was neither a minimum nor a maximum. Special appeals had been made and money had been obtained to fight special battles, but for the general purposes of the Society the simple subscription was paid by many who could afford more. He was assured that many were kept out. Take the case of a working man who might like his wife and perhaps two children to feel essentially connected with the Society, where every penny has to be considered, four shillings a year for members was a hindrance. But would the proposed alteration diminish their income? He ventured to say it would have another effect. Our only possible appeal is to altruism and enthusiasm, to individual generosity. There were a number of men—and their number is increasing—who, if they could not take part in the work of the Society, could put their hands in their pockets for its support. We made an appeal recently, and in a few weeks got £60, each person saying this is a yearly subscription so long as able. By appealing to generosity and letting the commercial spirit slide we obtain more from the wealthy and do not exclude those who have but little. He hoped the Conference would recognise that the old methods no longer serve. We must trust more to organisation and an appeal to the emotion which induced the members to join.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Gowland (of Liverpool).

Mr. Thomas (Camberwell) asked if Branches would retain their right of fixing their own subscriptions.

Mr. Foote: As a matter of fact the Executive has never interfered. A special law would have to be passed before they did so.

Mr. Bater thought the London Branches would be injuriously affected by the motion. The parent Society would take the money, and the work of the Branches be undone. Members would join the parent Society and the weaker Branches fall through.

Mr. Lees (Camberwell) pointed out that the new method would not make a serious difference. He believed the parent Society is strengthening the Branches.

Mr. Pegg (Manchester) observed that there was no doubt much force in what the President had said, yet he held that the motion would add to the parent Society at the expense of the branches. They found their members prepared to pay the smallest possible amount. He thought it would be detrimental to branches, and if so it was not easy to see how the whole Society would benefit.

Mr. Kelf (Newcastle) pointed to the denominations which trusted to the enthusiasm of members. In Newcastle for every Freethinker inside their ranks there were ten out. If the parent Society sent down lecturers that would be compensation.

Mr. Cheese (Manchester) wished to know if they did not pay their way now, how will they do so with a less subscription. He thought that experience showed that though for a year or two members would continue their present subscription, they would fall down to the minimum.

An individual Manchester member supported the motion. It would bring many more into the Society; he himself could bring twenty, and thought one thousand ought to be brought in at Manchester.

Mr. Kaye supported the motion. He thought it would result in an increase of membership. In each branch there were a certain number of old standards on whom the new rule would have no effect.

Mr. Doeg (Liverpool) also spoke in favor. For every member in Liverpool they had a hundred outside. A lot of working men at present were forced to be in arrears.

Miss Vance opposed the motion. She felt the minimum would become the maximum. Human nature was the same among Freethinkers as among others. At present some of the members were waiting for the reduction, and she feared the proposition would much weaken the Branches.

Mr. A. Thomas (Camberwell) mentioned that in his society there were two grades, the A and B—the B's giving a guinea a year and the A's 5s. 4d. This was found to work well. They would welcome any change which would put greater life into the movement, and this plan might bring in those who may give more in work than in money.

Mr. Gowland was not afraid that members of local Branches would leave and join the parent Society.

Mr. Forder (Woolwich) pointed out that if a Branch was in difficulties and a proper balance-sheet was shown, the Executive had never failed to cancel all arrears, and he had no doubt that in future the same consideration would be shown. He mentioned that on board a large ironclad there were several members, and nearly fifty Secularists, who might join if the subscription were one shilling. Two new Branches had been formed at Barbadoes and Gibraltar. They had, indeed, members in nearly every regiment. If the proposition was accepted, he felt sure a larger number would join. If we turned to the balance-sheets it would be found that many did not at present pay their full subscription, but make a renewal when they fell into arrears.

Mr. J. M. Robertson (North West London), said he had been instructed to oppose the motion, but personally he was in favor of it. He saw little argument on the other side, and replying to Miss Vance, said that if a person thinks he will gain five shillings by lowering his subscription, he might gain six shillings by leaving altogether.

The motion was carried by an overwhelming vote.

Mr. Foote then moved "That Branches shall henceforth pay to the central fund the sum of sixpence per year for each member." Mr. Smith (Farsley) seconded, and after some little discussion the motion was accepted.

The proposition that the Propagandist and General funds should be merged into one was also accepted, although Mr. Forder feared it might possibly cut off a portion of the Society's income.

The fourth motion, "That it is (1) advisable to consolidate and centralise the lecturing system, except in cases where the lecturers work on the plan of taking the surplus of proceeds; and that (2) an attempt should at once be made to send lecturers on tour at the expense of the central fund, the Branches being expected to bear the necessary local expenses; and that (3), when a charge for admission is made at such lectures, the branches shall forward to the General Secretary a statement of receipts and expenditure, and remit to him one-half of any balance that may remain in hand," was, after a few inquiries, unanimously adopted, as was also the fifth motion, "That instead of a special collection for the Propagandist Fund, every Branch shall make at least one annual collection for the general purposes of the Society, and remit the same within a fortnight to the General Secretary."

Mr. Kelf introduced the motion which had been placed on the agenda paper by the Newcastle Branch, "That the Conference instruct the Executive to take active steps to bring about the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and exhort all Freethinkers in the United Kingdom to bring pressure to bear wherever possible upon Parliamentary candidates." He urged that at all elections Secularists should rather sink party spirit than principle, and decline to vote for any candidate who refused to pledge himself against these intolerant laws, and also that the replies of candidates should be published in the public press.

Mr. Robertson supported the motion, and proposed a supplementary resolution, "That this Conference appeals to Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., to attempt to secure the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws in so far as they affect the right of the Society to receive legacies, if he is of opinion he can secure this by waiving for a time the demand that other disabling laws be repealed." Some years ago he (Mr. Robertson)

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held that they should agitate for nothing less than the complete removal of the obnoxious statutes. But that he saw was impossible with the present House of Commons, and although the laws might be held in terror over them he thought if they obtained the right of receiving legacies they would have the best half of the loaf.

Both motions were carried unanimously.

Mr. Dorg, for the Liverpool Branch, proposed, "That it is desirable that the Annual Conferences should be held only in towns affording facilities for access, and that the expenses attending them should in part at least be defrayed from the general fund." The motion was accepted.

This was all the business on the agenda paper. Two other resolutions, that in future all voting should be by ballot, and that individual members should have the right of sending a representative to sit on the Executive, were held to be of such importance that they could not be taken at the end of the sitting, but must be placed on the agenda paper for the consideration of members next year.

A vote of thanks to the Manchester friends for their entertaining the Conference at short notice closed the afternoon's proceedings.

EVENING MEETING.

The evening meeting was well attended, and was addressed by Mr. Pegg, President of the Manchester Branch, who said they had been greatly pleased with the Conference, and spoke of the new Lancashire Federation, which they expected would prove of great value.

On Mr. Foote announcing Mr. O'Donovan, who had recently formed a Branch at Dublin, that gentleman was accorded a very flattering reception. He dwelt on the condition of priests and paupers in Ireland, and assured the audience that, although they had a uphill fight there, they were prepared to face it.

Mr. Moss then gave a powerful address, in which he dwelt on the results of destructive criticism and Freethought, pointing out how much had been gained.—Mrs. Thornton Smith urged her audience to be unwearying in their efforts against the Blasphemy Laws and loyal in their support of the Executive.

Mr. J. M. Robertson followed with a thoughtful speech, in which he compared the Freethought of the present with that of last century, and dwelt on its alliance with Democracy. The Society was at one with the spirit of the time in being more democratic than ever, and in entering on a system of scientific organisation. Our cause was bound up with the progress of the race. He looked forward to the time when it would have an endowed system of advocacy. Its triumph would mean the raising of the whole level of life.

Mr. Forder, in a brief speech, pointed to the signs of progress in the Bruno monument and the rationalistic explanation of Bible miracles by clergymen.

Mr. Foote brought the proceedings to a close by an oration, in which he alluded to the loss of Mr. Bradlaugh as leader, the reception of the Freethinkers by the Municipal Council of Paris, and the many signs of promise for the future. His peroration was greeted with great applause, and the meeting ended with every sign of general satisfaction.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Social evening every Monday.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Prince of Darkness as Opposed to the Prince of Light."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone on the Jew Book."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. J. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic, II."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Heavenly Government."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, a lecture.

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Confusion of Tongues."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?' A meeting of members will be held after the lecture.

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Bible a Good Book?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic, I."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. G. Standring will lecture.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

COUNTRY.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, Mr. J. Hooper, 11, "Is the Bible True?"; 3 "The Ten Commandments and How They are Kept"; 7, "The Bible and Science: Do They Agree?"

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, Report of Delegates to Conference."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Hypocrisy and Cant."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, meeting of Sunday Music League; 3, annual meeting, election of officers, etc.

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Report of delegates to Conference, and arrangements for the anniversary on June 29.

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. Harry Smith, 3, "What Think ye of Christ"; 7, "By the Blast of God they Perish."

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, a business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London. S.E. — June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green, (evening), Camberwell; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

James Hooper, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—June 1, Hanley.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 1, Sheffield; 15, Birmingham.

E. Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 1, Manchester; 8, Manchester; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MR. GLADSTONE ON THE FALL OF MAN.

Talk *politics* with the stupidest Englishman, and he will be sure to say something sensible. But so soon as the conversation turns on *religion*, the most intelligent Englishman utters nothing but silly speeches.—HEINE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S third article on the Bible, in the June number of *Good Words*, is disappointing. He fulfils none of the promises with which he set out. No attempt is made to answer the sceptic's objections. We have simply a theological essay, restating the orthodox view of the Bible, and abounding in evasions and assumptions. A certain pomposity of style, familiar to Mr. Gladstone's readers, gives his article a fictitious air of importance; but in substance it is remarkably poor, and its argumentation is such that if it were displayed on any other topic it would expose him to derision. That a man of Mr. Gladstone's powers and eminence should sink so low is only to be explained by the fact that religion stultifies the intellect. The defence of childish legends and contemptible doctrines cannot but degrade their champion. We regret to say it, but truth is higher than politeness. It is time that some one told the Grand Old Man that he is making an exhibition of himself. He is a perfect Rip Van Winkle in religious controversy. What else can be said of one who, so many years after Darwin's death, writes as though Darwin had never lived; of one who, in an age in which Evolution has overrun every field of research and speculation, writes as though Evolution had never been heard of? If, on the other hand, Mr. Gladstone knows something of Evolution, and simply ignores it, he might give points in ludicrousness to the proverbial ostrich with its head in the desert sands. Why on earth—we say it in all seriousness—does not a confidential friend break through the ring of flatterers, and save a statesman in whose reputation we are all interested from himself and the editors with cheque books who are anxious to trade upon his name? Mr. John Morley could hardly do it; his heterodoxy would throw suspicion on his advice. But there is Professor Stuart. He knows a thing or two, and his scepticism is only ankle-deep. Could he not contrive to drop a whisper into Mrs. Gladstone's ear, and even in a roundabout way spare us the necessity of laughing at one we would fain reverence? For risibility is an imp who will not be baulked; when he scents antics he will take a ticket for the spectacle.

The very opening of Mr. Gladstone's third article is what is vulgarly called "a caution." In face of all he has written before he says it is "likely that the Creation Story has come down from the beginning." He even talks of "the corroborative legends of Assyria." Nay he declares, with a wonderful equanimity, which we are unable to emulate, that "we now trace the probable origins of our Sacred Books far back beyond Moses and his time." In other words, Mr. Gladstone, at this time of day, fancies the antediluvian patriarchs were actual and not mythical personages, who had the Creation Story revealed to them, and passed it down to their descendants. Despite the fact, too, that all savages—and the ancient Jews were savages—trace their descent from a common ancestor, for the simple reason that they cannot understand any but a blood relationship; despite the fact that Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome, for instance, is now seen to be as real a character as Tamoi of the Brazilians, or Unkulunkulu of the Zulus; Mr. Gladstone takes Abraham quite seriously, regards his "call" as a fact like that of the last clergyman who had a call to a richer living, and bravely declares that "Of all great and distinctive chapters in the history of the human race we have here perhaps the greatest and the most distinctive." Why, the very circumcision which Jehovah fixed as his special brand upon the Jews, beginning with Abraham, is older than the earliest trace of the Jews in history. It was practised on religious grounds by the priestly caste in Egypt. It was common among the Semites, of whom the Jews are a branch. It has been found in various parts of the world that had no communication with each other, such as South Africa, the South Pacific islands, and Mexico. Jehovah's trade mark was a plagiarism, a violation of an old patent, and he would have been non-suited in any action he took to assert his exclusive rights.

But let us come to Mr. Gladstone's account of the Fall. He starts with setting up an "Adamic race," of whom we suppose he implies that Adam was the first progenitor. Now the science of ethnology is pretty well established, but its records will be searched in vain for any Adamic race. Mr. Gladstone has developed this race, like the German's camel, from the depths of his inner consciousness. Elsewhere he speaks of the Fall as "introducing us to man in his first stage of existence—a stage not of savagery but of childhood." Nowadays such a remark is *childish*. There never was such a stage of humanity. Not childhood, but sheer savagery, was the original state of every people in history. Mr. Gladstone may talk as he pleases, but on this question he is no greater authority than the man in the street. Behind history lies anthropology, and the verdict of anthropology is decisive. Man is of animal origin. He was neither made from earth nor dropped from the skies. This is *proved*. Even Dr. Wallace can no longer withhold his assent. Despite himself he now admits that the evidence for man's "descent from some ancestral form common to man and the anthropoid apes" is "overwhelming and conclusive." Thus the Adamic race, and the primitive state "not of savagery but of childhood," are both figments of theological imagination. They would vanish to-morrow if they were not maintained by the Black Army in the interest of their dogmas.

Mr. Gladstone sums up the purport of the Old Testament as "a history of sin and redemption." Of course the second depends upon the first. Man is an awful sinner, a fallen being. That is the first statement of Christianity, and it is a falsehood. Evolution proves the ascent, not the descent, of man; that he

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has risen from a low estate to a high one, and from small things to great. On the other hand, the least knowledge of human nature shows us that man is not half as black as the parsons paint him. It is absurd to talk of "the preponderance of moral evil in the world." Human society could not exist under such conditions. Nor is it sensible to ask, "Are we as a race whole, or are we profoundly sick?" We are neither the one nor the other. Man is neither an angel nor a devil. But there is surely a preponderance of good in his composition. His heart is better than his head. No doubt there is a sad spectacle for the philanthropist in the oppressions of the world, for the honest man in its crimes, for the good man in its vices, and for the truthful man in its lies and hypocricies—after all these millenniums of religion. But what the world at large does not see, what the newspapers do not report, is deeper and more common than these things; and the homes of the people, where they really live their lives, are perpetually made fragnant by "the little unremembered deeds of kindness and of love." And sometimes a splendid deed of heroism, wrought by one great heart, thrills the hearts of millions, expands our moral horizon, and shames the whining of dastard priests.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

CARDINAL MANNING ON ATHEISM.

Last Sunday at the various Roman Catholic churches in the diocese of Westminster, a pastoral was read from Cardinal Manning on behalf of the Diocesan Building Fund. The Catholic Church is not only making great strides at present, it is preparing the plant for future acquisitions and like all other causes human and divine needs funds for its support. Now Cardinal Manning is tactician enough to know that when money is your suit there is nothing like attacking the enemy. Atheism has few friends, at any rate among the Catholics. The very word has associations which give it a flavor of all that is odious. To say one was an Atheist in the good old days was to say he was out of the bounds of decent society. Cardinal Manning is aware that Atheism is the enemy. He knows that all his elaborate preparations to restore England to "the faith of our fathers" are being undermined. While he is preparing to receive the divided sects of Protestants within the bosom of the mother Church, reason is impelling them outside all churches, and every strain made by his powerful church on behalf of authority but nerves Freethinkers in their promulgation of universal mental liberty.

The Cardinal devotes then much of his pastoral to Atheism. He sets out with the statement that of old, the knowledge of God was not a discovery but an inheritance. This is true enough if for knowledge we substitute belief. Men have inherited the belief in gods exactly as they inherited the belief in ghosts. Indeed, the one idea sprang from the other. The Cardinal, however, appears to hold that the knowledge of God came by a primitive revelation, though he does not expressly say so. He proceeds to observe that the ancients so profusely believed in God, that rather than lose hold of the divine presence, they believed all things to be God. His does not explain how this "majestic perversion of the truth" came about if God gave a primitive revelation. Polytheism and Pantheism are really to be explained as developments of the early superstitious belief in spirits.

"Among the people of Israel," continues the Cardinal, "an Atheist would have been shunned as insane or stoned as a blasphemer." The latter portion is certainly correct, although we may doubt the former, inasmuch as like most Orientals, the people of Israel considered the insane as inspired persons. The Cardinal seems to lament the divinely-directed stoning by the chosen race. He did his share in stoning Mr. Bradlaugh, writing the most virulent articles against him during his prolonged fight for his seat in the House of Commons. Here the Cardinal was an Israelite indeed. We do not doubt he was sincere. We feel sure he would consign an Atheist to the secular arm to be punished "without the effusion of blood" with the serene consciousness of doing his duty. We suspect he could see the said Atheist burn to death without one twinge of human pity, but with the reflection that thus might others be saved from eternal fire. But Atheists are less shunned now and escape stoning simply because they are too numerous.

His Eminence proceeds to ask "Is it not, then, a sign of these last days that in the full revelation of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, in the light and the glory of God in Unity and Trinity, there should be not only those who deny the Lord that bought them, but those also who will not trouble themselves so far as to believe or disbelieve his existence." We are not quite sure what he means by "these last days." If he agrees with Prophet Baxter that the end of all things is at hand, we do not see why he wants money to build splendid churches. No doubt the existence of Atheism is a sign. It is a sign the power of the Church to suppress opinion is gone. It is a sign, too, that there is no God who concerns himself with suppressing Atheism. If there is a God he could at once make Atheism impossible. It is a strange God who hides himself from honest seekers. And we tell Cardinal Manning that Atheists of all men are honest in their opinions, for they have nothing to gain and much to lose by their expression. Theirs is the modest, manly course of not pretending to know that which they do not know. Atheism has extended with increased knowledge of nature. Man, who recognises himself as one of myriads of beings living a few years on a little planet, the satellite of an inferior sun, can no longer suppose that all things were created for his benefit. He sees creation nowhere, but everywhere evolution. He finds that the chief forms of existence are brought about by an enormous destruction of life, that prayers are powerless to avert the evils from which he suffers, and that science is his only providence. Disregard for Deity springs from regard for humanity. Fortunately the mass of men are, in all their immediate concerns, practical Atheists, acting without regard to any possible deity or devil. Yet the Cardinal goes on to say, "The passive unbelief of the ignorant or gross-minded is as abnormal as the privation of sight or speech." Does he forget that God is responsible for the blindness and dumbness of the ignorant and gross-minded? If an almighty being willed, there could be no dispute about his existence or his will. But then there would be no need of Pope, cardinals or priests. Their occupation would be gone. The Cardinal laments that "the men of to-day are born into a state of privation." They are deprived of the guidance of his Church. Their thoughts and lives and those of their wives and children are no longer moulded by priests. But the Cardinal will do his best to bring back the good old days when all were subject to the power of God. And we will do our best to prevent him. We hold that the time has gone by for his Church with its supernatural morality, founded not on the needs of man, but on the supposed will of an arbitrary God, and its sacerdotal pretensions to be that God's interpreter. The Church has had a fair trial. It stands condemned by history. It has cursed mankind in direct proportion as it has been strong. We war against it in the name of progress and humanity.

J. M. Wheeler.

Freethinkers in Crewe and district are invited to attend a meeting at 42 Brown Street at seven o'clock on Sunday next, June 8, with a view to organisation.—Chas. Lewis

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FARRAR'S REPLY TO INGERSOLL.

[CONCLUDED.]

DR. FARRAR gives a curious list of these gentlemen who have given God a certificate. It includes Charlemagne, who had such a fine notion of "evidence" that he offered the Saxons the choice of baptism or instant death, and so converted them at the rate of twenty thousand a day. It includes Shakespeare, whose irreligion is a byword among the commentators. It also includes Dr. Lightfoot and Dr. Westcott, two highly-feed dignitaries of the Church. Among the scientific names is that of Faraday, who "had the Christian faith of a child," which is a very happy description, for Faraday deliberately refused to submit his faith to any test of reason. Dr. Farrar mentions Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall as "exceptions." But they cease to be exceptions when the names of Haeckel, Büchner, Clifford, Maudsley, Galton, and a score of others are added. Among the poets, Tennyson and Browning may be called believers, but Swinburne, Morris, and Meredith are not; and in France the foremost living poet, Leconte de Lisle, is a pronounced Atheist. Sir William Hamilton was a believer, but John Stuart Mill was not. Dr. Gardiner, the historian of England, is a believer, but Grote the greater historian of Greece was an Atheist. After all, however, this bandying of big names is perfectly idle. Propositions must ultimately rest on their evidence. What is the use of discussion if we are not to judge for ourselves?

Not only does Dr. Farrar give us a scratch list of eminent believers—as though every creed and every form of scepticism did not boast its eminent men—but he gives another list of assailants of Christianity, and declares that it has survived their attacks, as it will survive every assault that can be made upon it. It survived "the flashing wit of Lucian," which, by the way, never flashed upon the ignorant dupes who were gathered into the early Christian fold. It survived "the haughty mysticism of Porphyry." Yes, but how? By burning his books, and decreeing the penalty of death against everyone who should be found in possession of his damnable writings. It survived "the battering eloquence and keen criticism of Celsus." Yes, but how? By destroying his writings, so that not a single copy remained, and all that can be known of them is the extracts quoted in the answer of Origen. Then there are Hobbes, Spinoza, Bayle, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Voltaire, Diderot, Strauss and Renan—and "what have they effected?"

This is what they have effected. They have broken the spirit of intolerance, and made it possible for honest thinkers to express their opinions. They have crippled the power of priests, tamed their pride, and compelled them to argue with heretics instead of robbing and murdering them. They have leavened Christian superstition with human reason, and made educated Christians ashamed of the grosser aspects of their faith. They have driven Dr. Farrar himself to juggle with the words of Scripture in order to get rid of the infamous doctrine of everlasting torture. They have compelled the apologists of Christianity to alter their theory of Inspiration, to discriminate between better and worse in the Bible, and to practise all kinds of subtle shifts in order to patch up a hollow treaty between religion and science. They have loosened the Church's grasp on the mind of the child, and very largely secularised both private and public life, which were once under the domination of priestcraft. They have made millions of Freethinkers in Christendom, shaken the faith of the very worshippers in their pews, and helped to create that ever growing indifference to religion, which is a theme of wailing at Church Congresses, and bids fair to absorb all the sects of theology, as the desert absorbs water or the ocean a fleet of sinking ships.

What have they effected? Dr. Farrar's article furnishes an answer. Fifty years ago what dignitary of the Church would have replied to an "infidel" except with anathemas and the terrors of the law? Now the proudest of them rush to cross swords with Colonel Ingersoll, and, although they do it with a wry face, they shake hands with him before beginning the combat. Fifty years ago what "infidel," if he openly avowed his infidelity, had the remotest chance of occupying any public post? Now Mr. John Morley is Mr. Gladstone's first lieutenant, and Mr. Bradlaugh himself is marked out as a member of the next Liberal administration. All this may be "nothing" to Dr. Farrar, but it is much to Freethinkers, and they need not argue who has the best reason to be satisfied.

Dr. Farrar proceeds to tackle Ingersoll's agnosticism. In doing so he explains why he introduces the word "infidel." He does not desire "to create an unfair prejudice." Why then does he use the word at all? Certainly he is incorrect in saying that "the word has always been understood to mean one who does not believe in the existence of God." "Infidel" was first used by the Christians as a name for the Mohammedans. It was afterwards applied to the unbelievers at home. The Deists of last century were called infidels. Voltaire and Thomas Paine are arch-infidels, and both believed in the existence of God. Johnson defines "infidel" as "an unbeliever, a miscreant, a pagan; one who rejects Christianity." Bailey as "a Heathen, or one who believes nothing of the Christian religion." A similar definition is given in Richardson's great dictionary. It is clear that Dr. Farrar's etymology is no improvement on his manners. He covers a bad fault with a worse excuse. We are ready, however, to make allowance for him. His mind is naturally loose, and he is rather the slave than the master of his words. In the very next paragraph he says that "our beliefs are surrounded by immense and innumerable perplexities," forgetting that if they are immense they cannot be innumerable, and if they are innumerable they cannot be immense.

Ingersoll's arguments against theology are reduced by Dr. Farrar under four heads: "first, the difficulty of conceiving the nature of God; secondly, the existence of evil; thirdly, the impossibility of miracles; and fourthly, the asserted errors and imperfections of the Bible."

"Is it possible," asks Ingersoll, "for the human mind to conceive of an infinite personality?" Dr. Farrar replies, "Why, certainly it is; for human minds innumerable have done so." But have they? Dr. Farrar knows they have not. He knows they cannot. Otherwise he would not argue that we are bound to believe in the existence of things which are inconceivable.

"Can the human mind imagine a beginningless being?" asks Ingersoll. Dr. Farrar evades the question. He gives us another dissertation on conceivability. He asks whether Ingersoll believes "there is such a thing as *space*," and presently calls it "an entity." We venture to say that Ingersoll believes in nothing of the kind. You may call space "a thing," but it is only indefinite extension, as time is indefinite succession. The metaphysical difficulty arises when we try to use the word *infinite* in a positive sense. Then we are brought face to face with antinomies because we are trying to transcend the limit of our faculties. Still, it is absurd to affirm that "space is quite as impossible to conceive as God." We know extension by experience, and increasing it *ad infinitum* is rather an exercise in transcendent geometry than in practical reason. But what experience have we of God? Is it not easier to conceive that to be unlimited, of which we have some knowledge, and of which we have never found the limits, than to conceive that to be unlimited of which we have no knowledge at all? And if God be considered as a personality—without which he is not

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God—is it possible to combine infinitude and personality in the same conception? Dr. Farrar affirms that it is. We say it is not, and we appeal to the judgment of every man who will try to think accurately.

With regard to the existence of evil, all that Dr. Farrar can say is that it is a mystery. Now a mystery, in theology, is simply a contradiction between fact and theory, and arguing from mystery is only justifying a particular contradiction by a general contradiction. Dr. Farrar must also be exceedingly simple to imagine that it is any reply to Ingersoll to appeal to St. Paul. Nor is it permissible to argue from the assumed "restoration of all things" which is to take place in the future, unless conjecture and argument are the same thing, in which case it is idle to discuss at all, for every time the Christian is beaten he has only to start a fresh assumption. It is foolish, likewise, to complain that the argument from evil is an old one, and that there is "nothing new in the reiterated objection," for there is nothing new in the reiterated reply, and the objection remains unanswered. The Catholic theologian would address Dr. Farrar in the same futile fashion. He would reply to objections against Transubstantiation, for instance, that they are musty with age and have been answered again and again.

Dr. Farrar finally sees he has a poor case and resigns the argument. After trying to explain away a great deal of the world's evil by saying it is "transitory," which is questionable; or "phantasmal," which is a mockery; he ends by throwing up the sponge altogether. He admits he has "no compact logical solution of the problem," and cries out in despair that the theologians "are not called upon to construct theodicæas." But that is precisely what they *are* called upon to do, and if they cannot do it they should have the modesty to be silent. It is their function to "justify the ways of God to men." Let them perform it, or confess they cannot, and retire from their pretentious business.

But we must be just to Dr. Farrar. He does supply two arguments, not for God's goodness, but for God's existence. The first is "the starry heavens above." Did they come by *chance?*—as though God and chance were the only possible alternatives, or as though chance were anything but contingency arising from human ignorance!

"The starry heavens above." "*It is all very well, gentlemen, but who made these?*" asked the young Napoleon, pointing to the stars of heaven, as he sat with the French *savans* on the deck of the vessel which was carrying him to Egypt, after they had proved to their satisfaction that there is no God. To most minds it is a question finally decisive.

Colonel Ingersoll must smile at this childish logic. No doubt to most minds it is finally decisive. Who made the world or the stars? is a pertinent question to those who have been taught that they *were* made. It is an idle question to anyone with a moderate acquaintance with astronomy. On that subject the French *savans* were better informed than Napoleon.

Dr. Farrar is erroneous in supposing that the Atheist or Agnostic is bound to "account for the existence of matter and force." Accounting for them can only mean explaning how they began, and the Atheist or Agnostic is not aware that they had a beginning. The "source of life" is a question that biology must solve. Until it does, the "infidel" waits for information. No light is shed upon the problem by supernatural explanations. Still less is the "infidel" called upon to account for "the freedom of the will." He knows of no such freedom as Dr. Farrar means by this phrase. As for "the obvious design which runs through the whole of nature," it is so *obvious* that Charles Darwin wrote, "the longer I live the less I can see proof of design."

The second of the two things that are "ample to prove the being of a God" is "the moral law within." Dr. Farrar asserts that Conscience "is the voice of God within us." But assertion is not proof. Colonel Ingersoll would reply that Conscience is the voice of human experience. No student of evolution would admit Dr. Farrar's assertion. The origin and development of morality are seen by evolutionists to be perfectly natural. It is futile to make assertions which your opponent contradicts. Argument must rest upon admitted facts. Dr. Farrar strikes an attitude, makes dogmatic statements, draws out the conclusion he has put into them, and calls that discussion. He has yet to learn the rudiments of debate. The methods of the pulpit may do for a pious romance called the *Life of Christ*, but they are out of place in a discussion with Colonel Ingersoll.

Misled by his fondness for preaching, Dr. Farrar has forgotten two of the four heads under which he reduced Colonel Ingersoll's arguments. He says nothing about "the impossibility of miracles" or "the errors and imperfections of the Bible." But these are the very points that demanded his attention. The existence of God, and the problem of evil, belong to what is called Natural Religion. Dr. Farrar is a champion of Revealed Religion. He is not a Deist but a Christian. He should therefore have defended the Bible. His omission to do so may be owing to prudence or negligence. He has given us fifteen pages of "A Few Words on Colonel Ingersoll." We look forward to a "Fewer Words on Dr. Farrar."

G. W. FOOTE.

ACID DROPS.

Lord Wolesley is a curious specimen of the militant Christian. Of late he has been urging the duty of drilling school-children in order to make them good fighters—we suppose after the pattern of the Sermon on the Mount. Last Saturday afternoon he went a step farther in pious exhortation. After laying the foundation stone of a new church at Harringay, he preached a sermon on faith, which he regards as the one thing needful. According to the Wolesley creed, it is not righteousness, but faith that exalteth a nation; and as France is not noted for this particular virtue, Lord Wolesley declared that she was hopelessly lost. To make the declaration more offensive, he quoted the words of "a great German statesman," who said to him, alluding to France, "What can you hope from a nation that has no faith in it?"

Such a public insult to a friendly nation by a man in Lord Wolesley's official position is nothing less than a scandal. His foolish incontinence of tongue has more than once brought him into trouble, and he surely should be reprimanded for this fresh offence. Very likely, as before, when he was brought to book by Lord Salisbury, he would climb down and roar like any sucking dove. Anyhow, it is high time to tell this bouncible soldier, who brought home King Coffee's umbrella from Ashantee, and didn't rescue Gordon from Khartoum or get near it, that his achievements do not entitle him to indulge in the license of insulting nations with whom we are on terms of amity. If he must display his silliness, let him go on chattering about the dangers of the Channel Tunnel; or, better still, let him resign his sword and take a pulpit.

Our pious contemporary, the *Christian Commonwealth*, has a queer way of speaking of its betters. "This man," it says, "has told the world why he is an Agnostic." The "this man" is Colonel Ingersoll. How hard it is for Christians not to be impudent to Freethinkers.

By the way, there is an article in the *C. C.* on "brain friction." We should hardly have thought that a burning question with its readers.

Mr. Spurgeon reviews *The Atheist Shoemaker* in his monthly magazine. He praises it as "a beautiful story," and says it "should be given away among Atheistic shoemakers, of whom the world hath not a few." At the same he gives the Rev. Hugh Price Huges a shrewd dig in the ribs. "It is a pity," Mr. Spurgeon says, "that the name and address of Herbert [the blessed shoemaker] are not given, for it would make it a fair, logical, weighty testimony

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with the man's former companions. We fail to guess the reason for making the convert anonymous when the name of his spiritual guide is given so openly." Well said, Mr. Spurgeon. But when you read our exposure—and we are sending you a copy—you will no longer "fail to guess" Mr. Hughes's reason.

By the way, we have some copies of our exposure of the Hughes's story still remaining, and as the lie is being circulated and advertised we hope Freethinkers will continue to circulate its refutation.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis, in an article on the Broad Church in the June *Contemporary*, commences by stating two facts—(1) Intelligent men refuse to take Holy Orders. (2) Intelligent men refuse to attend Church. He fancies this can be got over by the admission that dogmas which were once true are so no longer. We fancy that when men come to see that God's revelation is in this category they will begin to doubt the utility of churches and ministers. Mr. Haweis and his like, with more ingenuity than ingenuousness, continue to put new wine into the old bottles, unheeding the warning of their master upon this matter.

Dr. Henry Van Dyke offers 100 dols. to the babies ward of a New York hospital if anyone will produce a passage from the writings of Calvin in which he unequivocally declares that all dying infants are elect and saved. He points out that, while Calvin's adversaries accused him of believing in infant perdition, he never denied it.

"The doctrine of hell," says Ingersoll in the *Twentieth Century*, "is now only for the poor, the ragged, the ignorant. Well-dressed people won't have it. Nobody goes to hell in a carriage—they foot it. Hell is for strangers and tramps. No soul leaves a brown-stone front for hell—they start from the tenements, from jails and reformatories. In other words, hell is for the poor. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a poor man to get into heaven, or for a rich man to get into hell. The ministers stand by their supporters. Their salaries are paid by the well-to-do, and they can hardly afford to send the subscribers to hell."

Walter Hayne, the hero of the Spring Palace fire, is to have a monument at Fort Worth, Texas, and ample provision is to be made for his family. He personally saved a hundred women and children. When the flames were beyond control he appeared at an upper window with another fainting woman in his arms. There was but one chance. He jumped. He broke the woman's fall with his own body, and was killed on the spot, while she was uninjured. Brave fellow! We would rather make a pilgrimage to his grave than to that of any saint in the calendar. Yet, if the Christian religion be true, and Walter Hayne's views were unsound, he is gone to hell. Everlasting fire is his reward for saving a hundred lives from the flames. What a disgusting creed! Every honest man should spit upon it. It is too vile for argument.

It is not usual for French advocates to appeal to the old Jew books for arguments in favor of their clients. In the great case of the Comptoir d'Escompte, prosecuted for forestalling copper, Maître Buit argued that such speculation was of divine origin. "What was Pharaoh's dream but a warning voice from above to speculate? There never was, added Maître Buit, such a great forestalling operation as Joseph carried out when he filled the granaries of Egypt with corn."

An infamous sentence has been passed upon Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer*. He is a very plain-spoken sexual reformer, and did not shrink from printing an unusually strong letter from one of his correspondents. For this offence he has actually been sentenced to five years' imprisonment and a fine of three hundred dollars, which he is never likely to pay. Such a sentence makes one gape with wonder. Would any judge who was not a wretched bigot pass it, or would it be tolerated by any people not eaten out with hypocrisy? The wife-beaters and woman-outragers are at large, and this well-meaning, if mistaken, man is treated as a criminal of the deepest dye. Even if society—God bless its sweet, pure soul!—felt obliged to discountenance such a publication as *Lucifer*, one would think that a week's imprisonment would suffice, at least to begin with. But five years! It takes one's breath away. Yet this happens in America, where they are holding meetings to protest against the Czar's treatment of political prisoners. "Frailty, thy name is woman," says Hamlet. That's a mistake. But this is true—Hypocrisy, thy name is Christian civilisation.

Instead of savagely torturing Moses Harman, Christian society should deal with its own black sheep. Here are three items from one American paper. Robert Willis, the San-Francisco evangelist, is charged by his wife with extreme cruelty and conspiracy to put her in a lunatic asylum. The Rev. Mr. Hyde, Protestant missionary at Honolulu, says that Father Damien's leprosy was brought on by his vices and uncleanness. Ex-priest Martin, of Montreal, who became a Protestant in order to marry, has deserted his wife and children, leaving them to destitution, and returned to the Catholic Church.

There was a very pretty squabble out in New Zealand. Mr. Henry Varley (? Butcher Varley) said that no man could live free of sin, and that Christ alone was perfectly holy. Mr. W. Birch, of the Baptist Tabernacle, undertook to refute this. He maintained that a sinless life was possible, and that he had attained it. But a scene of sad disorder ensued, and the meeting broke up amid "ructions." Full details are lacking. Very likely the sinless Birch used some strong language at the finish, but that goes for nothing. He couldn't well have beaten Holy J. C.

"Ingersollism" is causing great excitement in Yankeeland. The latest gentleman to take the field on the orthodox side is Professor Phelps, late U.S. Minister to England. Addressing the Yale divinity students, he has uttered some remarkable nonsense, the more remarkable as coming from a lawyer. He actually argues that "it is too late to raise the question as to the credibility" of the Gospels. "The time has come," he asserts, "to say that this is established, if anything can be established by human evidence." Indeed! Why precisely the same may be said of witchcraft. Even sceptical historians have remarked that there is superabundant "evidence"—as such evidence goes—of the truth of this superstition. Is Professor Phelps ready to accept witchcraft and to revive the witch laws? Of course not. But in that case he is bound to give up his argument.

Professor Phelps is mistaken in supposing that the legal doctrine of possession is applicable in this controversy. "Society," he says, speaking as a lawyer, "society could not stand if it did not respect the right of unchallenged possession of property. We do not ask a man to go back of twenty years if everybody has acquiesced in his claim." But this is a mere matter of practical prudence. Applied to history, philosophy and religion, it would give perpetuity to every legend, every false principle, and every dogma that once succeeded in getting itself established. Such a doctrine puts the Protestant Reformers out of court, and condemns the Christian missionaries who try to disturb the faith of the "heathen" in creeds that are older than Christianity itself.

"Truth can never be confirmed enough, though doubt did ever sleep," said a wiser man than Professor Phelps—namely, William Shakespeare. Christians, however, don't want their faith confirmed. They don't want it tested. Why? Because they fear the result.

There is another fallacy in Professor Phelps's argument. Christianity has never been in "*unchallenged* possession" of its documents. "There is positive proof," writes the Rev. Dr. Giles, "in writings of the first ages of Christianity, that the same question as to the age and authorship of the books of the New Testament was even then agitated, and if it was then set at rest, this was done, not by a deliberate sentence of the judge, but by burning all the evidence on which one side of controversy was supported."

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, Professor Phelps; and cease teaching that if a lie is believed long enough it becomes a truth.

Just another word to Professor Phelps. Why does he degrade himself by appealing to the lowest prejudices of

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Christian auditors? "Would you," he asked, "like to be tried for your life by a jury of Mohammedans or Brahmins?" Well, why not? Native judges in India are as just and honorable as English judges; and what is there in Mohammedans, who are proverbially more truthful than Christians, to prevent twelve of them from returning a true verdict in a case in which they have no personal interest?

At Cirencester on Monday the Rev. W. F. Gover, rector of Oaksey, was fined £2 and costs for being drunk when in charge of a horse and cart, at South Cerney, on May 19.

Rosina Price, a servant girl, who hanged herself at Hampstead, left a piece of paper, on which was written:

Let but my fainting heart be blest
With thy sweet spirit for its guest;
My God to thee I leave the rest.
Thy will be done.

The verdict was "Suicide while of unsound mind."

A married man named William Meredith, who occupied the position of treasurer to the Salvation Army at Newtown, has been committed to trial on a charge of indecent assault upon a member of the Army named Elizabeth Evans, aged fourteen years. According to the evidence the intimacy arose through attending the meetings in the Victoria Hall, and took place in the private room for the use of officers.

"He doeth all things well." An Armenian village has been completely destroyed by an earthquake.—Leprosy is extending in the Australian colonies.—Last year it is computed that 203 persons were killed by wolves in Russia; the number of wolves does not seem to diminish; according to official statements it is over 170,000.—A hail-storm in Bulgaria has thrown down telegraph posts, destroyed the crops and damaged many public buildings.—The Rev. J. W. Sharpe, vicar of North Leach, Gloucestershire, dropped down dead in a cricket-field.

Dr T Hodgkin contributes a paper entitled "A Palestinian Utopia" to the *Contemporary Review*. He shows that the Holy Land is one of the most God-forsaken of much-visited places. The worst bridle path in Cumberland is equal to the royal high road of Palestine. The Holy Land is a country without posts, newspapers, schools, doctors or justice. The cottages are without glazed windows, and the house is also the cow-byre. The Jews are corrupted on the one side by the bounty of their co-religionists, and on the other by Christians who seek to convert them. All this is to be altered by the country being placed under an International Commission. But what will the Turk, who is in possession, say?

Canon Girdlestone finds a confirmation of Holy Writ in the fact that the names of six of the Babylonian months are almost identical with those of the Jewish months: Nisan, Sivan, Chisleu, Tebeth, Sebat and Adar. This is only another proof that the Jews were adepts at borrowing, and indicates that much even of their chronology came from Babylon.

The Church papers are getting anxious as to what the judgment of the Archbishop of Canterbury will be in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln's trial, and whether the Bishop will conform to the judgment. The *Church Review*, one of the organs of the Ritualists, counsels submission to the decision, whatever it be, but a writer in the *Church Times* says if the Archbishop bases his decision of those of the Privy Council, it must be repudiated as those of the P. C. have been. It is evident there are all the elements of a very pretty quarrel arising out of the trial.

The missionaries of Calcutta are protesting against the new municipal bye law, which is intended to put a stop to preaching in public squares. They want preaching but not discussion.

At the soiree of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Dr. Sadler said Unitarians had never been received into cordial Christian fellowship by other denominations, though they had produced many champions against unbelief. Of course Unitarians seek to mitigate their own heresy by attacking those who go a little further. The Rev. J. H. Allen, of the American Unitarian Association, spoke of Theodore Parker as an eminent member of that body. but did not inform his hearers that Parker was driven out of the Unitarian Church because he went too far.

The Viligance Society and other worthies who have been so energetic in suppressing the portrait of a lady performer at the Aquarium, might notice the statement of Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., that "some of the most willing publishers of obscene and offensive advertisements were the proprietors of religious papers." Samuel Smith, M.P., is an authority. He has probably the keenest nose for obscenity of any man in England.

When Mr. Foote lectured at Portsmouth he was opposed by a Mr. Millett, who deliberately misread a passage from John Stuart Mill's *Three Essays on Religion*, making him say the very opposite of what he had written. Mr. Foote got hold of the book, read out the omitted words and exposed the wretched creature to public contempt. Yet this Millett is puffed in the *Christian Citizen* as having effectually disposed of Mr. Foote—when he had left the town! Now, as ever, the Christians will not only pardon but approve any liar, if he lies for the sake of their faith.

Mr. Mead, the magistrate who presides at the Thames Police-court, has done a public service by calling attention to the discreditable imposition of vestries in issuing the notices for a church rate on the same form that the general services and poor rate is made out, and with the words "if the rate is not paid a summons will be issued," when the fact is that in law the payment is entirely optional.

After Mr. Gladstone's curious Rip Van Winkle attitude towards Darwinism it is worth noting that even in the *Methodist Times* evolution is frankly accepted by the Rev. S. E. Keble, who says that "To account for man's significant resemblance to the animal on any other theory than that of Evolution is, I think, very difficult, and the attempt involves us in some intellectual vagaries and evasions." Of course Mr. Keble tries to make out that Evolution and Christianity are quite compatible. That is not a matter, however, to discuss in a paragraph. Our point is this—the clergy begin to see that Evolution can no longer be resisted.

"Gallant little Wales"—we mean the principality, not the Prince—is evidently going to the Devil. The Rev. Cynddylan Jones, travelling secretary of the Bible Society, declares that fifty persons would not go to hear a great preacher at Cardiff on Saturday afternoon, "free, gratis, for nothing," but fifteen thousand would readily pay a shilling each to see a football match. Dreadful!

Catholicism succeeds in India by assimilating itself to the native superstitions and adopting native festivals. The *Bombay Catholic Examiner* claims that there are 1,275,000 Roman Catholics in India, besides 400,000 belonging to the Portuguese jurisdiction of Goa.

The Rev. J. R. Diggle has unfrocked himself. Ceasing to be a clergyman he is eligible for a seat in Parliament. Like one of the gentlemen in the parable, he has "married a wife," and as she has plenty of money Mr. Diggle turns his back on Jesus Christ, scorns the pulpit, looks down upon the soul-saving business, and wants to become a politician. Well, we wish him success, for he is a very able man, and has been a notable chairman of the London School Board. His principles, of course, are opposed to ours, but able men in parliament are better than duffers. But what of this text?—"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Sunday trading is occupying the attention of the clergy of Somers Town. A meeting on the subject has been held in the parish-room, Christ Church, with the Rev. P. S. O'Brien in the chair, and a resolution passed calling on the "clergy and ministers" to take "energetic measures" against the "growing evil." This is evidently a clerical move, prompted by trade motives. For our part, we think it is doomed to failure. The old fashioned Sunday has received its death blow. People are not going to work seven days a week—there is no fear of that; but the notion of everybody resting on the same day is seen to be absurd. Most people will rest on Sunday, but a minority will have to minister to public requirements then, and take their rest at another time. Let the clergy whine and wail, or grunt and thunder, to this complexion it must come at last.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday morning, June 8, at 11, Gladstone Radical Club, 22 Baroness Road, Hackney Road, E., "The Future of Labor."

Sunday evening, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, at 7.30, "Heresy at Oxford."

June 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. A. NEWCOMB sent parcels of literature to Motherwell, Wexford, Blackpool, and London. He is cleared out for the present.

W. E. W.—Cuttings are always welcome.

S. STANDRING notifies the re-opening of the Tottenham outdoor station for the summer months. Local Freethinkers are desired to sustain the enterprise, and the services of one or two earnest Freethought missionaries would be very welcome.

J. FRASER.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

QUIZ.—The pamphlet was not priced. It seems to be circulated for the author by the Ulster Secular Society.

E. PINDER.—The scoundrel is hardly worth so much space. We note the fact, however, that when sky-pilot Johnson eloped from Leicester with Mrs. James, he left "his own wife and eight children, one at the breast, quite destitute."

C. K. LAPORTE wants to know where he can obtain the *Freethinker* near Camden Square. Can any reader inform him?

J. Ross.—Yes, it does look like a new version of the Kilkenny cats story. The paragraph was not our own, but quoted from a Christian paper.

H. BORLAND.—Our compliments to the gallant little band at Dum Dum. Write to us whenever the spirit moves you. The *Truthseeker* subscription is three dollars per year; we don't know about the extra postage. Address, 28 Layfette Place, New York. The *Liberator* is threepence weekly. Address, 456 Bourke Street West, Melbourne.

E. W. OSBORNE.—See "Acid Drops."

J. BROWN, sec. N.E. Secular Federation, acknowledges the folfowing subscriptions: Newcastle Branch, 9s.; Mr. Purvis, 2s. 6d.; Gateshead collection, 1s. 5d.

W. LEMAITRE.—The extract does not specifically refer to religious superstition. In the eagerness of your Freethought you have, we think, credited the writer with more than he meant.

W. WARRY.—The "convert" you refer to was not one of the National Secular Society's lecturers nor a member of the Society. If he has found Jesus for the usual consideration, we are not at all sorry. To call this seedy, drink-sodden individual a "Secular leader" is worthy of his converter's genius.

BRANCH SECRETARIES are requested to be more careful when sending Lecture Notices. Camberwell has last week's subject for this week's lecture. Birmingham notice has no lecturer's name. Bethnal Green afternoon notice makes Mr. Marshall lecture on Mr. Moss's morning subject.

J. BURRELL.—The "extraordinary bill" is sent us about once a month. It has been printed in hundreds of papers for ever so many years. Readers are requested to note that we don't want any more copies of that bill for putting a new tail on the Devil, etc.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Morpeth Herald—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Women's Suffrage Journal—Church Reformer—Notes and Queries—Manchester Guardian—Maldon Express—Nazarene—North Western Gazette—Loyal American—South Wales Echo—Tocsin—Barnet Press—Reading Observer—Newcastle Chronicle.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £58 11s. 8d.

Seventh List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
W. Brierley	0	10	0	John and James	1	0	0
J. Brierley	0	10	0				

[Mr. Forder, who is not well, has a further list, which will be acknowledged next week.]

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening at the London Hall of Science on "Heresy at Oxford." He will deal with the volume entitled *Lux Mundi*, written by the clergy of Pusey House, who are all High Churchmen. It goes a great deal farther than the once famous *Essays and Reviews*, and is causing much excitement in orthodox circles. The Bishop of Lichfield and Archdeacon Denison have fulminated against it, and Canon Liddon has been to Oxford to counteract its influence.

The first meeting of the new N. S. S. Executive will be held on Wednesday, June 25, at the Hall of Science. Branches should appoint their members of the Council by that time. A full attendance is necessary. Very important business will have to be dealt with.

Mr. J. O'Donovan's article on the Decline of Calvinism will appear in our next number. Press of matter excludes it from the present issue.

An important meeting will be held at Manchester on Saturday evening, June 14, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme Road. Delegates are to attend from all the South Lancashire Branches of the National Secular Society for the purpose of forming a Federation for the district. Branches that have not yet appointed representatives should do so immediately. Mr. Foote will preside at the meeting.

A meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation was held on Sunday, June 1, at Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford. Arrangements were made for a monster demonstration to be held at Shipley Glen on June 8. The object is to stir up the latent Freethought of the neighborhood, and a resolution for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will be proposed. It is hoped that Freethinkers who live within reasonable distance will come and help to make it a success. —ROBERT ATKINSON.

Mr. C. J. Hunt has been winning golden opinions in the Tyneside. Mr. Brown sends us a glowing account of his tour. The open-air lectures were especially successful. At Blyth he had a long discussion with a Presbyterian minister.

Mr. Hunt's two nights lectures at Blyth are both well reported in the *Morpeth Herald*, which devotes a leaderette to the subject, in which it praises his courtesy and reflects upon his opponents.

A select concert will be held at the Battersea Secular Hall, Prince of Wales's Road, on Wednesday, June 11, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of furnishing the hall. This Branch has had to buy all new chairs, the ones previously used having been only lent; therefore the finances are in a low state. There will be an excellent entertainment, and Freethinkers who can attend, as well as those who cannot attend, should buy a ticket (sixpence), which can be obtained at the hall, or of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street.

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The *Liberator*, of Melbourne, prints in full Mr. Foote's address to the members of the National Secular Society upon being elected President.

The army Freethinkers at Dum Dum have formed a Branch of the N. S. S. It begins with twenty-two members. The promoters engaged the only available room in Dum Dum for the preliminary meeting, but the Christians threatened to starve the proprietor, and for his sake the engagement was cancelled. The meeting was finally held in the open air. This was on May 4. Afterwards the Adjutant of the Buffs called two members of the Branch before him, and told them if they held any kind of meeting in the barracks he would confine them for disobeying orders. Happily this bigoted martinet cannot touch them outside. The men are full of enthusiasm and mean business. They have ordered a parcel of literature for sale and distribution.

We can give any Branch a parcel of back numbers of the *Freethinker* for distribution at open-air meetings. Applicants should state how many they can use. The parcels must be fetched from our office.

We are issuing a new edition of James Thomson's *Satires and Profanities*. This includes all the principal pieces in the original edition; the pieces, in short, that fall most properly under the title, and that are best worth preserving. A complete reprint was financially out of the question, besides being unnecessary. The price of the new edition is one shilling. The volume includes "The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm"—that is, Jehovah, Son, and Co.; "Religion in the Rocky Mountains"—"Christmas Eve in the Upper Circles"—"The Devil in the Church of England"—and some other pieces, forming the cream of Thomson's genius in this direction.

The concluding numbers of *Bible Heroes*, so long but so unavoidably delayed, are now ready, and the Second Series will be ready in volume form next week.

Mr. Foote is engaged on a new edition of his *Bible Romances*, which has long been out of print. The first instalment, "The Creation Story," will be published on the first of July. A fresh instalment will be issued every fortnight afterwards. Much of the work is re-written and amplified, and the rest is carefully revised.

The *Jewish Chronicle* reports a lecture by the Rev. Isidore Harris at the West London Synagogue on Judaism and Christianity in relation to the Rights of Labor. Mr. Harris claims that Judaism has been more favorable to the workers than Christianity. The laws of Moses he contends mitigated slavery while Christianity at a later date confirmed it.

Freethought, of San Francisco, under the able editorship of Messrs. Macdonald and Putnam, must be doing a great deal of good out West. We are glad to see that the shares of the Freethought Publishing Company are being rapidly taken up. This means that *Freethought* has "come to stay." It is also pleasant to notice the energy of the lecture movement.

The Freethinkers of Texas will hold a Convention at Waco from July 15th to the 17th. Mr. J. D. Shaw will preside.

Dr. Voelkel, of Magdeburg, has published in a series called the *Freireligiose Hausbibliothek* an account of Thomas Paine and the *Age of Reason*.

The Bruno statue receives much admiration for its workmanship and honor for its subject, and in addition to one to Arnold de Brescia, it is also proposed to erect a monument to Pompeyo de Algeri, burnt in 1556. On this a Catholic journal says that "if the existing fanaticism continues, Rome, and indeed the entire land of Italy, bids fair to become one vast 'Rogue's Gallery' in marble, stone and bronze."

El Libre Examen is the title of a newspaper which has been started in Caracas (Venezuala), and is edited by J. M. Leon Garcia. Its object is to support and spread Freethought in Venezuala, one of the most bigoted republics in South America, and the Eldorado of skypilots.

According to the *Daily Graphic* a collection of valuable cuneiform tablets has just arrived from Babylon. They are documents of a legal, commercial, and fiscal character, varying from B.C. 2300 down to two centuries before the Christian era. One pair of tablets, dating about B.C. 2,200, reveal the curious fact that there were at that time a class of men in Babylon who obtained children to be adopted by wealthy men who had no family. These men received a regular commission from both parties.

B.C. 2,200 is about seven hundred years before Moses is supposed to have received the rudiments of civilisation from God Almighty. What a race of "stretchers" were the scribes of Palestine! Query—was it this adoption of children in in Babylon that suggested the idea of Moses being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter? Located in Egypt, where a rigid system of caste prevailed, the incident is absurd.

THE ASCENSION AND ASTRONOMY.

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."—Acts i., 9.

"We maintain that the body of Christ even after his resurrection and ascension is a true human body with all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature."—Bishop Harold Brown's *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, page 106.

It is a noteworthy sign of the times that religious magazines publish articles on scientific topics. Such articles have no effect in sustaining religious belief; they are simply inserted as a tribute to the spirit of the times—to make the serial interesting to the general reader, and thus to make it sell.

Not only are articles on science powerless to "save souls" but they are very likely to foster scepticism. To insert articles on science in a religious paper may be compared to building up a house of cards with one hand and pulling it down with the other. I was reminded of this simile when I read recently, in one of the class of magazines alluded to, an article on the Ascension and another on Astronomy.

Now, if the reflection that the ascension story is rendered ridiculous by astronomy forces itself upon the mind of one reader upon comparing these articles, the conjecture seems not unwarranted, as all sane minds are of the same general pattern, that some similar idea would suggest itself more or less strongly to the intelligence of other readers.

The thoughts aroused within my own mind by the perusal of the two articles to which I have referred I mean to state as briefly as I can, and that they make the Ascension story appear absurd and improbable—not to say impossible, for the highest authorities assure us that this is a word we should be exceedingly chary of using—will, I think, be admitted without hesitation.

The story goes that Jesus left this earth direct for heaven in his bodily form. The general style of going there is to leave the body behind, and this, of course, does not seem nearly so wonderful. This ascension, we are told, was witnessed by his disciples who gazed upwards in amazement as "a cloud received him out of their sight." The writer of the article on this subject, having discovered that clouds are merely masses of vapor and consequently unable to support a man's weight, thinks this statement so obviously incredible that he explains, "the cloud was one probably composed of angels." It does not occur to him that this cloud of angels when they left the earth's atmosphere would be unable to make use of their wings, or even to breathe; and an attempt to explain such a little matter as that of the cloud while leaving untouched other far greater difficulties is like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

Now, the word ascension, as pointing out any particular direction a body might take on leaving the earth on a journey into space, is rendered meaningless by the fact that the earth is a globe rotating on its axis round an ellipse.

If we imagine a top spinning and a microscopical insect on it endeavoring to jump off, we may form some dim notion of the difficulty Jesus would encounter on taking his departure from this earth which rotates on its axis at the rate of one thousand miles every hour; and this illustration, rough though it is, enables us to understand clearly that the direction of his journey—supposing a straight course steered—would be determined by the precise moment at which he succeeded in overcoming the earth's attraction. An error on his part to the extent of half a second would have had serious consequences, because however small the divergence between two lines—*i.e.*, the true course and the false one—may be at their commencement, the distance between them increases as they lengthen, so that, on a long voyage, a mistake, however

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small initially, would land its perpetrator a long way from his port of destination.

Assuming that Jesus made his calculations correctly, without the aid of a chronometer, sextant, or nautical almanac, for there were no such things in those days, and allowing for the fact that modern theologians, in order to explain errors in his reported utterances, allege that in taking on man's nature he also shared his ignorance, which, at the time he lived in was of the grossest kind, it yet remains to be considered how he reached heaven while there was any life in him.

On leaving the earth he is represented to have started at a somewhat moderate rate; had he put on full speed before getting out of the atmosphere, which offers considerable opposition to anybody passing through it, he would have dissolved into the elements, and vanished in a streak of flame, after the manner of a meteorite. Supposing, then, that after getting out of the earth's atmosphere he travelled at the same speed as light (one hundred and eighty six thousand miles per second) it would have taken him three years and a half to get as far as the nearest fixed star, Alpha Centauri, and, keeping up the same rate of speed, he would not have reached the farthest visible star even yet.

Great as is the speed of light, Jesus must have travelled a great deal quicker, for we are told he reached his journey's end safely and "sitteth at the right hand of God." How he kept his breath, and how he obtained food during this stupendous journey, are questions which might well puzzle the heads of theologians.

Another element of difficulty in his flight through space which has to be taken into account, as it would render futile any attempt to make use of the stars to guide him in his course, is presented by the fact that, after leaving the earth's atmosphere he would be plunged into pitch darkness, for we are instructed by physicists that waves of ether only form light when they have some state of matter to impinge against and that therefore all interstellar space is pitch dark.

These are some of the difficulties with which theologians ought to grapple, and when they have succeeded in smoothing them away, with the valuable assistance of the learned President of the Royal Society, and offered some explanation of how Jesus overcame the force of gravitation, and of the nature of the energy which rushed him through space, and also informed us of the attitude his body assumed with reference to its flight—whether, for instance, it went headlong, or feet first, sideways, or backways, or doubled up with a rotatory motion—for these details, trivial as they may appear, are essential towards forming a correct apprehension of the affair—they will then have to furnish proof that the event ever happened, for at present there is none whatever.

This most wonderful of the wonderful achievements of Jesus took place in the year A.D. 33,—1857 years ago, so that, as the sun is dragging its planets after it at the rate of 154 million miles a year, we have left the point of space from which Jesus commenced his journey about 285,978 million miles behind us; to the Christian, no doubt, a melancholy reflection, as from this fact it may be presumed that heaven lies somewhere in the same backward direction, and that we are thus ever increasing our distance from it. If the centre round which the sun moves is also changing its position, and this is inferred by astronomers, the distance mentioned may be immensely greater than I have stated it to be.

To the old Jews the Ascension story appeared easily credible because, not to speak of their superstitions on other matters, they believed the earth to be motionless, and heaven just above the firmament, *i.e.*, the blue sky overhead, which they regarded as a solid expanse with the sun and moon and stars fixed in it, and worked behind by angels. Childish, however, does the story seem when we consider that the sun, round which our little planet keeps circling, is only one of the countless million suns in the path of the Milky Way—that it is one of the smallest of them, and that each one of these suns, with which the sky appears white by reason of their innumerable multitude, most probably has its planets revolving around it similarly to the sun of our own system.

The relative insignificance of the portion of space occupied by our sun with all its planets revolving around it was well shown by Professor Norman Lockyer when lecturing recently on the meteoritic hypothesis.

A photograph of the nebulæ in Orion being reflected and magnified on a screen about twelve feet square, he remarked that the space within the orbit of the outermost planet of our solar system, represented on the reflected and magnified photograph on the screen only as large a surface as he could cover with the point of his stick. And it must be noted that the photograph had been taken by aid of the telescope, and that to the unassisted eye the part of the sky from which the entire photograph had been taken would appear no larger than a shilling piece.

Stray meteors must have presented a serious danger to Jesus in his heavenward flight, but these nebulæ, or suns in course of formation, covering such vast spaces, must have been hard indeed to "circumwent," as Mr. Weller used to say, and once within their fiery influence there would have been little chance of survival even for the great thaumaturgist himself.

J. E. Roosz.

ENCHANTING THE ROD.

Tune—"Vilikins and his Dinah."

As Moses was tending his dad-in-law's herds,
Jehovah spake to him, and these were his words:
"Don't draw too near, Moses, but pull off your shoes,
I'll give you the tip how to lead out the Jews.

"Go down and tell Pharaoh I want them let out
To cook me some lamb while green peas are about;
For since they've been captive, as he may suppose,
No sweet smelling savor has come near my nose."

"O Lord," cried poor Moses, "my speech is so slow,
I'm certain King Pharaoh will not let them go;
Besides, by the Jews I will not be believed,
They'll ask me from whom I the message received."

"What's that in thine hand?" "Why," said Moses, "a stick."
"Well, cast it down there, I'll show you a trick
I'm sure will convince the most sceptical Jew:
I am that I am gave the order to you."

Mo threw down his hazel, when lo and behold!
It became a live cobra—so we have been told—
And so frightened Moses he gave it leg bail;
But Jehovah called out, "Catch a hold of his tail."

Then Moses came back and laid hold of the snake:
The feel of its scales made him all of a shake.
"Hey, presto!" again cried this conjuring God,
When lo! in an instant 'twas once more a rod.

"You see," said Jehovah, "what excellent sport
You'll have with the wizards about Pharaoh's court;
I know he will not let the Hebrews depart,
I've taken precautions to harden his heart.

I want to impress this great truth on his mind,
That I am Jehovah, the boss of mankind—
That no other god on the earth's worth a sou:
So go tackle Pharaoh and see what I'll do."

Thus the rod was enchanted and ready to use,
And Moses trugded off to deliver the Jews;
And the tricks he performed, with the help of the Lord—
Lo! are they not written in God's Holy Word?

T. Clark.

SCHOOLBOY BLUNDERS.

The *Private Schoolmaster* prints some amusing answers given by schoolboys, for the truth of which the writer, himself a schoolmaster, vouches:—

SCRIPTURE STUDIES.

It is not perhaps generally known that "Christ appeared to two disciples as they were going to Mass," or that "Adam and Eve were tempted by the servant." A rather Irish piece of information is contained in the statement. "The only light in the Holy of Holies was darkness." "Abraham turned Ishmael out of doors because Sarah saw him trying to wean Isaac." The answer to the question, "What did Gallio do when the Apostles were brought before him?" runs as follows:—"He cut their hair, and sent them away again." When Peter saw in a vision a great sheet let down from Heaven, full of clean and unclean beasts, the directions he received were—"To clean them." "The parents of Moses, when they could no longer hide him, put him in a burning bush," with what result is not stated. "Seth was so called because he married Adam instead of Abel." "The Israelites travelling through the wilderness were fed on mammoth."

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COLONEL INGERSOLL SPEAKS.

At the nineteenth anniversary banquet of the Lotos Club, the literary club of New York, Col. Ingersoll was one of the distinguished guests. Here is a portion of his speech :—

"Sometimes I think, and especially when I am at a meeting where they have what they call reminiscences, that a world with death in it is a mistake. What would you think of a man building a railroad knowing that every passenger was to he killed—knowing that there was no escape? What would you think of the cheerfulness of the passengers if everyone knew that at some station the name of which had not been called out, there was a hearse waiting for him; backed up there, horses fighting flies, drivers whistling, waiting for you? Is it not wonderful that the passengers on that train really enjoy themselves? Is it not magnificent that everyone of these, under perpetual sentence of death, after all can dimple their cheeks with laughter; that we, everyone doomed to become dust, can yet meet around this table, as full of joy as spring is full of life, as full of hope as the heavens are full of stars? I tell you we have a good deal of pluck. And yet, after all, what would this world be without death? It may be from the fact that we are all victims, from the fact that we are all bound by common fate; it may be that friendship and love are born of that fact; but whatever the fact is, I am perfectly satisfied that the highest possible philosophy is to enjoy to day, not regretting yesterday and not fearing to-morrow. (Applause.) So, let us suck this orange of life dry, so that when death doth come we can politely say to him, 'You are welcome to the peelings. What little there was we have enjoyed.'

"But there is one splendid thing about the play called life. Suppose that when you die that is the end. The last thing you know you are alive and the last thing that will happen to you is the curtain, not falling, but the curtain rising on another thought, so that as far as your consciousness is concerned you will and must live for ever. No man can remember when he commenced and no man can remember when he ends. As far as we are concerned we live both eternities, the one past and the one to come, and it is a delight to me to feel satisfied and to feel in my own heart that I can never be certain that I have seen the faces I love for the last time. When I am at such a gathering as this I almost wish I had had the making of the world. What a world I would have made! In that world unhappiness would have been the only sin; melancholy the only crime; joy the only virtue. And whether there is another world nobody knows. Nobody can affirm it; nobody can deny it; nobody can collect tolls from me claiming that he owns a turnpike (applause), and nobody can certainly say that the crooked path that I follow, beside which many roses are growing, does not lead to that place. He does not know. But if there is such a place I hope that all good fellows will be welcome."

THE BIBLE.

We understand that this excellent work has a large sale, but on inquiry we learn that it is very seldom read, and that it is principally used for making entries of births, marriages and deaths. This is a pity, as it gives away your eldest daughter when a probable match calls and turns over the leaves of the family Bible, and sees her real age knocking about. Some of the narratives in this very ingenious compilation are calculated to effect considerable good, but we have some hesitation about recommending it for perusal by a mixed class of young men and young women. Certainly, if this work were more generally read, we should all be better than we are, but as most of us yearn to be much worse, we are filled up with grave fears that this estimable book will go on increasing in sale without being read any more. Some of the lessons taught are very sublime, and we rather like the idea of Abraham going up the mountain to burn up his son Isaac. We quite sympathise with Abraham. We know what these young Jews are. There is also a pleasant story of King David taking a fancy to another gentleman's wife, and getting him killed in order that he (the King) might enjoy the lady's society without the fear of a divorce court citation. The expedient seems unnecessary to our modern minds, which take their impressions from what is proceeding in fashionable society. Despite this defect, however, we have no hesitation in recommending a more extensive perusal of this noble book.
—*Sporting Review.*

CREEDS.

This is the age of revision. Churches are all hurrying to catch up with the world. There is a desire to square ideas with facts, and shape beliefs with knowledge. Religion must suffer in this process. Something will be lost, but only what is bad, false and wrong. Creeds are out of date. They are behind the times. They are the dead leaves from the tree of knowledge, the dead branches on the tree of life. The world's faith is in the living; in the bud, the blossom, the promise of things—not in the husk, the shell, in dead and useless things.

New creeds are to take the place of old ones, What people believe now, not what people believed hundreds or thousands of years ago, must be put into a confession of faith. For a man to profess what his father and mother believed is to make birth useless and existence valueless. We are to live to add to life, not to repeat it. Is theology the only thing that people believe? Is religion the only thing that people put their trust in? A theological creed has to be accepted with the eyes shut. We want a creed of the heart, of the head, of the senses, of the whole man. There is no theology worth believing in. The creed of the Church is a gravestone.

If we were to make a creed for the world of man to accept we would make it out of human hearts. We would go where a man had helped another; where a woman had sat beside the sick and suffering; where man had been crucified for being true, where he had been burned for being honest; where he had stood against the world protesting against its wrongs and proclaiming the right, and where he had fallen with a martyr's crown upon his forehead; and we would write these into a creed, and have man say: I believe in men and women who have led good lives, who have taken the unfortunate by the hand and lifted up the fallen, who have pardoned a woman's fault, who have showed their love of truth by being true, and who have done right even when they were wronged for so doing.

The grandest life is the grandest creed; and if man's faith was faith in what has made the world better and brighter and happier, he would be better off than by believing in a God that is cruel, unjust and unkind, and in a heaven where the highest joy is found in laughing at those who are in hell.
—*Boston Investigator.*

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Mrs. Lonomens, who was seven years at the Court of Siam, says that on one occasion she read some of the Gospels to these royal ladies. We may be pretty sure it wasn't about cursing the fig-tree, more probably the sermon on the mount. They were delighted. "Why, he is just like Buddha," they said; "suppose you call Christ Buddha and we will call Buddha Christ!" On another occasion an ascetic heard her read from the high water mark of New Testament literature, Paul's words on Charity, 1 Cor. xiii., "Though I give my body to be burned," etc. "Ye know not the meaning of your great Teacher," he said "Soon I shall pass on to Nirvâna, but the ashes of my unworthy body are to be scattered on the land of the poor and needy to enrich it; and yet, as he saith, even that is nothing without illimitable love." The Dhammapada utters a similar sentiment. It has been conjectured that Paul had heard of the Hindu ascetics who gave their body to be burned, but is it not just possible that the famous discourse on charity itself originally emanated from India where this reference would be most natural?

PROFANE JOKES.

A printer, in setting up "All are but parts of one stupendous whole," by mistake of a letter made it read: "All are but parts of one stupendous whale!"

At a Jewish School.—Teacher: "What fault did Joseph's brothers commit in selling him?" Smart boy: "Please sir, I know, sir. They sold him *too cheap.*"

Little girl (looking at a one-legged man)—"Oh, mamma! Where was he made?" Mother: "Made in Heaven, my dear." Little girl: "Why don't he go back and get finished?"

Little Viola: "Mama won't oo tum up an' sit wid me till I dit aseep?" Mamma: "Mama's busy, darling, and can't come now. Run back to bed, my pet, the angels are with you." Viola: "Dat's wat oo said before, mama, but the angels didn't show up an' I's lonesome."

A refractory youngster was being sharply rebuked by his mother for his numerous transgressions. "Harry, Harry," she exclaimed, "if you behave in that way you will worry your father and mother to death; and what will you do without any father and mother?" "The Lord is my shepherd," said the small boy; "I shall not want.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "The English Language and the Confusion of Tongues."

Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "Christianity and Civilisation" (free). Monday (at 8), social evening. Wednesday, select concert. Thursday, committee meeting. Friday, discussion.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, 7.30, a members' meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Biography."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. T. Garner, "Life's Duty from a Freethought Point of View."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Heresy at Oxford."

West Ham — 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, the President, "Labor: its Condition and Redemption."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. Norrish, "The Teachings of Christ."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Sinful Saints and Sensual Shepherds."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Civilisation and Progress."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Why Christianity is Dying."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Is the Bible a Civilising Power?"

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Good and Evil."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Christian Evidences. June 11, at 8, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Barbarities."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Faith or Freedom."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Working Men in Parliament."

Old Southgate - On the Green, 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "An Atheist's View of Right and Wrong."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Why I am a Secularist."

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 11, Mr. J. Marshall will lecture.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Life and Character of Christ."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent; lectures, 11, "Can Christ Atone for the Sins of Men?"; 3, "Theosophy or Materialism?"; 7, "Christianity and Women."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, special meeting, for consideration of the report of Conference.

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street — 7, Mr. Haslam, "Knowledge versus Beliefs."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, "Creation and Evolution."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, meeting of Sunday Music League. On Newcastle Town Moor, 6.30, first concert of season by band, under the leadership of Mr. Wood.

Sheffield - Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, excursion to Rotherham Park; members and friends meet at Midland Station, train starts at 2 p.m.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, yearly meeting and election of officers.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — June 8 (morning), Bethnal Green, (evening), Camberwell; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 15, Birmingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 8, Manchester; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 8 (morning), Wood Green; 15 (morning and evening), Battersea; 22 (morning), Camberwell. July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MR. GLADSTONE ON THE FALL OF MAN.

(CONCLUDED.)

WHAT is sin? That must be answered before we discuss redemption. Mr. Gladstone calls it "a departure from the will of God." Later on he describes it more fully as "a deviation from the order of nature, a foreign element not belonging to the original creation of Divine design, but introduced into it by special causes."

But how came man to depart from the will of God? How can there be a departure from the order of nature? Who introduced a foreign element into God's creation? What special causes lie outside the sphere of Omnipotence? To say that man's free-will "frustrated" God's "attempt" is to say that God did not foresee the result of his own action, or that he deliberately endowed man with a faculty that would lead him astray. "Foreign element" and "special causes" are polite circumlocutions for the Devil. But who made the Devil? The only answer is—God. Finally, therefore, the Christian has to face these dilemmas. Either God can stop the Devil or he cannot. If he cannot he is not all-powerful, if he will not he is not all-good. Either God knew the Devil would pervert Adam or he did not. If he did not he is deficient in foresight, if he did he had no right to be angry at the inevitable.

Mr. Gladstone speaks of "the revolt of man's lower nature against its higher elements." How came there to be "lower elements" in a divine production? Higher and lower can only be explained by evolution. The lower is the blind animal passion inherited from our brutish progenitors. The higher is the governing reason and conscience developed in countless ages of social growth.

With regard to the story of the Fall of Man in Genesis, Mr. Gladstone takes a position commonly called sitting on the fence. He "deals with it as a parable," but adds "I do not mean to make on my own part any definite surrender of the form as it stands." But the Fall is either history or romance. There can be no medium. If it be a parable it is absurd to talk of it as a fact. If it be a fact it is idle to talk of it as a parable.

Adam and Eve are placed in the garden. They are the work of an Omniscient Designer, but they are incapable of knowing good from evil. They cannot appreciate a moral code. God "has laid upon them a law of obedience." Like stupid, wilful parents he says "Don't do that, because I tell you not to." He does not give them a comprehensive view of their duties to each other. His law is "simply a rule of feeding and not feeding." He governs them through their stomachs. What a noble view of our first parents! What a tribute to the wisdom and goodness of God!

The law of obedience involves the law of punishment. In eating what he is told not to—that is, in gratifying the appetite God gave him—man becomes "a rebel," and is justly punished as such. But is there any justice in the case? Is not everything arbitrary? Man does what his nature instigates, and God chooses to chastise him. God is witness, counsel, judge, and executioner, and gives penal servitude for life for a first offence.

Mr. Gladstone wastes his time in trying to show the similarity of punishment and consequence. One is arbitrary, the other is natural. If I put my hand in the fire, it burns me. That is consequence. It is indifferent to morality. There is no discrimination. The hand may be an honest man's or a scoundrel's. If I think for myself under the Inquisition I am burnt at the stake. That is punishment. The two may run parallel, but they have no connection. If I steal I injure my fellow men and debase my own nature. That is consequence. If I am found out I am sent to prison. That is punishment.

Adam and Eve did not injure each other, nor did they injure God. Consequently they did not sin. A child does not sin in eating what he is told not to, unless he knows he is stealing or depriving someone else of food. He means no harm, and the action does not deteriorate his nature. Is it not absurd, then, to affirm that God's treatment of Adam and Eve is "in accordance with the laws of a grand and comprehensive philosophy"? Mr. Gladstone says that sceptical objections to the Fall are "the product of narrower and shallower modes of thought." We reply that his "grand and comprehensive philosophy" overlooks the most obvious facts.

Mr. Gladstone calls the Fall "a gigantic drama." It seems to us a petty farce. The people who lived in the ages of Miracle Plays took it seriously, but what educated man of the present age—unless he keeps a dark room for theology in his brain—can regard it without smiling? Of course imagination can make anything gigantic. It can turn a white rag into a ghost, or a donkey's head into the Devil. But imagination is powerless to exaggerate when you see the objects as they are.

Mr. Gladstone's imagination tells him that the Fall "wisely teaches us to look to misused free-will as the source of all sin, and of all the accompanying misery." It is rather cool to assert this in the face of St. Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin; in face of the Church of England Articles and the Westminster Confession of Faith. If an unbeliever treated the Bible in this way, putting his own private interpretation on every text, heedless of the settled interpretation of the Churches, Mr. Gladstone would stigmatise him as ignorant or insolent. We do not say a man has no right to his private interpretation. We claim it for him. But we say that when he is opposed to a great historic school of interpretation he is bound to give his reasons. This Mr. Gladstone avoids. He simply dogmatises. The proper answer, therefore, is to defy him to show a single allusion to free-will in the story of the Fall, or a single text in favor of free-will from Genesis to Revelation.

Let us follow Mr. Gladstone still further. "The original attempt," he writes, "to plant a race upon our planet who should be endowed with the faculty

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of free-will, but should always direct that will to good, had been frustrated through sin." How this happened, or how it could happen if God were all-wise and all-powerful, is not explained. Mr. Gladstone introduces "sin" as though it were an entity. Sin is a quality of actions. To make "sin" the cause of actions is an absurdity. The ultimate question is—*why* did Adam go wrong? To that question Mr. Gladstone never addresses himself.

God's "original attempt" having been "frustrated"—somehow, by somebody—the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the universe set about a remedy. His operations were so slow that, fifteen hundred years afterwards, the world was so hopelessly corrupt that he lost patience and drowned the lot, with the exception of eight persons, not one of whom was worth saving. Afterwards the Almighty began to work in a small way. He chose the most insignificant people on earth, visited them occasionally, and gave them a little heavenly illumination. Why he chose the Jews is a mystery. Mr. Gladstone admits the choice was not what reason would expect. It was not made on moral grounds. The Jews were distinctly inferior to the primitive Greeks, as Mr. Gladstone proves at considerable length. And finally, when the Redeemer came, after nearly two thousand years of preparation, the chosen people crucified him between two thieves, as a warning to other gentleman in the same line of business. Nay more, after the Redemption has been actively operating for another two thousand years, there is still "a preponderance of moral evil in the world." Thus the Almighty and Omniscient God is able to make a world and pronounce it "good," but utterly unable to keep it good, or to repair it when it falls out of order. Indeed the longer he tries to improve it the worse it gets. All this is asserted or implied in Mr. Gladstone's argument. It is a queer compliment to God, and a flat contradiction to his attributes. Either God is very weak, or the Devil is very strong, or man is very "cussed." We leave Mr. Gladstone to say which. Meanwhile we must observe that his exposition and vindication of the story of the Fall is a shocking example of how devotion to an inherited creed will make even a great man wallow in absurdity. Tycho Brahe, the great astronomer, kept an idiot, and watched his lips for words of inspiration. Mr. Gladstone, the great statesman, finds infinite wisdom in an old Jewish story, which is less moral and entertaining than "Jack the Giant-Killer."

G. W. FOOTE.

WHAT IS EVIL?

Dr. Farrar in his reply to Colonel Ingersoll, alludes to the existence of evil as a mystery. The existence of evil. In the first place, what is this existence? or rather what is *evil*? Has a satisfactory definition ever been given? It is difficult to say, for one may satisfy one person, and another satisfy another.

Now here is a definition, which, though rather negative than positive seems to be fairly satisfactory to my mind:—Evil consists of the act or totality of acts of non-conformity with the civil and moral laws of the country. If this definition be true the existence of evil is no longer a mystery. For what is the intention of these laws? For what purpose were they made? If a person exerts his mind a little, he can trace them all down to the one object of restraining man's natural desires.

For what man is there, who on seeing something that he wants is not affected by the desire to obtain it? This is his first impulse—irrespective of *how* he is to gain his desired end. Thus a man of not very high principles—and there are thousands, nay millions in the world—would set to work to form some plan by means of which he can gain his end. And this plan would in 99 cases out of a 100 be *unfair*—in fact it might in the end come to stealing. Of course these remarks only refer to the above mentioned *unprincipled* men.

Thus one law has been traced to the object of restraining man's desires, and it is quite easy to trace all laws whatsoever to the same object. Thus Dr. Farrar's "mystery" vanishes.

C. W. KENNAWAY.

FALSE CHRISTS.

"For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect."—MATT. XXIV., 24.

WHEN quite a boy it struck me as curious that after the genuine Messiah had come, performed wonderful works and risen from the dead, other false Christs and false prophets should arise deceiving many. Now the matter seems simple. Such passages indicate that they were written after several of the said Christs had appeared, and probably because non-Christians pointed to the notorious fact that there were other Christs than Jesus of Nazareth of whom great signs and wonders were alleged.

In the East prophecy has ever been an important factor in bringing about political results. The Indian Mutiny was vastly aided by a prophecy that British rule should terminate in a hundred years from the battle of Plassy. The Jews, always in subjection, longed for and therefore prophesied a redeemer, a king who should conquer and rule over their enemies and enable them to dwell in peace and plenty, each under his own vine and fig-tree, none making him afraid. Demand regulates supply in Messiahs as much as in minerals. When the Jews sought to throw over the Roman yoke, a crop of Christs sprung up like mushrooms after a shower. A number of delirious fanatics started in the prophetic business, found favor for a while in the credulity of the people, and in some cases left followers to perpetuate their fame. It seems certain that John, known as the Baptist, was one of these. One of the most suggestive things in the Acts of the Apostles is the fact that the disciples of St. John apparently had heard no more of Jesus than of the Holy Ghost (Act xix., 2).

Little more than thirty years after the alleged death of Jesus and the supernatural wonders attending that event, the Jews knew so little that their Messiah had come that they were still expecting him, and, as Josephus observes, what most animated them in undertaking war against the Romans was an ambiguous oracle how about that time one of their country should become governor of the whole world. Previously the Pharisees had persuaded Pheroras, Herod's brother, that he was the predicted king. This priestly Messianic conspiracy was quenched in blood by Herod. As there were six thousand Pharisees engaged in it, besides influential court people, this is likely enough; but it is very improbable that Herod should be alarmed by the prophecy by Magi of the birth of a child, and that when he did not find the child he should slay all the children in Bethlehem "and in all the coasts thereof," from two years of age and under, without one word of notice from the Jewish historian. Possibly the historic bloodshed gave rise to the gospel legend.

Josephus (*Wars* vi., v., 2) says there were many false prophets, and (in the next section) tells particularly of one Jesus, the son of a plebeian, who cried, "A voice from the east a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice from the holy house, a voice against the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This Jesus persisted in proclaiming woe to Jerusalem, though scourged till his bones were laid bare, till at last a stone from a catapult killed him. There have not been wanting those who have found the original of Jesus of Nazareth in this cranky prophet. This view was, in part at least, adopted by Mr. Richard Proctor, and is argued in a work on the *Jesus of History* by George Solomon.

In his *Antiquities* (bk. XX., ch. 8, § 6) Josephus tells how these impostors or fanatics "persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders

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and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God."

One of the most notable and earliest of these Christs was the founder of the Galilean sect, which arose in the first decade of the Christian era. Judas, their leader, sought to revive the tradition of a theocracy and re-establish the kingdom of God. He was a religious teacher as well as a revolutionist, and taught that men should regard God as their only ruler. Josephus says of his followers: "They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor, indeed, do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord." Origen tells us Judas was regarded as the Messiah. Basnage says: "The Romans sent some forces against Judas and he perished miserably." It is just possible his fate was the same as that of his two sons, James and Simon, who were crucified A.D. 47.

Another false prophet mentioned by Josephus was Theudas (*Antiq.*, book xx., chap. 5, § 6). Like other fanatics of the period, he persuaded a multitude to follow him. He pretended they would be able to cross the Jordan as on dry land, but the Roman procurator Fadus sent a troop of horsemen against them, and they were killed, taken prisoners and scattered. Theudas himself was beheaded. The compiler of the Acts of the Apostles alludes to Theudas (v. 36), but makes a mistake, placing him before the time of Judas of Galilee, whereas Fadus was procurator of Judæa in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, a generation afterwards. Josephus places the event in its due chronological order, and from his official position could hardly make a mistake of thirty years in regard to an outbreak which took place in his own lifetime. But the Acts compiler in the latter part of the second century mixed up matters without regard to the order of time.

J. M. WHEELER.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE DECLINE OF CALVINISM.

THE good city of Edinburgh was invaded by crowds of the clergymen and elders of the Established and Free Churches during the last week of May. Usually, the "Assemblies" of the these gentlemen are not of an interesting character; and as far as the Established Church is concerned the Assembly this year was no exception to the general rule. It was different, however, with the Free Church Assembly. That body of pious Calvinists had a lively time of it, and the deliberations and decisions of its members, besides being interesting in themselves, are likely to be productive of far-reaching and momentous results. For orthodox Calvinism was on its trial; and it emerged from the ordeal in a very battered and shaken condition. This, at least, is the opinion of the responsible part of the Scottish Press, and I have no reason to doubt that the Press in this instance hold views substantially in harmony with the opinions of the people generally.

Before proceeding to deal with the subject proper, I may be pardoned if I refer to one or two matters of interest connected with the Edinburgh Assemblies. I take the following pretty little story from the *Dundee People's Journal*, of the 31st May; and as it speaks for itself comment is needless:—

"It is generally understood among the more irreverent that occasionally one or two of the ministers who come to Edinburgh for the Assemblies indulge after the manner of the schoolboy in high jinks. On Tuesday, about midnight, a clergyman, wrapped in a huge ulster that completely concealed his "black," and hailing from a quiet little Ayrshire town, lost his way in the Grange district. He had too evidently been on the spree, and persisted in ringing every bell he came across, and asking in a tone that would have been melancholy had it not been maudlin, if he lodged there. Eventually his vagaries attracted the attention of the police, and they interviewed him. His assumption of drunken dignity when he realised with whom he had foregathered was ludicrous in the extreme. The policemen when they found that it was a cleric who had fallen into their hands chaffed him, until, in a funereal tone, he remonstrated, and said it was going too far to joke on serious subjects. After some discussion, a dim recollection of the whereabouts of his lodgings dawned on the erring shepherd, and a friendly policeman saw him to bed." [Which the "friendly policeman" would not have done if the offender was a fustian-clad Irishman from the Cowgate].

The other matter to which I will refer has reference to the Free Church Committee's report on Religion and Morals. This report is not at all satisfactory from the point of view of its compilers; and to outsiders it is an eloquent confession of failure on the part of the narrow-minded "men of God" who have been endeavoring to keep the people of Scotland in darkness. The Committee is very much grieved at the decline of respect for the "Sabbath." Sabbath pleasure-seeking, it seems, prevails to a large and increasing extent. In Argyleshire, for example, people actually walk and drive on the Sabbath; while in other places they go on excursions by road and rail. This is very sad; but matters are even worse. "Tourists travelling on the Sabbath" are a great nuisance in Ross-shire; but, as the *People's Journal* remarks, the people of that country "make a protest in the name of religion and morals by charging the Sunday tourists double prices for anything they may want on that sacred day." As a further evidence of the manner in which religion in Scotland has failed dismally to improve the morals of the people, it is remarked in the report that Wigtown-shire holds "the place of degradation and shame" in the matter of illegitimate children; while in Shetland "courtship" among the young folk is not at all godly. In Edinburgh people even read for amusement on "Fast" and Sabbath days. All this makes the Freethinker smile at the childishness of these pious humbugs, while it makes him rejoice that the people of Scotland, as far at least as the observance of Sunday is concerned, have grown to be a little more sensible than they were when they punished men for whistling on the Sacred Day.

Disrespect for the Sabbath is a sign that Calvinism is on the decline; but it is not *that* I had on my mind when I gave this article its title. I meant the title to refer to the trial for "Heresy" which Professor Bruce, of the Free Church College, had to undergo before the Assembly. The Professor, it appears, is a capable, learned man, who writes very well, and who has done good work on behalf of his Church. Recently, however, he has shown an inclination to think for himself; and in his book, "The Kingdom of God," he has given expression to opinions that have agitated the Free Church to its very foundations.

From some of Professor Bruce's remarks in his book it would seem that he thinks that Christ was no more than a great original genius, and that he was not at all of that divinely perfect and infallible character that religious folk affect to believe. Of course this pill, so to speak, is dexterously coated over with the usual pious phrases, more distinguished by sound than sense. His remarks on this heading, however, would scarcely lead to his indictment for Heresy, as they are of too unpronounced a character. With the Gospels he is more precise and unmistakeable in his tone, and it is for his criticisms of Luke and John that the attack has been made upon him.

As for the Gospel according to Luke, the Professor says that that party cannot be relied upon, as he evidently went the length of actual suppressions and alterations in his writings, being apparently more desirous of saying what would serve the cause of infant Christianity rather than what was the strict truth. As for John, Professor Bruce looks upon him as a fraud who mixed up Christ's teachings and his own bigoted reflections, and called the mixture the doctrines and history of Christ.

These are dangerous notions for a Free Church College Professor to hold. Their patent meaning is that the inspiration theory as generally accepted is absurd. If it is once admitted that a portion of the

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Gospels is not "inspired," people will be inquiring what portion *is* inspired, and how the inspired can be distinguished from the non-inspired portion? No wonder that the Scotch clergymen were excited over the matter, and that they brought Professor Bruce to task for his heresy, for heresy it unquestionably is.

Writing on the debates on this case, and on a less important heresy case, the *Edinburgh Evening News*, of the 30th May says:—"The intelligent foreigner, if present in the Free Assembly yesterday, would have concluded from the debates that he had got in among a company of Freethinkers, who were desperately trying to make themselves believe that they were believers." And the same journal makes another remarkable admission when it says, regarding the difference between the churches:—"Unless the churches reach unanimity in the essentials of religion, they will lose their influence over plain people as they have already lost their hold upon the intellect of the day."

When the question of Professor Bruce's Heresy came to be voted upon, the heretic had a majority of 155 votes in his favor, out of a house of 629. This means that 302 of his fellow religious leaders are at one with him on the matter of inspiration. And this being so, where is the matter to stop short? Surely, when the majority within the Church declares in favor of such heretical notions, the time must be at hand when the "Confession of Faith" must undergo very considerable alterations. And the disturbance that will be caused by these alterations will inevitably drive many of the honest Free Churchmen along the road to Freethought, on which it is evident they have already entered when they have declared against the very doctrines for which their fathers dared so much.

Commenting on the decision in the Bruce case, the *People's Journal* says that "Antiquated superstition has been effectively disclaimed by the Free Church." And the same paper says: "The doctrines of damnation according to Calvin have too long held sway over us, but there are signs that the day of deliverance has come at last." Let us hope so.

From all these facts and opinions it is safe to conclude that Calvinism has entered on its decline in these countries, as it has already done in America. In truth, it is about time that this hideous superstition, with its degrading doctrines of hell and damnation, went the way of all superstitions. The wonder is that its tenets did not long ago drive those born into the creed into revolt, and that it was reserved for our own day to bring forth men who have manliness enough to be ashamed of its teachings.

J. O. Donovan.

MOMENTOUS QUESTIONS.

Some of the questions discussed by the scholastics in the middle ages savored of heresy. The famous query as to how many angels could dance on the point of a needle was probably propounded by a sceptic. So too with such conundrums as

> Whether angels in going from place to place
> Move over the intermediate space?

Then there was the famous question whether God could make another God like unto himself? and a similar one, if he could become a cucumber or a black-beetle as readily as a man? These were surely the suggestions of wicked sceptics. Such conundrums as whether God could make a harlot into a virgin, and the dispute as to the way in which the Virgin Mary was impregnated were doubtless the outcome of the morbid minds of celibate monks. Protestants ridicule such controversies, but their own disputes as to justification, election, baptism, future punishments, etc. are equally profitless and absurd.—Lucianus.

A little parson preached in a high pulpit. His two little eyes appeared just above the cushion. His morning text was: "Be of good cheer, it is I be not afraid." In the afternoon he stood on a foot-stool and announced his text: "A little while ye shall see me; again a little while ye shall not see me." The foot-stool slipped during the discourse and he verified his text.

ACID DROPS.

Much as we hate police tyranny, we confess to a certain grim pleasure in reading how Monro's lambs chivvied some of the pious demonstrators against the publicans. Hugh Price Hughes himself (dreadful thought!) was hustled about. When the Radicals and Socialists were batoned away from Trafalgar Square these gentlemen uttered no protest. Now they are suffering from the same tyranny, and we are rather glad to see them feel the rod they helped to pickle.

A wealthy Radical of the old philosophical school, who is still living though long out of public life, used to say that Secular Societies were the only ones that really admitted the equality of the sexes, for they made no distinction of sex in their membership, their committees, or their advocacy. Some day or other this will be recognised at its full worth. Meanwhile Freethinkers will be glad to join in the chorus of congratulation on the success of Miss Fawcett at Cambridge. But they will not lose their heads; they will not talk cant; they will just stand upon their old principle of the right for the right's sake. And as they always admitted, not only in theory but in practice, the natural rights of women, so now they will as loyally refrain from befooling them—a trick which is only the old male impudence turned inside out. "Women," says a gushing writer in the *Star*, "have measured themselves against men in the toughest intellectual contests, and proved themselves the stronger." Stuff and nonsense! Cant and humbug! Examinations are not the stiffest intellectual contests. The ability to learn and the ability to do are very different. The stiff intellectual contest really comes in the world of practice. There women have not proved themselves stronger than men, and it is unlikely that they ever will. Surely the best women will not thank those who offer them honied lies. One good result of the mental elevation of women is that it will compel men to be more sincere with them.

The *Irish Catholic Times* gives "Full Details" of the apparition of Our Lady of Dolours at Castelpetroso, Italy. The apparition, it seems, showed herself to a peasant woman in this remote district over two years ago, and the account is now published under ecclesiastical approbation, although it is carefully said that "The apparition has not yet received the solemn approbation of the Holy See."

The mother of God appeared at first to a shepherdess in a cavern on the mountain side. Seven swords is is said pierced her heart, her eyes with tears were raised to heaven. As there was a brilliant light, we may imagine there was perhaps a priest with a magic lantern behind the scene. At any rate thousands were led to believe in the story, a priest and a bishop were found who asserted that they too had seen Our Lady of Dolours. The tale is ratified by diocesan authority, and a miraculous cure of a boy born deaf and dumb is reported.

Living people, among them the cashier of a bank at Naples, are found ready to attest the truth of this miraculous occurrence. But what Protestant will believe in it, although he pins his faith to miracles which happened farther off and much longer ago without any equal amount of testimony?

Thunderstorms in the west of the United States have done much damage. There has also been much destruction of property and life through lightning. The *Two Worlds* argues that such events indicate this is a probation for another life, thus supporting one hypothesis, that of an all-perfect ruler of events by another, that of immortality. Will it now answer why a being who permits evil in this life should not continue to permit it in another one?

One of God's houses, a Primitive Methodist affair in Southport, caught fire on Monday. The organ was destroyed and the whole building gutted. Of course the place was insured. There isn't faith enough knocking about to trust the Lord entirely, even in regard to his own gospel-shops.

Mr. Denison, churchwarden of St. Michael's, Woburn-on-Surds, fell back dead during divine service last Sunday. Father Mostyn, of Birkenhead, is dangerously ill with blood poisoning, the effect of pricking his hand with a poisonous plant while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

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The Rev. Mr. Kneist, vice-president of the General Synod of the Reformed Lutheran Church in America, was seized with paralysis during divine service at Philadelphia on Sunday, and died in his pew. The incident is perfectly natural, but how the religious press would improve the occasion if anything of the kind happened in a Secular hall. We should be treated to something like this :—"On Sunday evening the hand of God struck consternation into the infidels at the Hall of Science. During a most blasphemous passage in a lecture by their most reckless speaker, a vice-president of their Society was seen to drop off his seat and fall in a heap on the floor. He was picked up insensible and expired in the arms of his supporters. This shocking occurrence will be regarded as a judgment by everyone who fears God. Even the infidels are terribly staggered, and those who are not irrecoverably lost will no doubt be turned from the path of sin by this providential warning."

The Sydney *Argus* of May 6 prints a letter from Constable Willshire to his superiors at Port Augusta about the arrogance and cruelty of missionaries at Finke River. These servants of Christ preach the Gospel with whips and revolvers, and sometimes show their Christian charity by chaining up a native to broil in the sun.

Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, Ward Beecher's successor, wonders at Ingersoll's lack of vision. Ingersoll says he sees nothing of any value to mankind in Genesis. Dr. Abbott refers him to the beautiful stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, with their exquisite moral lessons. Well, those "beautiful stories" are analysed in *Bible Heroes*. They strike a Freethinker as not too edifying. There are better "moral lessons" in any good modern novelist, and infinitely better in Shakespeare.

Dr. Abbott tells of a pigeon that flew into a naturalist's room on a stormy night, and flew out again when it cleared up. The naturalist did not hurt it. He was a Christian. Another pigeon, on another stormy night, flew into an unbeliever's room, and the unbeliever had pigeon pie for supper. Fancy such anecdotage as this coming from the first pulpit in New York! Why on earth doesn't the Lord give his champions a little sense?

Rev. Dr. Cuyler, of New York, speaks of "the ribald assaults of Ingersoll." As a matter of fact, in the late discussion, Ingersoll has been the polite debater. All the impertinence and offensiveness has come from his opponents.

TO CANON FARRAR.

If that philosopher you scold and spurn,
Should deign indifference from his mood to sunder,
Ah, Canon Farrar, you might shortly learn
What broadsides Cannon Ingersoll could thunder!

—*Edgar Fawcett.*

Poor old Archdeacon Denison is declared by the *Christian World* to be in "a state of doleful dumps" For our part, we think he is both honest and logical. He declares "it is not 'intellectual freedom' that is the salt of faith; nay, it has been from the first, and will be to the last, the poison of it." This is quite true. Those who introduce reason into faith are introducing a solving power, which acts upon it as water acts upon salt. The *Christian World* itself is helping to destroy Christianity.

Dr. Momerie, the Foundling chaplain, goes too far even for the *Christian World*. It takes him to task for branding Luther's doctrine of salvation by faith as "the most vile doctrine with which the world was ever cursed," and asks him whether he is not "playing into the hands of the Atheist party."

According to Dr. Parker, men should pray more and discuss less. A capital recipe—for the pulpit!

We have read some of Parker's prayers, and we prefer the braying of a good honest jackass. They are full of twaddle and affectation. If God hears them he must be thoroughly sick. There ought to be a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Gods.

The *Belfast Weekly Star* attacks Mr. C. J. Hunt as behind the times, because when asked who supported the ideas he attacked he said St. Agustine. The *B. W. S.* ought to know that St. Augustine is one of the most eminent authorities that could be cited to the large mass of the inhabitants of Ireland.

A well-known Chinese physician having died in New York, his funeral was attended by most of his compatriots in that city. Christian civilisation was evinced by a shower of brickbats which followed the cortège from the house to the cemetery. A Chinaman wrote to the *New York Herald* that "Especially in good Brooklyn, the city of eloquent preachers and expensive churches, every carriage was hooted at and stoned both to and from the cemetery by children, and young men in some instances." The saying, "Let the dead bury the dead," like that of of hating father and mother, has always stood in the way of the reception of Christianity by the Chinese. The conduct of the New York Christian hoodlums must induce them still further to detest a faith they regard as barbarous and unnatural.

American papers strain the thing a bit at times in their efforts at acting squarely and honestly. The *Christian Witness*, of New York, being a bit short of copy the other day ran in the ten commandments. Now a lot of other semi-religious journals are reprinting them under the heading, "Pearls of Thought," crediting them to the *Witness*.

At a meeting of the Sabbath Alliance at Edinburgh, the Rev. Dr. Gibson, of Perth, deplored the fact that on the Lord's Day well-dressed crowds filled the streets and country road—"people who had plenty of opportunity of enjoying the fresh air every day in the week," and who appear to find it good to get a little also on the Sabbath. Shocking! Guid God, what is puir auld Scotland coming to?

AN ANSWERED PRAYER.

"OH, where have you been, my pretty maid?"
"To the morning service, sir," she said.

"Did you enjoy it, my pretty maid?"
"I did, indeed, kind sir," she said.

"And what was the text, my pretty maid?"
"I didn't hear it, sir," she said.

"And what did they sing, my pretty maid?"
"I cannot tell you, sir," she said.

"Then why did it please you, my pretty maid?"
"My prayer was answered there," she said.

"And what was the answer to your prayer?"
"Mine was the prettiest bonnet there."

The serenity of the Conference of the South-Eastern Church Alliance at Eastbourne was disturbed by a violent attack by the Rev. W. Phelps on the method of preaching in the street in canonicals, adopted by the Rev. A. J Robinson, whom he compared to one of the Aunt Sallies at which people threw sticks. Mr. Phelps's remarks were received with hisses.

A working man who has had some experience of invitations to church, says: "When you pay your pew-rent it is 'Come to Jesus,' but as soon as you fail to shell out it is 'Go to the Devil.'"

The question of the right of theatres, music-halls, etc., at Sydney to have sacred concerts on the Sunday has been brought before the law courts, the proprietors contending that the English law is obsolete in New South Wales. The judges' decision is reserved. In any case the right of public meeting is maintained by the Secularists in Sydney as elsewhere.

The movement for revising the Presbyterian creeds in America proves to have unexpected strength, and the conservative party are taken aback. They will probably have to give up reprobation, but they fondly hope to be able to retain election and eternal damnation.

A saloon man has been found in Washington who closes his place with prayer. His application for renewal of license having been rejected on the ground that his place bore a bad name, he appeared before the commissioner in his own behalf. In reply to the question, "Do you shut up

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promptly at midnight ?" he answered: "When ten minutes to twelve comes, I kneel down, say my prayers and shut up" Drinking in such a place as this man keeps must be very much like partaking of the sacrament.—*Freethought.*

The Education Department of Japan has decided to compile a text-book of morals from Confucius as the best in the market. "We hope," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "they will soon learn the superiority of Christ's morals." No doubt. When they learn to give to thieves, and turn their cheeks to the smiter, they will soon be exploited by the Britisher, who calls that stuff divine with his tongue in his cheek.

Spare the rod and spoil the child is the moral of a lady's article in the *Christian Commonwealth.* She tells us naively how she gave baby his first blow, and doesn't see that she took a short cut for want of patience. The admission of such an article, which is unsigned and in a sense editorial, shows the natural tendency of Christian ethics. God punishes *his* children, and we should punish ours. Rare old Ben Jonson struck a higher note, writing to a father on the education of his son—"And from the rod or ferule I would have him free, as from the menace of them; for it is both deformed and servile."

Canon Wilberforce has been airing a story—one of the good old sort; O how often we have heard it before! yet it only happened "last week"—of a good young man among "scoffing sceptical friends" who "challenged him to kneel down and pray," and he did so, and "silent and thoughtful they left him without a word." But why not go the whole hog? Why not add that they were all converted on the spot? 'Tis a pity to spoil the dish for a hap'o'rth of fat.

Notwithstanding the "lapsed masses" in London, the Methodists have a mission in Paris, "the city of sin" as they call it. The Rev. W. Gibson, who bosses the affair, is urgently appealing for funds. He wants to make a special attack on the students' quarter. He is also spending £500—a pretty big sum—on a Hymn Book, with which he expects to "evangelise France." What a mouse to produce such a mountain!

A good cadger is the Rev. George Farmer, of Borstal Church, near Rochester. In his parish magazine he tells the flock how to give to his Parsonage Fund. They should lay aside a tenth of the price when they sell poultry, rabbits, or garden produce. Others should put by farthings and threepenny pieces. Even washerwomen are requested to give a trifle out of their poor wages to this clerical beggar.

The *Bournemouth Guardian* reports a discourse by the Rev. J. Ossian Davies on the Bible. We agree with him on one point. Would that people read the Bible more frequently. If they did they would become Freethinkers. But they believe it without reading it, and that's easy.

Archdeacon Sinclair is not a friend of Polytechnics for educating Londoners. He recommends—no doubt on the nothing-like-leather principle—the erection of a Westminster Abbey in the East-end "where for many hundreds of years the ashes of the illustrious dead would be committed to their stately repose, each a lesson to the million toilers of the East." We fancy the million toilers of the East are not so fond of corpses.

Lye is a very appropriate name for the town where a Mr. Moyle, from Birmingham, is carrying on "a mission." He professes himself "a convert from professed infidelity," and the pious Lyers seem to look upon him as a sort of tamed tiger. He is described as "formerly one of the most prominent infidel debaters in Birmingham." But his fame never reached our ears. Can any Birmingham Secularist throw a little more light on the illustrious Moyle?

At the Church of Mary Magdalene, Bridgenorth, the pastors instruct the sheep in the way they should go. Lest they should make any mistake the following directions are conspicuously painted up:

HINTS TO WORSHIPPERS.

1. Be in time.
2. Go straight into church.
3. Kneel down on your knees, and instruct your children to do so.
4. Join in all the prayers, singing, and amens.
5. Stand up directly the hymns are given out.
6. Do not whisper to your neighbor.
7. Keep your thoughts fixed.
8. Bow your head at the holy name of Jesus.
9. Make offertory a regular part of your worship.
10. Stand up when the clergy and choir enter or leave the church, and join in prayer for those who minister. Use the scraper and doormat, and use the hassocks only for kneeling upon, and not for footstools.

The remaining North American Indian tribes, it is said, are much excited over the expected appearance of an Indian Messiah. The tribes camped in the river bottom, near Port Reno, are daily expecting the arrival of their greatest medicine man, who will come from the northern Cheyennes, near the Black Hills. He promises to restore the country to the Indians in its original state, with its forests, its prairies, its buffalo and wild game. They won't wait quite so long as the Christians have waited for the second coming of Jesus, for they will be exterminated by the Christians long before the Messiah comes to save them.

We wonder what sort of a choir the Rev. Mr. Madden, of Liverpool, has in his church. He says he does not ask the members how they can sing, but whether their hearts are right with God. His opinion was that "if God was offered a consecrated heart he could forgive an occasional false note." This seems to depend on whether God has a musical ear or not. If he has, he will think a consecrated heart—however excellent in its way—is no apology for an occasional false note.

According to the *Methodist Times*—that is, Hugh Price Hughes—"the rock upon which we are to build must be neither the infallibility of the Church nor the infallibility of the Bible, but the infallibility of Jesus Christ." This dismisses the Catholic dogma and the Protestant fetish, and sets up a new idol. But Jesus Christ is no more infallible than the other two. However, if the Christians pursue this line, we shall have to concentrate our attack on Jesus Christ.

Tit Bits answers a correspondent, "N," who has been religious for two years, and has prayed every night for prosperity. He has never got it and does not make any headway. *Tit Bits* gives him a lot of buncombe in reply. All prayers are not answered. God makes a judicicious selection. *Tit Bits* is in it, but poor "N" is out. Evidently! Our advice to "N" is this—Stop praying, and spend the time in thinking and working.

The Rev. R. J. Bond, a member of the Devonport School Board, is a zealous religionist and something of a bigot. He went into one of the Board Schools and told a female candidate for a teachership that if she did not go in for the religious examination he would do all he could to ruin her prospects. Being challenged on this, at an open Board meeting, by our friend Mr. R. S. Smith, he gloried in the action, and declared he would do his utmost to blast the career of any candidate who did not qualify herself to give Biblical instruction. Unfortunately Mr. Smith was feebly supported, and Mr. Bigot Bond came off with flying colors. Still, something is gained by making these wretches take the full public responsibility of their conduct. We hope Mr. Smith will not be discouraged. He will do good by dragging these clerical ruiners of free-minded girls into the light of publicity.

Boulanger's failure is bad business for the French priests who favored his cause and looked forward to a handsome reward when the dashing shallow-pate had overturned the Republic. The Abbé Villiard expected the bishopric of Tulle. He invested 9,000 francs in the Boulanger boom, and has lost his money. We congratulate him. He will be 9,000 francs thinner when he tries to get through the narrow gate of Paradise.

Messrs. Trübner and Co. will shortly publish what promises to be an important book by Edwin Johnson on *The Rise of Christendom.* We shall notice the work when it reaches our hands.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 15, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester; at 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; at 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; at 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"

June 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. (Middlesbro').—We do not believe that falsehood is necessary to morality. The average man's goodness does not depend on his creed. Divorced from theology, morality will be nobler because more disinterested, and brighter because more intelligent.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Yes, accidents happened to all alike, and if a Christian cannot swim he is drowned like a Freethinker. The "hand of God" people never see it when it strikes themselves.

E. CHESHIRE.—Not badly written, but you require more practice in composition.

C. MITCHELL.—To form a Branch at Bexley Heath it will be necessary to get seven persons (at least) to join the N. S. S. The Executive will then sanction the formation of a Branch and give it advice and assistance. Communicate with the secretary, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. Mr. Foote cannot undertake any open-air lecturing at present. His doctor warns him to be careful for some time.

J. R. WIDDUP.—We cannot answer such inquires by post. Farrar wrote, "If Colonel Ingersoll really takes in the meaning implied in his own words, I should think that he would have recoiled before," etc. He ought to have written, "I think he should have recoiled." The double subjunctive is unnecessary and therefore improper. Indeed the whole sentence is dreadfully slipshod.

C. H. KELF.—Mr. Foote does not think it would be prudent—at any rate for the present—to put any pressure on the Branches; but he is decidedly of opinion that the Branches would do well to bear in mind the decision of the Conference as to the minimum subscription. He is convinced that the Branches, no less than the parent Society, would profit by the new policy. At any rate it is worth a trial. Get in all the members you can. This is the easier with the shilling minimum. When they are in, appeal to their generosity. Some are more liberal than others, some can afford more than others, but that is inevitable. Get from each what he can and will give in money and work. Ours is a *voluntary* society, and we should carry out the voluntary principle logically. That is Mr. Foote's view, and he urges the Braches to give it the consideration he has a right to expect. He may feel it his duty to draft a circular to the Branches on the subject by-and-bye.

F. WESTON informs C. K. Laporte that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Mr. Daw's, 7 Pratt Street, Camden Town, close to Camden Square. This correspondent is thanked for promoting our circulation.

W. LEMAITRE.—Don't take it to heart. We have as keen a nose for a joke as most people. But it isn't always possible from a man's letter, when you don't see his face, to tell that he doesn't mean what he says, especially when you have no preliminary clue.

R. G. LEES.—Better try for yourselves. You could engage him for an outdoor lecture first. We never heard him lecture, but we can speak for his earnestness and sincerity.

W. M. KNOX, secretary, Ulster Branch N. S. S., 44 Stratheden Street, Belfast, will send the two pamphlets on "Prayer" and the "Law of Parsimony" to any applicant on receipt of two stamps to cover postage,

HINDS GREEN.—Thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

W. G. RENN.—Call at 14 Clerkenwell Green, second floor, for the back numbers of the *Freethinker*. Any London Branch can do the same.

J. H. SUMMERFIELD.—Better let the Guide Notice be sent by one person or we shall get mixed. Mr. Brown sends from Newcastle.

J. K. SYKES.—Glad to learn you are still "pegging away" at Southend, and trying to push our circulation. Of course that is slow work, but a little progress is encouraging. You should duplicate your order to Mr. Forder. Probably the original miscarried.

G. E. RUNACRE says the Sunday League runs an Excursion to-day (June 15) to the South Coast of Devonshire, and wonders if some Secular Missionary could go down and wake up the Devonshire dumplings.

A. RENNOLLS.—The exclusion of your letter is not surprising. The Sunday question is hardly opened at Plymouth yet. You'll get a band on the Hoe some day. We dare say the first performance will make Drake's statue turn round.

C. E. HILL.—There is no really good Life of Paine in the field. Mr. M. D. Conway is writing one. We have thoughts of tackling the job ourselves. Meanwhile there is Linton's, which is better than none, price sixpence. Thanks for your efforts to get us new subscribers.

F. ABLARD (Stretford) writes: "About three months ago I got a newsagent to take half a dozen copies of the *Freethinker*, agreeing to take all the unsold ones myself on the Monday, but I never had to take one, and now he sells a dozen." Reader, go thou and do likewise.

UNKNOWN.—No doubt it would do good to leave the *Freethinker* in public reading rooms, or in coffee and cocoa houses. Lots of people don't know of the paper who might like to take it.

QUIZ.—The subject is too large for a paragraph. There is overwhelming proof that our four Gospels did not exist in the first century. Not a single Christian writer mentions one of them for more than a century after the death of Christ. The Tacitus passage is disputed. Even if authentic it lends no support to the miraculous narrative of the Gospels. We thank you for circulating five copies of this journal weekly.

R. ATKINSON.—It is pleasant to see the *Bradford Observer* giving a good report of the Shipley Glen demonstration. The provincial press is more impartial than the metropolitan.

W. J. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks for the cuttings. Mr. Forder shall send you a contents-sheet.

LEXICON.—No numbers were kept in stock.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Always pleased to receive cuttings.

FREETHINKER.—The man must be a fool to charge the loss of Napoleon's wars to Atheism. Napoleon set up again the very Catholic Church which the Revolution abolished. When you heard Mr. Foote he was speaking of the Reign of Terror. The number of victims is given by Carlyle—a very accurate authority on matters of fact.

G. F. MARGETSON.—The *Freethinkers* must be fetched from 14 Clerkenwell Green. We cannot send them anywhere.

DOLF.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. Y.—"London, E.C." means London East Central. Mr. Forder will send you the two pamphlets post free for the full published price (6d.)

B. BRIGGS.—Thanks for your ordering extra copies. We are glad to hear they sold. The Ingersoll extracts would be better arranged according to subject. We are afraid we have no room for them.

J. JACKSON.—Vaccination is a question on which Freethinkers may differ. We are opposed to it medically, and we hate it as a compulsory rite of doctor-craft.

FREETHINKER.—We are not good at conundrums, and cannot tell why the Pyramids prove the Bible is true.

P. H. ECHLIN.—The lines are amusing, but scarcely "profane" enough for the *Freethinker*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Open Court—Freethought Record—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Portsmouth Evening News—Twentieth Century—New Zealand Public Opinion—West Sussex Gazette—Belfast Weekly Star—Edinburgh Evening News—Blyth Examiner—Coming Man—Bulletin Mensuel de la Federation Francaise de la Libre-Pensée—Sunday Notes—La Verité—Reading Observer—Irish Catholic Times—Les Etats Unis de l'Europe—Freethinkers' Magazine—Two Worlds—Body and Soul—Cornish Telegraph—Countryman—St. Michaels Union Herald—Bournemouth Guardian.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

The Oxford City Council has decided to open the free public libraries on Sunday evenings, commencing in November.

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THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £60 11s. 8d.

Eighth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
J. Gott	0	0	6	S. Hartmann	0	10	0
T. Holstead	0	5	0	G. E. Lupton	1	0	0
J. Marsh	0	2	6	J. Tomkins	0	5	0
A Friend, Cornwall	0	10	0	Dick & Mrs. Edwards	1	0	0
A Footite	0	2	0				

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening to hear his lecture on "Heresy at Oxford." There was great applause at the finish. To-day (June 15) Mr. Foote lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester. The subjects are interesting, and we hope the local Freethinkers will counterbalance the fine weather by trying to bring their orthodox friends to the meetings.

On Saturday evening, the night before the Manchester lectures, Mr. Foote will preside at a meeting of delegates in the Secular Hall for the purpose of forming a South Lancashire Federation. All Branches in the district should be represented. Just as we are going to press we learn for the first time that the meeting is called for five o'clock. This upsets all Mr. Foote's arrangements. He will try to be present at the opening, but he is doubtful whether it will be possible.

Owing to the smaller hall being pre-engaged, the large Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, has been engaged for Mr. Foote's evening lecture on June 22. As the hall will take some filling, especially at this time of the year, the Liverpool Freethinkers should make a special effort.

—We are issuing a fresh supply of Tracts, each bearing (at the end) an advertisement of the *Freethinker*. There will be twenty in all to suit a variety of tastes. Most of them are entirely new. They involve a considerable outlay, and when all are sold they barely pay the cost of production. We therefore appeal to our friends to distribute them widely. First and last our output of Tracts amounts to over half a million. Particulars of the new issue will be found in the advertisement. Numbers 9 to 16, inclusive, are now on sale. The rest will be ready next week.

The final numbers of *Bible Heroes* are on sale at Mr. Forder's. The Second Series, bound up like the first, is daily expected from the binder's.

The London Secular Federation's fourth course of Free Lectures opened on Thursday June 5, at the Hammersmith Club (No. 1 the Grove). Mr. A. B. Moss addressed a very good audience on "Religious Guide Posts." The Christian side was represented in the discussion by the Rev. F. L. Donaldson and Mr. Dell, two able and courteous opponents. Others were prevented from speaking by lack of time. Mr. Moss challenged the clergyman to a set debate, which it is hoped may be arranged. Mr. G. Standring is the second lecturer on Thursday June 12; Mr. J. M. Robertson the third, on June 19th; and Mr. Foote winds up on June 26. Freethinkers in the district willing to co-operate in propagandist work are requested to communicate with Mr. H. Courtney, 8 Norland-road North, Notting hill, W.

The London Secular Federation is organising a brake excursion to Epping Forest on Sunday, July 20. Each Branch will arrange its own contingent, and an extra one will start from the Hall of Science. If possible the contingents will all join on the road. The final trysting place is the "King's Oak Hotel," High Beach, where a substantial tea will be served at ninepence. Mr. Foote will join the party. Further particulars in due course.

Mr. Edmund Pounceby is the new secretary of the London Secular Federation in place of Mr. G. Standring who has resigned. Mr. Standring only accepted the office temporarily until the Federation was well established. The Council is grateful for his services and has elected him a vice-president. In that capacity he will continue to take his share in the business of the Federation.

Owing to the decease of the North London Branch the open-air station at the Midland Arches was in danger of collapsing. Miss Edith Vance, however, has undertaken to carry it on if possible. Surely half a dozen Freethinkers will volunteer to help her. They should communicate with her by letter to save the time and expense of preliminary meetings. Her address is 24 Caroline Street, Camden Town, N.W. We may add that it is proposed to shift the stand away from the Babel under the arch.

Mr. Rowney must be supported. He is a modest man but he means business. Last Sunday his open-air meeting at Tottenham was broken up by well-dressed Christian rowdies, egged on by the local sky-pilots. But Mr. Rowney will stick to his post. He will be there again to-day (June 15) at 3.30, and we beg the Freethinkers of the district to rally round him. Mr. Rowney is the very opposite of a ferocious speaker. Those who broke up his meeting were not exasperated by anything he said. They acted from sheer wanton bigotry, and their antics must not be tolerated.

The Yorkshire Secular Federation held a very successful demonstration at Shipley Glen on Sunday. About a thousand people were present. Mr. H. Smith presided. Mr. W. R. Atkinson, secretary, read a statement of the society's objects. An Address was then delivered by Mr. A. B. Wakefield. This was followed by a resolution against the Blasphemy Laws, proposed by J. G. Fisher, seconded by J. Kay, supported by Mr. Leowy (a Jew), and carried. Evidently the Yorkshire Freethinkers only want organising to become a power.

The Leicester Secularists, headed by Mr. Gimson, have interviewed Sir James Whitehead, the Liberal candidate, on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. They laid their case before him ably and clearly. All they wanted was legal equality—no favor and no disability. Sir James Whitehead replied that he was in favor of the reform they desired, and added "I will support anything brought before Parliament which will put you on a fair footing of equality with all religious denominations." Thanks, Sir James. Thanks also to the Leicester Secularists for obtaining this straight declaration. We hope their example will be followed in every constituency.

The *Reading Observer*, which, considering the general attitude of the press to our movement, is a remarkably fair paper, inserts a capital letter by Mr. J. M. Robertson in reply to an abusive Catholic who criticised the report of his recent lectures at Reading.

The Secretary of the Liverpool Branch desires to acknowledge the receipt of 15s. 6d. in response to an appeal on behalf of Mr. James Thompson, a veteran Freethinker, who upheld the cause a quarter of a century ago. He has now been suffering from a most painful malady over two years, and has undergone three operations (the earlier one the first of its kind), and is now at an advanced age, without hope of recovery. Further donations will be thankfully received by Mr. V. W. Hardwick, 1 Olive Street, Liverpool; or the Secretary, at the hall, and duly acknowledged.

Mr. A. B. Moss is going North shortly. The Tyneside Branches should lose no time in arranging dates. Mr. Moss proposes to spend his holiday from July 28 to September 17 at this work.

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake commences in the June number of the *Freethinker's Magazine* a paper entitled "What would Follow on the Effacement of Christianity?" He lays down the tenets of Christianity as seven in number. 1. The Bible,

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the standard of Truth. 2. Three co-equal Gods. 3. A God of Love, appeased by blood. 4. Vengeance, by unending torment. 5. A Devil, who superintends the torment. 6. Prayer, a said-bringer. 7. Faith, as a final surety. He will not have much difficulty in showing that the effacement of these ideas will accelerate progress. Among the other attractive contents of the *Freethinker's Magazine* we mention Prof. Davidson on "Bruno's Thought," and Lydia Chase's "Hindrances to the Advancement of Women in America."

Centuries ago Englishmen, as well as continental Christians, used to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship at the bogus tomb of Christ. Now the Mecca of the English speaking world is Stratford-on-Avon. Last year 20,000 persons, of twenty-one nationalities, but chiefly from America and the Colonies, paid for admission into the house in which Shakespeare was born. The miracle-workers go out with the world's childhood. The poet is the true magician. It is easier to find a talking jackass than a man who can write "Hamlet."

The *Edinburgh Evening News*, which had done so much for the intellectual culture of Modern Athens has nothing less than a Freethought article on the Decline of the Power of the Pulpit. This it traces to the fact that the ideas which used to give it power are out of harmony with modern thought which demands proof for all assertions.

Mr. W. W. Collins has been on a trip to New Zealand. His lectures are well reported in the New Zealand *Public Opinion*. Sir Robert Stout, who was at one time prime minister of the colony, presided at one of his lectures at Dunedin. No doubt his visit will give a fillip to the cause in New Zealand.

A new London Cemetery and Crematorium Co. has been formed, and proposes to erect and work a crematorium within the ground which it has acquired near Streatham and Mitcham, Surrey.

The Conference of German Freethinkers at Hannover appears to have been a success. A public meeting was afterwards addressed by Drs. Specht, Voelkel, Rüdt and Frau Hedwig Wilhelmi.

The Newcastle Sunday League, undeterred by the prohibition of music in the parks by the Town Council, are giving a series of musical performances on the Town Moor. Together with the programme they issue a bright little paper entitled *Sunday Notes*.

Mr. Foote's portrait by Amey, of Portsmouth, will soon be on sale. It is an excellent one. The price will be one shilling for the cabinet size. Some larger ones will be done at a higher price.

GOD AND MAN.

"If God did not exist"—it is Voltaire, the enemy of religions, who speaks—"it would be necessary to invent him." Why? "Because," adds the same Voltaire, "if I had to do with an Atheist prince whose interest it was to have me pounded in a mortar, I am quite sure that I would be pounded." Strange aberration of a great mind! And if you had to do with a godly prince whose confessor commanded him, on the part of God, to burn you alive, are you not quite sure that you would be burnt? Do you forget, then, you antichrist, the Inquisition and St. Bartholomew, the stakes of Vanini and of Bruno, and the tortures of Galileo, and the martyrdom of so many Freethinkers? . . . . This is not a question of distinguishing between use and abuse: for I would answer you that on a mystical and supernatural principle, a principle which embraces all, which explains all, which justifies all, like the idea of God, any consequence is legitimate, and the zeal of the believer is the sole judge of the occasion.

"Formerly," says Rousseau, "I thought that a man could be honest, and yet do without God: but I have got over that error." At bottom this is the same reasoning as that of Voltaire, the same justification of intolerance. Man does good and abstains from evil only by the consideration that a Providence is watching him. Anathems upon those who deny it! And, as a height of unreasonableness, the same man who thus claims for our virtue the sanction of a rewarding and avenging Deity, is also the one who teaches the native goodness of man as a dogma of faith.

For my part I say: The first duty of man, intelligent and free, is to instantly chase the idea of God from his mind and conscience: for God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we advance in no way by his authority. We arrive at science in spite of him; we arrive at well-being in spite of him; at society in spite of him; every progress of ours is a victory in which we crush Divinity.

Say no more that the ways of God are impenetrable! We have penetrated them, these ways, and we have read therein, written in letters of blood, the proofs of impotence if not of bad will on the part of God. My reason, so long humiliated, gradually rises to the infinite; in time it will discover all that is hidden from its inexperience; with time I shall be less and less an artisan of woe, and by the light that I shall have acquired, by the perfectionment of liberty, I will purify myself, I will idealise my being, I will become the chief of creation, the equal of God.

A single instant of disorder, which the almighty could have prevented, and which he has not prevented, accuses his Providence and puts his wisdom in fault; the smallest progress that man, ignorant, abandoned and betrayed, accomplishes towards good, honors him without measure. By what right should he say to me: *Be holy because I am holy?* Lying spirit, I answer him, imbecile God, thy reign is finished; seek among the brutes for other victims. I know that I am not holy and never can become so: and how can you be holy if I am like you? Eternal father, Japiter or Jehovah, we have learnt to know thee: Thou art, thou wert, thou shalt ever be the jealous of Adam, the tyrant of Prometheus. Therefore, I do not fall into the sophism refuted by St. Paul when he forbids the vessel to say to the potter "Why hast thou made me so?" I do not reproach the author of things for having made of me an inharmonious creature, an incoherent assemblage. I could only exist on that condition. I only say to him: Why dost thou deceive me? Why by thy silence hast thou unchained egoism in me? Why hast thou submitted me to the torture of universal doubt, by the bitter illusion of the antagonistic ideas which thou hast put in my understanding? doubt of the truth, doubt of justice, doubt of my conscience and of my liberty, doubt of thy self oh God! and as a consequence of this doubt, necessity of war with myself and with my fellows! Behold, supreme father, what thou hast done for our happiness and thy glory; behold what were thy will and thy government from the very origin; behold the bread kneaded in blood and tears, with which thou hast fed us. The sins for which we ask thee forgiveness, it is thou who hast made us commit them; the temptations from which we conjure thee to deliver us, it is thou, who hast held them out to us, and the Satan who tempts us, it is thee.

Thou didst triumph and no one dared to contradict thee, when after having tormented in his soul and his body, the just Job, figure of our humanity, thou didst insult his candid piety, his discreet and respectful ignorance. We were as nothing before thy invisible majesty, to which we gave the heavens as daïs and the earth for a footstool. And now thou art dethroned and broken. Thy name so long the last word of the *savant*, the sanction of the judge, the strength of the prince, the hope of the poor, the refuge of the repentant criminal; well then! that incommunicable name, henceforward given up to contempt and anathema, shall be hissed among men. For God is tyranny and misery, God is folly and cowardice; God is hypocrisy and lies; God is evil. As long as humanity bows before an altar, humanity, slave of priests and kings, shall be reprobated; as long as a man, in the name of God receives the oath of another, society will be founded upon perjury; peace and love will be banished from among mortals. God, retire! and from to-day, cured of thy fear and become wise, I swear, my hand extended to the heavens, that thou art only the tormentor of my reason, the spectre of my conscience.

Therefore I deny the supremacy of God over humanity; I reject his providential government, the non-existence of which is sufficiently established by the metaphysical and economic hallucinations of humanity—in a word, by the martyrdom of our species; I decline the jurisdiction of the supreme being over man; I deprive him of his titles of father, king, judge, good, clement, merciful, helpful, rewarder and avenger. All these attributes of which the idea of Providence is composed, are only a caricature of humanity, irreconcilable with the autonomy of civilisation and refuted by the history of its aberrations and catastrophies.

From the French of Proudhon, translated by Hinds Green.

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REVIEW.

Christ and Krishna. By JOHN M. ROBERTSON. London: Freethought Publishing Company. 1890. Price 2s.

SINCE the last century, when our connection with India gradually brought trustworthy information of Hindu mythology, there has been some speculation as to the possible connection between the legends of Christ and those of the god Krishna. The subject is one wrapped in some obscurity and difficulty, arising from the uncertain character of Hindu chronology. On the one hand it has been asserted that certain elements in Krishnaism have been derived from Christianity, and on the other the reverse has been as stoutly maintained. It must be admitted that the latter side has been badly represented by such writers as the Rev. Robert Taylor, Kersey Graves, Louis Jacolliot and Mrs. Besant, who, in her *Roots of Christianity*, seems to confuse the Bhagvat Gita with the Bhagvat Purana. Some time since we felt called on to warn Freethinkers against unduly pressing coincidences in legends when their dates could not be accurately determined.* Mr. Robertson deserves the thanks of all Freethinkers for his endeavor to set the matter at rest. The result is scarcely as definite as we might wish, but this arises from the difficulties of the subject, and Mr. Robertson's impartial disposition, which prevents any overstatement of his case.

So far as anyone not a Sanskrit scholar can do, Mr. Robertson seems to have surveyed the whole ground. He thoroughly succeeds in rebutting the position that Krishnaism borrowed from Christianity. He establishes that the name of Krishna and his worship as a god existed before the Christian era, though it has undoubtedly developed since. He shows that, in its pre-Christian form, it contained some at least of the myth elements which have been claimed as borrowed from Christianity. Of these may be mentioned the story that the infant Krishna was sought to be killed by the tyrant Kansa, and that Krishna himself killed Kansa, a story referred to by Patanjali in the second century, B.C., as being exhibited in dramatic representation. But the myth, of a predicted child whose life is vainly sought to be destroyed, is, as Mr. Robertson himself points out, so widely extended that it is not easy to draw any conclusion as to its origin. Mr. Robertson holds that the "obviously mythical story in Matthew of the massacre of the innocents by Herod was doubtless concocted by blending the legend of the child massacre by Pharaoh with the legend of the quasi-Messianic, doom escaping, and finally crucified Cyrus, who stood high in Jewish esteem as a liberator of the captive race and a believer in their God; and adding the prophecy of Zoroaster." But, as we point out elsewhere, there is recorded in Josephus an actual historic, Messianic conspiracy in the reign of Herod, which was stifled in blood by that monarch. The incident connected with the infancy of Krishna of the visit of his foster father, Nanda, who goes to the Holy City of Mathura† to pay his taxes, Mr. Robertson, to our mind, does not prove to have existed before Christianity, though he gives good reason for believing that the story in Luke is mythical. Indeed throughout, it seems to us, Mr. Robertson is more successful in showing the mythical elements in the Gospels than in actually tracing them to the Hindu stories of Krishna. His examination of the Christian legends is one of the most valuable features of the work, and the suggestion that the birth myths are due to a ritual of a Babe Sun God is one that will not hastily be dismissed by any competent critic.

But our own frequently expressed opinion is that although Christianity was affected from the East, and that mainly through the missionaries of Buddhism, its extra Jewish legends and doctrines are chiefly to be sought in Egypt, with which ountry we know Christianity had the closest contact, if it d[illegible]d not virtually arise there. For Mr. Robertson to go to Di[illegible]i and Krishna for the origin of the worship of the Virg Mother and child is travelling far for what certainly existed in Egypt for two thousand years before the Christian era. His theory that Isis and Horus may have been derived from India must be dismissed as utterly without evidence.

Before dismissing the similarities between the stories told of Krishna and of Christ, it should be mentioned that as far as documentary evidence is concerned they mostly depend on the Bhagvat Purana, which the chief authorities assign to the tenth or the eleventh century of our era. In that Purana, they by no means assume that close parallel which is made by selecting here and there special details, a method which as Warburton long since pointed out, would make King Arthur and William the Conqueror to be one and the same person.

It is noticeable that Mr. Robertson makes little of the doctrinal similarities between Krishnaism and Christianity, although to our mind they even deserve better attention than the likeness of their legends. Mr. Robertson justly points out that certain commonplaces of ethics and theology are equally inevitable conclusions in all religious systems that rise above savagery, but it is unquestionable that in the Gospel of John there is a theosophic doctrine which formed no part of ordinary Juadism and which is not found in the Synoptic gospels. Many parallels are found in the Bhagvat Gita, an often translated episode of the Mahabharata. Chiefly on this account the Bhagvat Gita is usually assigned to about the third century of our era. But though nothing can be founded on the date, our own opinion is clear that the Gita is an original composition in no way indebted to Christianity, but founded on the Hindu doctrine of transmigration.

In conclusion we warmly commend Mr. Robertson's work to the study of all interested in the origin of Christian myths, with the assurance that even those who do not agree with him will find much food for thought, and stimulating suggestion. We trust the sale of the work will in some measure compensate him for the undoubted pains he has taken in his inquiry.

J. M. W.

* See article "Krishna and Christ," *Freethinker*, June 30, 1889.

† Mr. Robertson lays no stress on the suspicious fact that in the Gospel of the Infancy the child Jesus is said to have worked miracles at the city of Matarea, which is placed in Egypt.

HIS FRIEND'S DREAM!

Colonel Ingersoll at the last Lotus Club dinner told a new and funny story. Here it is:

"I have a friend," said the genial Bob, "who dreamed that he died and went to heaven. He wandered through the place without meeting any one whom he had ever known or heard of. Meeting a spirit, he asked: 'Where's Voltaire?' 'Oh, he's not here.' 'Nor Jean-Jacques Rousseau?' 'No.' 'Nor Bob Ingersoll?' 'Oh, dear me, no! They're all over there in hell,' and the spirit pointed away to a place quite distant. 'Can I go over there and see the place?' Certainly; you can get a return ticket if you like.' So the man bought his ticket and started.

"He came to a most charming place, and, entering, was amazed to find it delightful in every way. He met all his friends, companions and the men whose writing he had admired, and to one expressed his unbounded appreciation of all the attractions there. 'Yes, it's very beautiful. You should have seen the place when we came. We have made it over,' said one of the Freethinkers. The man who had come visiting left the others and wandered anxiously up and down, looking to the right and left. 'For what are you searching?' asked one of him. 'I am looking for some one to whom I can sell my return ticket,' was the answer."—*Chicago Herald.*

JACK IN THE BOX.

1 SAMUEL V.

The Philistines once took the ark of God,
Removed it with Jehovah to Ashdod,
And placed it safely in old Dagon's house,
Then locked the door, and held a great carouse.
When Dagon rose, and saw the wooden box,
He said: "What's this?"—and gave it sundry knocks
Which roused Jehovah,—fast asleep inside,—
Who thought it inconsistent with his pride
To let a stranger knock him thus about,
As if he were a mere terrestrial lout.
Out popped the Jew-god in a dreadful wax,
And gave him two or three celestial smacks,
Which brought the bloated Dagon to the ground;
And *thus*, next morn, the heathen god was found:
"Deprived of head and hands,—a wretched stump,
"With old Jehovah's footmarks on his rump."
Now when the Philistines their god did see,
They said: "Two of a trade will ne'er agree:
Let's send the bruiser back unto his Jews,
Or else he'll plague us like the very deuce."
The people rose,—the ark they seized upon,
And in an hour the pugilist was gone.
Though far away, he played a nasty trick,
For all victorious Philistines fell sick,
Sore smitten in the seat with emerods—
A plague sent by this dirtiest of gods.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

An attorney in a storm, prayed, saying: "Lord I beseech thee, hear my prayer now, for thou knowest I trouble thee but seldom."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Biography."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Story of the Bible Good?" Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Freethought and Politics."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Meaning of Materialism."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, "Socialism and Secularism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Liberation."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Barbarities."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christianity and Freedom."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Christ and Crime." June 18, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Life Hereafter."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Christianity: Is it Moral?"

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, a Freethought lecture.

Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus Christ."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Recantations."

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, J. Rowney, "Our Blessed Lord"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford "The Miraculous Basis of Christianity."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Ramsey, "A New Gospel Harmony."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Christ as a Teacher."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Triune God."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. H. Smith, 11, "What Think ye of Christ?"; 7, "Her House is the Way to Hell."

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, business meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. W. Craig, "Witchcraft."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. E. S. Jones, "Creation and Evolution."

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, meeting of the council of North-Eastern Secular Federation; delegates not met at train are requested to meet their Newcastle friends at Societies' Rooms at 11; tea provided for delegates at 6d. each. At 6.30 band performance on Newcastle Town Moor, leader, Mr T. Woods

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. J. F. Moult, a reading, "Velvet and Vice."

Rochdale—Town Hall Square (weather permitting), Mr. Ernest Evans, 3, "Origin of the Earth"; 6.30, "Man's Place in Nature according to Paley and Darwin."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Capt. Pfoundes, 11, "The Science of Religion, Philosophies and Ethics"; 3, "Theosophy: its Follies, Fallacies, and False Pretences"; 7, "Buddhism: What it Was, Is, and Is Not."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — June 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 15, Birmingham.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 15, Liverpool; 22, Birmingham; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea; 22 (morning), Camberwell. July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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A Lecture, for delivering which the author was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for Blasphemy in Sweden. Translated from the Swedish, with an Introduction by J. M. WHEELER.

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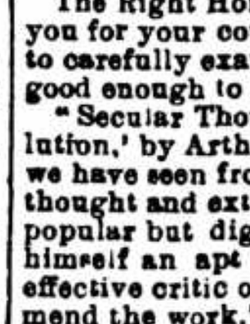

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request.
—BEN JONSON.

JESUS AT THE DERBY.

THIS is the age of advertisement. Look at the street-hoardings, look at the newspapers, look at our actor-managers, look at Barnum. Scream from the house-tops or you stand no chance. If you cannot attract attention in any other way, stand on your head. Get talked about somehow. The only hell is obscurity, and notoriety is the seventh heaven. If you cannot make a fortune, spend one. Run through a quarter of a million in three years, be the fool of every knave, and though you are as commonplace as a wet day in London, you shall find a host of envious admirers. Should the worst come to the worst, you can defy obscurity by committing a judiciously villainous murder. Perhaps Jack the Ripper had a passion for publicity, and liked to see his name in the papers, until he grew *blasé* and retired upon his laurels.

Yes, it is an advertising age, and an advertising age is a sensational age. Religion itself—the staid, the demure—shares in the general tendency. She preaches in the style of the auction room, she beats drums and shakes tambourines in the streets, she affects criminals and dotes on vice, she bustles about the reformation of confirmed topers. By-and-bye she will get up a mission to lunatics and idiots. She is now a very "forward" person. Forward movements are the rage in all the churches. But Methodism bears the palm, though Presbyterianism threatens to run it hard in the person of John McNeill. Hugh Price Hughes is a very smart showman. When truth is stale he is ready with a bouncing lie, and has "face" enough to keep it up in five chapters. But the West-End Mission is getting rather tame. The dukes and duchesses are not yet converted. Money is spent like water and the aristocracy still go to Hades. A new move is tried. The "forward" Methodists organise a Mission to Epsom. Jesus Christ goes to the Derby; that is, he goes by proxy, in the person of Mr. Nix. A van, a tent and a big stock of pious literature, with mackintoshes and umbrellas, form his equipment. He is accompanied by a band of workers. Their rules are to be up for prayer-meeting at seven in the morning, and "never to look at any race, or jockey, or horse." This is a precaution against the Old Adam. It saves the Mission from going over to the enemy on the field of battle.

Mr. Nix gives an account of his performance in the *Methodist Times*. He converted a lot of people. So has Hugh Price Hughes. "At one time," he says, "there were three Church of England clergymen and their wives and some distinguished members of the aristocracy in the tent"—probably out of the wet. Of course *they* were not converted. But what a pity! A "converted clergyman" would have been a glorious catch, worth five thousand pounds at St. James's Hall. And fancy bagging a duke! It was enough to make Mr. Nix's mouth water. He must have felt some of the agony of Tantalus. He was up to the neck, so to speak, in lords and parsons, and could not grasp one. Dissenting ministers and their wives did not show up. Naturally. They would not go to such a naughty place—except in a mission van. Mr. Nix has a keen eye for the Methodist business. He has open and sly digs at the Church clergy. One of the tipsters said his father was a clergyman, but "his religion was no good to him." He would give anything for the religion of "the little chap that stood on the stool." That was Mr. Nix.

We suspect the Epsom races will outlast Mr. Nix. There is more boast than performance about Missions. Christianity is always converting drunkards, profligates, prostitutes, and thieves; but somehow our social evils do not disappear. Even the drink bill runs up, despite all the Gospel pledges. *Nix* is the practical result of the efforts of gentlemen like Mr. Nix. They are on the wrong tack. They are sweeping back the tide with mops. The real reformatory agency is the spread of education and refinement.

Yet the mission will go on. It is a good advertisement. Mr. Hughes gives it a special leading article. He cries up the Epsom mob as the "most representative gathering of Englishmen," and "therefore a fair specimen of the mental and moral condition of the English people." This is stuff and nonsense, but it serves its purpose. Mr. Hughes wants to show that Missions are needed. He finds that "the great majority of the people are outside the Christian Church," that "this is still a heathen country." Perhaps so. But what a confession after all these centuries of gospel-grinding and Church predominance! There are fifty or sixty thousand churches and chapels, and as many sky-pilots. Six million children go to Sunday School. The Bible is forced into the public day-schools. Copies are circulated by the million. Twenty millions a year, at the least, is spent in inculcating Christianity. Yet England is still "a heathen country." Well, if this be the case, what is the use of Mr. Nix? What is the use of Mr. Hughes? Greater preachers have gone before them and have failed. Is it not high time for Jesus to run the job himself? "Come Lord Jesus," as John says. Let him descend from the Father's right hand and take Mr. Nix's place at the next Derby. He might even convert the "clergymen and their wives" and the "distinguished members of the aristocracy." Anyhow he should try. He will not be crucified again. The worst that could happen is a charge of obstruction, and perhaps a fine of forty shillings. But surely he will not lay himself open to such indignities. He should triumphantly assert his deity. A few big miracles would strike Englishmen more than the Jews, who were sated with the supernatural. He might stop the horses in mid career, fix the jockeys in their saddles, root the Epsom mob where they stood, and address them from the top of the grand stand. That would settle them. They would all go to church next Sunday. Yes, Jesus must come himself, or the case is hopeless. Missions to the people of this

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"heathen country" are like fleas on an elephant. What the ministers should pray for is the second coming of Christ. But we guess it will be a long time before they sing "Lo, he comes, in clouds descending." Besides, it would be a bad job for them. Their occupation would be gone. A wholesale conversion would cut up the retail traders. On the whole, we have no doubt the men of God prefer the good old plan. If Jesus came he would take the bread out of their mouths. That would be shabby after they had devoted themselves to the business. The very publicans demand compensation, and could the sky-pilots do less? But perhaps Jesus would send them all *home*. We should like to see them go. It would give the world a chance.

G. W. FOOTE.

FALSE CHRISTS.

(*Continued from page* 279.)

THE Samaritans appear to have been almost as much afflicted with the Christ fever as the Jews. There was one Dositheus, a Samaritan, who Mosheim tells us lived about the time of "our Savior" and set up for the Messiah, whom God had promised to the Jews. One Cleobulus played a similar *rôle*. There was also Menander, who the same historian remarks "is rather to be ranked with the lunatics than with the heretics of antiquity, seeing he also took it into his head to exhibit himself to the world as the promised Savior."

But the most renowned of these Samaritan gentlemen was Simon Magus, who is supposed to have appeared in the fourth decade of the first century. According to the untrustworthy Acts (viii., 9-11) he "bewitched the people of Samaria giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." The writer of the Acts makes him a Christian convert anxious to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost. This seems hardly compatible with the tradition which makes him the father of all heretics and to have disputed with St. Peter at Rome, where flying in the air by the power of demons, he was, by Peter's prayers, thrown down and killed. Baur, Volkmar and Zeller hold that Simon Magus was the Ebionite caricature of Paul. The matter is too abstruse to enter on here. I refer the reader to a curious and able paper on "The Myth of Simon Magus" in the *Westminster Review*, of July 1884, and give in a footnote a recent admission of an orthodox advocate.* Certain it is that Simon Magus figures largely in early Christian legend, and he appears to have had followers in the time of Origen. Justin Martyr says, a statue was erected to Simon in Rome as to a god. This was doubtless one of the father's many errors.

Hippolytus mentions Simon in connection with one Apsethus, a Libyan who he says taught parrots to say "Apsethus is a God," and then let them loose to be taken as a voice from heaven, like that which appeared with the dove at Jordan. Hippolytus also mentions one Marcus—no relation to Mark, a Gnostic follower of Jesus, who worked wonders "partly by sleight of hand, partly by demons," and who with drugs turned water into wine and multiplied the liquor.

The greatest of the Jewish Messiahs was named Barchocheba, the son of a star, in allusion to Numb. xxiv., 17. In the reign of Hadrian, about 132, he set up a rebellion. His Messianic claims were recognised by the renowned Rabbi Akiba, who crowned him king of the Jews. Half a million of that people flocked to his standard. The Roman army was sent against him. For two years he resisted the power of the Empire, and finally he and a prodigious number of Jews—it is said two millions—were destroyed, and a new city Ælia Capitolina, raised upon the ruins of Jerusalem, into which no Jew was permitted to enter.

Another Christ was Mani, the founder of the Manichæan system. Of his life there are but few trustworthy details. He was born about 215 A.D. of a noble Persian family settled in Ecbatana. His father belonged to a sect of Baptists, something similar to the Christians of Saint John. It was in 242, when he was twenty-four years old, that he presented himself to the Persians as the founder of a new religion. He claimed to be a messenger or avatar of the true God. "What Buddha was to India, Zoroaster to Persia, Jesus to the lands of the West, I am to the country of Babylonia." He seems to have aimed at uniting some of the characteristics of these faiths. His Christian followers held him to be the Paraclete promised in John xvi., 13. He surrounded himself with twelve disciples. His career in attempting to reform the old Persian religion produced much opposition, and in 276 he was seized by the priestly party and crucified. His corpse was flayed, stuffed with hay, and nailed to the gate of the city, which afterwards bore his name. But his religion spread with the rapidity of Oriental fanaticisms. Manichæism sought to satisfy intellectual problems undealt with by Christianity. It explained evil by a system of dualism. The world began from the mixture of two radically opposing elements, one good the other bad. The course of history, the evolution of life, is but the conflict of these two powers. Manichæism, which for some time attracted the powerful intellect of St. Augustine, who, indeed, imported some of its ideas into Christianity, might as fairly claim to be an independent religion as Mohammedanism, by which it was mainly crushed, though some elements survived in the West among the Albigenses and Cathari.

Socrates, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, tells of a false Messiah named Moses, who appeared in Crete A.D. 434, and pretended to be the ancient legislator of the Jews, descended from heaven to procure a glorious deliverance for the Jews of that island by making them pass over the sea into the Land of Promise. Some of the credulous and oppressed Jews of Crete were fools enough to be persuaded by Moses redivivus. Many of them jumped into the sea, in expectation that it would give them safe passage. Numbers were drowned, others escaped as well as they could; and when they sought for the prophet to punish him, he could no more be found than the tomb of his predecessor.

A considerable list of further Messiahs may be found in the pages of Basnage, Milner and Jortin, but it may be doubted if their pretences more deserve the epithet false than those of the founder of the Christian religion. His claims at any rate have always been esteemed so by the bulk of the Jewish people who, I opine, should be the best judges in the matter.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Dr. Salmon, in his Introduction to "The Study of the New Testament" (pp. 15, 16, 1889), says: "In one passage in the 'Homilies' the dislike of Paul passes the bounds of mere silence. For Simon Magus is described as 'withstanding Peter to the face,' and declared that he was 'to be blamed.' Many a reader might innocently overlook the malice of these expressions; but when attention is called to them, we can hardly deny that the coincidence of language with that in the Epistle to the Galatians (ii. 11) leads to the surmise that under the character of Simon a reference to Paul is cloaked; and that Paul is intended by 'the enemy,' who opposed St. Peter and St. James. We also see what interpretation is to be put on a controversy as to relative superiority between Simon Magus, who claims to have seen our Lord in vision, and Peter, who had actually seen him in the flesh."

"It seems to me," observed Jo Cose "that the recording angel must have a pretty easy time of it now-a-days?"

"Why so?" asked his wife.

"Simply because if a man does anything good or bad it gets into the newspapers."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, all the angel has to do is to go over his exchanges with a pair of shears."

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LOOKING FORWARD IN IRELAND.

THE belief that the Irishman is a compound of contradictions is not devoid of foundation. While he is proverbially fickle, unstable and easily deceived in some important respects, he is so stubbornly immovable in others as to be utterly impervious to all arguments and blandishments. In religious affairs, especially, his tenacity to the creed in which he finds himself by accident is really extraordinary. He is so thoroughly convinced that he is in the right, and that all those who differ from him are in the wrong, that his self-confidence and self-satisfaction excite at once the amazement and ridicule of the Freethinker. These remarks are alike applicable to all sects that have found a home in Ireland, but in an especial manner to the dominant sect, the Catholics.

But there is a very important qualification to be noted. Outwardly things appear to be proceeding on the old self-satisfied and unchangeable groove. As to compliance with religious observance, and adherence to religious dogmas and beliefs, there is apparently no alteration. If we penetrate beneath the surface, however, it will be discovered that things are not exactly as they seem. Even inside the Catholic Church matters are altered, and the old cast-iron beliefs are undergoing a slow process of corrosion. I meet from time to time orthodox Papists, with some educational pretensions, who do not hide their dislike to be treated by the priests to the same homilies and exhortations that are specially designed for the ignorant and the illiterate. Others there are, of the same faith and similar pretensions, who admit, when brought to defend their doctrines, that they regard many of the Bible stories as allegories, and that they do not expect to find things in the "other" world as they are taught to expect. But they urge that if the ignorant were led or allowed to harbor such mild Freethought notions their conduct and their morals would quickly undergo serious deterioration. There are others still who are much displeased that the ministers of their religion do not practise what they preach; and these make little secret of their disgust at the respect paid to the rich, and the disrespect paid to the poor, by the Catholic clergy. It is true that the existence of such ideas does not give rise to any definite hopes as to the immediate progress of Freethought in Catholic circles; but still they point to a distinct step in advance, and a step which will ultimately produce important effects.

There is another point which must not be overlooked. The number and character of the ceremonies of the Catholic religion, and the all-important significance attached to them, are gradually bringing the more sensible Catholics to think that the spirit of the religion is being altogether sacrificed to the letter. This feeling is always preliminary to viewing the ceremonies as tom-fooleries, and once it exists in the mind of a Catholic his acceptance of Freethought is a likely contingency.

Notwithstanding these facts, however, it is not likely that Irish Catholicism will suffer perceptibly in our day from defections to Secularism. The Irish Catholic is essentially a religious animal. Irishmen and Catholicism seem to be made for each other, and the scarcely perceptible breach between them will not be widened without long and arduous labor. The spread of education, no doubt, will accomplish much; but the peculiar love of the people for the "old faith" will, it is to be feared, long withstand the march of reason.

The outlook is more hopeful as far as non-Catholic Ireland is concerned. The Protestants are as a house divided against itself. Ritualism has made its way amongst them, and is steadily dividing them into opposite and hostile camps. There are bitter quarrels in progress about how the clergymen are to face while performing the service, and about other equally "important" considerations. Then there is the question of "Confession." The more common-sense Protestants view with righteous alarm the probability that the establishment of the Confessional will place a terrible power in the hands of the ministers who adopt the principle. It is notorious that the moral character of many of the clergymen of this church is anything but good. It is an open secret that quite recently the Protestant Chaplain of a Dublin Hospital had to be dismissed for accomplishing the ruin of the nurses employed in the establishment. "Give the clerics the power to establish the Confessional," said an influential Protestant, and member of the Synod, to me the other day, "and no family will be safe." We can, therefore, well understand the agitation in Protestant circles over the advance of Ritualism. The squabbles, however, are not without their interest for us, inasmuch as they are producing an extending indifference to all religion in intelligent Protestant circles. In the history of the Protestant Church in Ireland there never was such indifference among the best of its members as at the present time. The young men, especially, are notoriously careless, and great numbers of them, though nominally Protestants, are virtually Freethinkers. Many of these are only kept even nominally within the church by fear of the ruin that would await them in business were their true thoughts known. From these facts it is safe to conclude that the fate of Protestantism in Ireland promises to be the same as that which more obviously awaits it elsewhere. The Ritualistic portion will drift into Catholicism; the non-Ritualistic section will go over by degrees to Freethought; and, ultimately, the people will be divided into two camps, composed of Catholics and Secularists. When this inevitable division is an accomplished fact, *then* will come the "tug of war"; but the issue will be fought out long after "all of us are mute and most of us forgotten."

J. O'DONOVAN.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The historical books of Israel which we possess are not historical records, but are historical legends reduced to writing by writers who had sometimes political and sometimes religious ends in view. The argument of those tales is that all the people habitually worshipped Jahveh and him alone, during which normal period they were prosperous, but that sometimes under evil influence they abandoned him, and fell into disaster, until, after sufficient chastisement, they returned to the true worship. The historic truth is that the old Israelites, when disasters came, as they always do come, gave up the worship of their national god as not a success, and tried the gods of their neighbors. They returned to Jahveh because the other gods did not satisfy them any better. In fact, the people had no fixed or distinct faith, and it is not correct to accuse them of backsliding when they were only vacillating.—*Garrick Mallery in "Popular Science Monthly."*

OBITUARY.

Died on June 12, William Chicken, at South Gosforth. Deceased for many years had been a member of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch of N.S.S. Not long before he died, the vicar of the parish desired to see him. The deceased sent word out that he might come as a gentleman, but not as a priest. The vicar did not come. Almost his last words were: "I think this is the winding up."—CHAS. H. KELF.

On May 28, at his residence, Bartholomew Street, High Fields, Leicester, aged 72 years, died, after a long illness, Mr. Geo. Woodford. He was one of the first pioneers of Freethought in Leicester, holding meetings at the homes of different friends, and afterwards joining the Secular Society, of which he was an earnest member. Deceased was buried on Saturday, May 31, at Leicester Cemetery, by Mr. Slater, sen., who read the service. I have known the late Mr. G. Woodford 25 years, and remember him as one of the most consistent and benevolent members of society. He passed away peacefully in the opinions for which he fought in life. He was much respected by all.—S. STAUGHTON.

"On human evidence the miracles of St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament."—*J. A. Froude,* "Short Studies."

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SOME BIBLE SAINTS.

There was an old Jewess named Jael,
She took up a hammer and nail,
And knocked on the head
A friend in her bed;
So "blessed among women" is Jael.

Then there was the holy cheat Jacob,
Who played all the tricks he could rake up;
He deceived his old dad
And his brother drove mad,
So a saint now in heaven is Jacob.

Another fine saint is King David,
Who watched Mrs. Uriah as she bathéd;
Then put Mr. Uriah
In the enemies' fire,
While he took the joys of the savéd.

And lastly there's sweet gentle Jesus,
Whose virtues so cold nearly freeze us;
He swore at the figs
And sent devils to pigs,
And took all our sins just to ease us.

LUCIANUS.

TALMAGE IN THIRTY-NINE ATTITUDES.

One of our Sunday papers, says *The Christian Register*, has recently published thirty-nine pictures of Dr. Talmage, taken by instantaneous photography—taken in all the attitudes of prayer, spiritual ecstasy, devotion, inspiration, exaltation, fervor, and frenzy which he exhibits in the pulpit. This five-cent show is one of the most extraordinary uses to which photography has ever been put. The worldly laugh over it, the judicious grieve, the pious mourn. The editor of our religious evening daily has heretofore rather gloried in Dr. Talmage; but he is out now in a lengthy article in which he solemnly takes the doctor to task for profaning the Sabbath. If the doctor allowed himself to be photographed in the pulpit in the full swing of his eloquence, it was awful; if he posed for those theatrical pictures in cold blood, who can characterise the deed? This aspect of the affair is, however, lost sight of by the religious daily, which regards the doctor's sin as monstrous in swelling the receipts of a sensational Sunday newspaper. But one of its secular rivals harps on a different string, as witness the following: "Ye gods and little fishes! Is the preacher's art a sham and a humbug? Is your pulpit pathos a simple matter of arching the eyebrows, and your eloquence a mere trade? Can you show how you make your congregation weep by putting on the proper expression before a camera? Is it all mechanism, all acting, all hypocrisy?"

LAWYERS AND DOCTORS AS FREETHINKERS.

The lawyers are probably less inclined to scepticism than the doctors, because the legal mind is closer akin to the theological mind; it has chiefly to do with arbitrary and artificial questions and distinctions, and is brought less under the influence of natural causes than that of the medical practitioner. The lawyer falls into personal and exclusive views; he makes the cause of his client his own; and his whole training is to beget a habit of mind quite the opposite of the scientific. The physicians were the first to discredit witchcraft and to write against it, but the lawyers cherished and defended the belief nearly as long as did the clergy. The legalism, too, which has invaded Christianity, and which is such a repulsive feature in certain of the creeds, especially that of Calvinism, is the word of the attorney habit of mind.—*John Burroughs in "Open Court."*

In the Life of Dr. Doyle by Fitzpatrick, it is told how examining theological students at Carlow College on the subject of administering the mass, he said to a student named Jarrett, "Supposing you were saying mass, and let a spider fall into the chalice, would you feel yourself authorised in picking it out?" Jarrett was silent; but having been prompted by another student, he replied, "I would swallow it, my lord." "Very good," said Dr. Doyle "and if a donkey fell into the chalice, what course would you adopt?" "Swallow it," responded Garrett mechanically. "Hoofs and all?" inquired the Bishop. "Yes," replied Garrett to the amusement of the assemblage.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE A FAILURE.

The lady of the house was cheerful, chatty, and good humored. A late personal experience which she told was enjoyed by her small audience. She had not been feeling well, had been depressed and nervous, and somebody advised her to try Christian science. She consulted a "healer," who informed her that she was not ill, depressed, or nervous; that such states of feeling had no real existence; that she must lift herself into an exalted atmosphere, keep herself in an elevated condition of mind, and thus free herself from these troubles, which were nothing more than the evidence of sin, etc. She was much impressed by this spiritual doctrine, and returned to her home feeling that she had indeed been lifted into the regions of the beautiful and the good.

At dinner, surrounded by her husband and children, she continued in this transcendental state—as evidenced by her conversation—and thinks she might be there still had she not been rudely lowered to the level of commonplace life by the remarks of various members of the family about the board.

"Mother, you seem absent-minded," said one of the boys.

"Mamma, you are hifaluten," chimed in one of the little ones.

Finally the august senator, who is accustomed to all sorts of attention from his wife, emphatically demanded: "What the ——is the matter with you?"

"I came down at once," said the vivacious hostess. "I was like the old farmer who had got religion and who owned a ram. Going into the house one day, minus his hat and coat, he said to his family: 'There's no use in trying—I can't be a Christian while that ram is on the place.' I told the senator that I can never be a genuine Christian scientist while he and the boys are around."—*Washington Post.*

ACID DROPS.

The impudence of the Romish Church, and the connivance of Lord Salisbury, should attract greater attention. Malta is an English possession, but our Tory premier has allowed the Pope to decide its marriage laws. Roman Catholics must be married according to the form established by the Council of Trent. If a Protestant marries a Catholic the marriage is null and void. And as the arrangement is retrospective all persons married otherwise will be regarded as "living tally" and their children as illegitimate. Surely it is enough to make an Englishman's blood boil to see our Government truckling in this infamous way to Papa Pecci.

A joker will have it that Miss Fawcett is not the first woman who may claim to be senior wrangler. He says Eve has a prior claim. She was the first to eat of the tree of knowledge, and the world has been full of wrangling ever since.

Mr. Sheil, a London magistrate, has fined a Salvation officer for doing his duty. He obeyed his general's orders and had the big drum banged, and a number of brass instruments blared, outside the house of an old lady suffering from rheumatics in the head. She was nearly driven crazy, but that was her own fault, for why did she have the rheumatics when the Salvationists were playing? Being asked to go, the officer said he wouldn't. Afterwards he moved four doors off. Finally he was taken in hand by another officer in the service of the law, and the upshot was a stiff fine in a police court. We sympathise, with the poor oppressed Salvationist. As for the old lady, who objected to being driven mad with pain, she ought to be ashamed of herself.

After eighteen centuries of Christianity the grandest monument in Brompton Cemetery is to Jackson, the prize-fighter.

At a meeting of the Kent and Sussex Baptist Association, the Rev. J. S. Geale related with much gusto how a tract headed "Prepare to meet your God" created so much alarm in the mind of the female occupier of a house in Sussex, that she thought it requisite that a retired policeman should sleep at her house to protect her.

There is not to be a religious census after all. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury is against it. Perhaps he is

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afraid a good many people will put down, as Mr. Foote did in Holloway Gaol, "Religion—none."

Count Leo Tolstoi, the great Russian novelist, has gone the full length in his imitation of Jesus. He now boldly advocates universal celibacy, says there can be no such a thing as Christian marriage. Marriage is a sin, and "the Christian view of marriage requires a married convert to substitute fraternal for conjugal relations." Mr. Foote will deal with Count Tolstoi's declaration next week.

The Bishop of Rochester has been holding forth at Kingston on heaven. His object was to raise funds to build a little heaven on earth, in the shape of a vicarage, for the parson of St. John's. Dr. Thorold told his audience as much about heaven as could be imparted by one who has never seen it and does not know anyone who has. He described it as a place of "rapturous worship." Evidently the parsons are to be the top sawyers even in paradise. The poet says "The heaven of each is all that each desires," and Dr. Thorold cannot imagine a heaven without plenty of "worship" and unlimited gospel-shops. Just in the same way the Russian soldier looks for grog-shops in heaven. According to a story, which we are not sceptical enough to doubt, one soldier got to heaven, and finding he could not obtain any brandy, he went off in a huff to the other place, where he found brandy and tobacco too.

Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, in this city, thinks that "our elections are bought and sold in the most shameless way, and the political morals of the republic in all respects are thoroughly depraved. Vice rules and virtue tamely submits." He ought to know. Collector Erhardt and the Hon. Thomas C. Platt, the Republican boss, are both members of his church.—*Twentieth Century.*

The Bishop of Manchester says the poor clergy are scandalously underpaid. He himself draws only some £4,000 a year. Meantime match-box makers get 2¼d. a gross and find their own paste.

The Bishop of Chester is a facetious gentleman. He preached at St. Paul's the other day on behalf of the East London Church Fund, which needs £20,000 this year. For his subject he chose the dwellings of the poor. He dilated on the evils of insanitary dwellings and overcrowding, and when his sermon was over they took up a collection for more gospel-shops. From his lordship's closing remarks it seems that the Church's part in remedying the life-conditions of the poor is to consist in maintaining "the purity of family life by her Gospel of Love." Ahem! Was it not Dr. Johnson who said "Clear your mind of cant, sir"?

The President of the National Secular Society has received several begging letters, printed or stereotyped from London missions. They are all in the gospel line, and all want money for "the poor." We hope they may get it—if they deserve it, which is sometimes doubtful. But why do they beg from the President of a Freethought Society?

"People preach that there is nothing in religion. It is a lie, as deep as hell." So says the Rev. J. McNeill, and he speaks from experience. He finds there is more in religion than in railway portering.

The other Sunday Barnum's wife got him to go to church, where, early in the proceedings, he fell asleep. The minister then began reading the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel. As he proceeded in the description of the wonderful beast, which the prophet saw in the land of the Chaldeans, Barnum moved uneasily in his seat. "Everyone had four faces and everyone four wings." Barnum rubbed his eyes, and the preacher went on—"And they had the hands of a man under their wings." Barnum was now wideawake. "As for the likeness of their faces, the four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side, and the four had the face of an oxen on the left side, the four also had the face of an eagle." Barnum was now standing up, his wife vainly pulling at his coat tails. "Name your own price," he cried, disregarding the wifely entreaty. —*Winnipeg Star.*

Thibet is being gradually opened up. Mr. Rockhill, formerly American Secretary of Legation to Pekin, has explored the country, and so has Babu Sarat Chandra Das, whose account will be given in next month's *Contemporary*. Readers will probably be able then to judge whether the account of Buddhism in Thibet as given by Mme. Blavatsky, who pretends also to have been there, or that given by Mr. Wheeler in our columns last year, is the more correct.

Cardinal Manning has turned poet, or rather parodist, in his old age. Copying the well-known lines of Pope—

> "For modes of faith let graceless bigot fight;
> He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."—

he says,

> "For charts and compasses let bigots fight;
> He can't be wrecked who steers the ship aright."

Of course he argues that the ship cannot be steered aright without the charts and compasses provided by the Church. But this is a question of fact and experience and shows that there are more shipwrecks by following these antiquated charts than by boldly casting them aside and relying on what is supplied by modern science.

By the way, Pope was professedly a Catholic, but the lines Manning reprobates shows he was really more a follower of his friend Lord Bolingbroke than a true disciple of the Church.

The so-called "Christian Scientists," or believers in the faith cure, who are virtually a new Christian sect, are spreading in America. One little town in Indiana reports: "All the members of orthodox churches in this town of 1,500 people have withdrawn and have become Christian Scientists." They don't believe in doctors. The only way in which "Christian Science" is likely to be beneficial is in killing out the fools.

The Christian Scientist holds that really there is no disease, and he is enjoined to meditate upon this profound thought for fifteen minutes at the hour of nine every day. The editor of the *Christian Science Thought*, the organ of the believers, says that the difference in solar time between the localities will not materially affect the result. We should think not indeed.

Dr. L. E. Browski, who obtained a copy of the sacred book of the Yezidees, the so-called devil-worshippers of Mesopotamia, says the Yezidee religion is so fortunate as to have no devil. They not only don't worship him, but think it a God-pleasing act to cut off the head of any one who even mentions his name. Missionaries would have a bad time among the Yezidees.

Lord Rosebery, in laying the foundation stone of the London County Council's new asylum, delivered an impressive speech. He deplored the increase of insanity in civilised countries, and remarked that "among barbarians it was comparatively rare—so rare that a person mentally diseased was regarded as a deity." Yes, and all our Western religion comes from the Orient, where the prophets of God are all more or less cranky and every lunatic is inspired.

A statement was made in America that more than one half of the cases of religious mania came from the Presbyterians, the sect who hold most firmly to God's sovereignty, election, and eternal torment. No doubt these views tend to mental distraction, and an illustration is given this week by the identification of the young woman found in the Thames at Horsleydown as Miss Mary Louisa Garraway McGaw, the daughter of the Rev. J. Thoburn McGaw, the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in England. She had suffered from religious mania and doubtless committed suicide.

The Prophet Elias recently arrived at Odessa. Not the one who ascended in a fire-chariot, and turned up a thousand years later when J. C. was "transfigured," but a vessel of that name. She was manned entirely by monks from the monastery of Mount Athos. This is as it should be. There are many strapping men of God in England who would be more useful before the mast.

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The *Christian Commonwealth* has discovered that John Stuart Mill was a great social reformer, and that his message to the world is very far from being exhausted. It hopes that "Mill will find his Cobden"—someone, that is, to carry his gospel amongst the people—and suggests Mr. John Morley as a likely prophet. But, alas, "Mill was an Atheist, or nearly such, and the popular idea of Mr. Morley is the melancholy one that he is altogether so." 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

Dr. Parker is getting on with his People's Bible. He has arrived at the Psalms, and if he lives long enough he will reach Revelation. How strange that the Father's Word requires such a vast amount of explanation! Fancy a human father sending such a muddled message to his family that one of them had to spend his whole life in finding out and expounding the governor's meaning!

The Jews starting an Association for the Colonisation of Palestine looks like a practical joke. Like Christians in their eulogy of poverty, the Jews think that to go to Palestine will be an excellent thing for everybody but their individual selves. They all want somebody else to go.

The Christians of this country should feel relieved to know that the Maori god recently contributed to the New York Museum of Natural History has been sent back to New Zealand whence it came. There is a high duty on gods, as home manufacture must be protected. It is lucky for Jehovah that he got in before the tariff was established. —*Freethought.*

The Lord sent a fire upon the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Stourport, which distroyed the organ and gutted the interior of the building. The guid auld Scotch folk always held that the Lord did not like organs.

One of the Lord's visitations in the shape of cholera is reported from Spain, where godliness usually has so much play that cleanliness does not get a chance.

An outbreak against the Jews in Lithuania is reported. At Lohoisk a crowd of drunken peasants attacked and destroyed the shops and public-houses belonging to the Jews. The police were quite unable to manage the crowd, and were attacked with stones. A great number of policemen and Jewish merchants were wounded. More blessed fruits of religion.

The Rev. F. McLeod, formerly of Economy, Nova Scotia, has been sent to gaol at Chicago for bigamy. The heartless law has no consideration for the privileges of men of God.

The unhappy husband and wife who committed suicide after killing their child at Holloway, died in the conviction that their child "was in heaven." "God forgive us," wrote the husband in his last letter. "God bless you," also wrote Alfred Reynolds, whose body was found in the Thames. Evidently not Atheists, Mr. Talmage.

A controversy on "Confession and Absolution" has been going on in the pages of the *Sussex Daily News*. No doubt sacerdotal pretensions in that direction are endorsed by the Prayer-book, but when people read how women are disgusted by the questions asked them at Ritualistic confessionals, and that the filthy *Priest in Absolution* is used there and defended by its users, they will not think much of the Prayer-book endorsement.

The Sabbatarian bigots are wild at the idea of a Sunday band at Hampstead Heath, and the *Record* devotes a leading article to denunciation of the desecration. "No Competition" is the cry of the sky-pilots. Music is an excellent thing, but only in the service of the church.

The tithe war still goes on in Wales. Mr. Stevens, the agent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who has been endeavoring to get in the arrears at Llanefydd, near Denbigh, has been obliged to retire, and vows he will not again attempt the task unless the claims of the Church of Christ are enforced by a strong body of police or military.

Of "rich coves' parsons" we have enough and to spare—clergymen who keep their denunciations for the vices of Lazarus, and are careful never to ruffle the self-complacence of Dives. Now and then we have a bishop in search of a sensation taking up gambling or Sunday sports among the upper classes as a peg on which to get paragraphed in the Press; but as a rule it is the poor people who are preached at, prayed at, yelled at, and sent to hell by the great mob of half-hearted, half-souled sky-pilots who crowd the quays of religion in search of a job. They howl at the poor, but they go out in the pilot boat only to assist the rich who have something to give away.—*Referee.*

Canon Carter, Superior-General of the Romanising Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, evidently fears that the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury will not thoroughly endorse the Ritualism of the Bishop of Lincoln and that that dignitary may "cave in." He therefore urges his friends to remember that their movement does not depend on any single man, however high, however venerable.

Some Welsh operas by Dr. Parry have been produced at the Theatre Royal, Cardiff, and some of the most pious people in the town gave their services as singers. This has roused the wrath of the Rev. F. C. Spur, who makes a solemn protest against this hideous thing. He said, in his Sunday sermon: "We have had this hideous spectacle—I can call it by no other term—of a company of professedly Christian people—members of Christian churches in Cardiff and elsewhere—on the boards of our Theatre Royal. One of them the daughter of a Congregational minister, one the daughter of a Church of England minister, two or three the daughters of Cardiff chapel deacons, a number of them members of chapel choirs and members of the churches themselves, principally in this town." Horrible, most horrible! The Devil is evidently inserting the thin edge of wedge to drive out Calvinistic Methodism.

The religious papers are much concerned about the Lord Mayor having declared that Cardinals like Manning took precedence like other "deposed princes." Now we don't care a jot whether the Cardinal comes before the Archbishop of Canterbury or not, but we cannot help noticing how constantly he is pushed forward, as though he was virtually already the head of the Church of England, instead of "a restless self-advertiser."

"A restless self-advertiser." This is the description given of Cardinal Manning by Prof. Friedrich, the historian of the Vatican Council, in his scathing reply to the Cardinal's "True" History of the Vatican Council. The Professor adds: "As before the Council and during the Council he was always pushing himself to the front, so he continued to do after the Council, and so he does still."

Bishop Wilberforce told Prince Albert that if Manning had been made an English Bishop he would never have 'verted to Rome, and in his Diary Soapy Sam refers to Manning discussing his chance of being a bishop with one Trower. Possibly Manning, like all Cardinals, aims at the seat of St. Peter. His good friend Mr. Stead, who has urged the advantage to the Church of an English-speaking Pontiff, has not mentioned that Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, has far better claims. But the Italian Cardinals will take good care that the tiara falls on one of their own heads.

Here is a new Thomas Paine story—positively a *new* one. According to one of God's elect at Manchester, Thomas Paine's death-bed was attended by John Wesley, and Thomas told John that he would be in the arms of Jesus in two hours. How's that for high? Paine died at New Rochelle, in America, on June 8, 1809. Wesley died in 1791, eighteen years earlier. But what does that matter? If it wasn't Wesley it was someone else.

Jehovah and Human Sacrifices.—That the worship of this deity was at first completely in keeping with the sternness of his nature may be inferred from the facts that human sacrifice occur even in the time of the Judges (Jephthah's daughter), that the prophet Micah presupposes an acquaintance with them on the part of his contemporaries, and that the substitution for them of animal sacrifices only takes shape in the (late prophetic) form of the legends of Abraham.—*Dr. Otto Pfleiderer "Philosophy of Religion*, vol iii., p. 123.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 22, morning at 11 and afternoon at 3, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; evening at 7, Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street: subjects—"Heresy at Oxford," "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism," "Is there a Future Life?"

Thursday, June 26, Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Hammersmith, at 8, "Freethought and Christ." Admission free.

June 29, Reading.
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.
August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. C.—There is no evidence that Cyrenius was governor of Syria in the time of Herod. There is evidence to the contrary. Herod the Great died B.C. 4. Being recognised as king, he would not have been subjected to such an indignity as the taxing, which is unrecorded by any historian. Judæa was only declared a Roman province after the deposition of Archelaus, about A.D. 7, and then Cyrenius was sent (see Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii., 1, 1, and *Wars*, ii., 8, 1). Of course there are numerous attempts to shuffle out of the difficulty that there is a difference of a dozen years between Matthew and Luke as to the date of Christ's birth, by those brought up to believe in inspiration. Mr. Wheeler will probably write on the subject shortly.

J. HAWKE.—Your letter *was* answered, and the reply posted in your own envelope. Ingersoll would be laughed at if he took any action against a creature like Clark Braden. If you believe everything said about public men, which they do not deign to contradict, you will have to carry a good budget of scandal. Mr. Justice Wills recently denounced this wicked and foolish principle in court. Colonel Ingersoll is too sensible and dignified to go down and scuffle in the gutter with blackguards who make faces at his windows.

R. G. LEES.—We are pleased to hear such good reports of Mr. Snell, and hope he will prosper with his platform work in London.

J. BROAD.—Paper sent. What is the other matter to which you allude?

C. K. LAPORTE.—Don't be too hard on the Grand Old Man.

C. J. RUSE reports 16s., collected at a Camberwell Branch open-air lecture for Hospital Sunday Fund.

C. JOHNSON.—It is copied from an American paper. Fixing it at "Crewe, Cheshire" is good.

W. HOLLAND.—The Branches have the power to invite whom they please to lecture for them. The Executive would not interfere except in a case affecting the honor of the party. Thanks for the jokes.

G. B.—Shall appear.

G. NAEWIGER.—The date is altered to September 28.

J. BRUMAGE.—Thanks for the cutting. Always pleased to hear from you.

C. H. KELF.—We note what you say.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec., N. E. Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subs.:—Stockton Branch, £1 15s. 2d.; Mr. Elcoat, £1; J. Bowen, 2s. 6d.

A. W. BARBER.—Thanks for the extracts which may be useful.

J. BURRELL.—The suggestions shall be considered.

W. H. PEGG.—Mr. Forder executes your order and sends you the information as to joining the N. S. S., which every Freethinker should do. You will find Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on the *Laws Relating to Heresy* useful, also Mr. Foote's *Prisoner for Blasphemy*.

M. A. FISHER—Cuttings are always welcome.

S. STANDRING.—Sorry to hear of the disturbance in Finsbury Park. You are to be relied on, but are you sure of the discretion of all your lecturers?

A. B. MOSS.—We wish the *Freethinker* did circulate by the hundred thousand. As an editor we haven't modesty enough to dispute that it deserves to. Thanks for your efforts to push our circulation.

F. ABLARD.—We have passed over your order to Mr. Forder. For the Paine story see "Acid Drops."

W. FOWLER.—The Parson's Idol is one of our tracts. See advertisement on our last page. We don't want any more copies. With mistaken kindness our readers send us one nicely written once or twice a month.

THE SNAKE.—First half good, second half indifferent.

W. WARRY.—We never knew the man and could not "disown" him. We cannot find that he was ever a member of the N. S. S.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Open Court—Freethought Record—Daily News—East Devon Mail—Loyal American—Sussex Daily News—Canterbury Press—Two Worlds—West London Church Chronicle—Morpeth Herald—People's Press—Reading Observer—South Wales Echo—Gravesend and Dartford Reporter.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £64 6s. 8d.

Ninth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
J. Sanderson	0	5	0	F. Denny	0	2	6
S. M. Peacock	0	5	0	J. Primrose	0	4	0
R. S.	0	5	0	H. Croughan	0	2	0
R. S.	0	1	0	J. Bunton	0	1	6
E. Brewster	0	7	0	J. Mascord	0	1	0
W. Josslyn	0	1	0				

SUGAR PLUMS.

A small meeting of delegates of Lancashire Branches of the N. S. S. was held at the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Saturday evening. Mr. Foote presided. On the proposal of Mr. Smith (Liverpool), seconded by Mr. Hemingway (Manchester), it was resolved that the Lancashire Branches should form a Secular Federation on the model of the existing Federations in London and the Tyneside. It was further resolved to call a special meeting, for the purpose of publicly inaugurating the Federation, at Manchester, on Sunday, July 6, at half-past three in the afternoon. Delegates from all the Lancashire Branches are invited to attend, and also any members of the Branches who would like to attend individually and take part in the deliberations. The Constitution will then be adopted; a President, vice-presidents and a secretary will be elected; and steps will be taken to organise some lecturing tours in the district. We hope the July 6 meeting will be a large one.

Despite the extremely fine weather, Mr. Foote had very good audiences at Manchester on Sunday. He said a few words in the afternoon on the usefulness of outdoor lecturing. In the evening Mr. Pegg, the chairman, announced that an outdoor lecture would be delivered the following Sunday afternoon on an open space in the Oxford Road, at the corner of Denmark Road. Time 3 o'clock. Lecturer, Mr. A. B. Wakefield.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (June 22) at Liverpool. The morning and afternoon lectures will be delivered in the

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Camden Hall, but owing to structural alterations it is not large enough for the evening meeting, which will be held in the large Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street. This hall holds a great many people. We appeal to the Liverpool Freethinkers to bring as many as possible of their liberal or orthodox friends.

Mr. Geo. Standring's lecture at Hammersmith, in connection with the London Secular Federation, was distinctly a success, the hall being well filled with a mixed audience, who heartily enjoyed the discussion. A great many questions were asked and replied to. Three clergymen attended, two of them opposing, as also did Mr. J. Glen, of the Theistic Church, and a liberal-minded lady, who argued for figurative interpretation. Good feeling prevailed, the Rev. F. L. Donaldson and others describing the Secularists as "Church Purifiers." There are many Freethinkers at Hammersmith, and a good open-air station should be started. Mr. Courtney is willing to endeavor to do this, if a little help is forthcoming from local friends. His address is 8 Norland Road North, Notting Hill. Or he will be pleased to confer with Freethinkers after the forthcoming lectures on the 19th or 26th.

The London Branches are preparing for the Federation's excursion to Epping Forest on July 20. The arrangements for the Hall of Science contingent are completed. The brakes will start at 9.30. Tickets (price 2s. 6d.) can be had from Mr. Anderson at the Hall, the bookstall on Sunday evening, or Mr. E. Pownceby (secy.), 9 Finsbury Street, E.C.

The presence of a good number of Freethinkers overawed the pious rowdies at Tottenham on Sunday afternoon and the meeting went off peacefully. Unfortunately there was trouble in Finsbury Park. We have heard many complaints about this station. Lecturers should remember, when they are breaking new ground, that the wind of Freethought must be tempered to the orthodox shorn lambs. It is highly necessary that lecturers in such places should be courteous and good-tempered. No doubt Christian insults are hard to stand, but those who cannot control themselves should not engage in such work.

The Newcastle Secularists are making headway with the Sunday Music League. On Sunday evening a first concert was given on the Town Moor. The band was conducted by Mr. Thomas Wood, and according to the *Chronicle* the selections were admirably rendered. There was a large and orderly concourse of people. During an interval in the programme some spirited addresses were delivered by Messrs. J. Brown, E. Copland, and F. Ogle. Loud applause greeted the announcement that Sunday music would be made a test question at the municipal elections in November.

Of course the Secularists have all along been the moving spirits in this agitation, but we are glad to see they are now being joined by some liberal-minded Christians.

The North-Eastern Secular Federation's annual meetingf took place on Sunday. Mr. S. M. Peacock, as a matter o, course, was re-elected president, Mr. Joseph Brown secretary and Mr. Tullen treasurer. Most of the old vice-presidents were also re-elected. Two additions were Mr. H. Richardson, of Jarrow—a very welcome addition—and Mr. Storar. Arrangements were begun for the annual excursion to Durham on August 4, when a public meeting will be held in the market-place. No more lecturing tours are to be organised for the present, the Federation having overrun the constable. We hope its financial position will be speedily improved by the subscriptions of the wealthier Freethinkers.

Mr. Freeman, the historian, writing to the *Speaker* from Kairwan, gives an interesting account of the Great Mosque. "This astounding work was done," he says, "when St. Sophia was still a modern building, and when in England we had but lately begun to build the rudest buildings at all. The Great Mosque arose before the seventh century was ended, while Islam was still in its early zeal, when Africa was its latest conquest." Mr. Freeman also refers to the "time when the Arab had the whole civilisation, the whole art and science of the world, to himself."

In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for June 15, M. Ernest Renan resumes his critical history of the People of Israel, dealing with the reign of Hezekiah. Hezekiah and Isaiah he holds were the real founders of Judaism, which before their time was without name or definite monotheistic character.

Chat, of Portsmouth, prints our paragraph on the noble Millett in a letter from "A Hater of Cant." The same number of *Chat* contains a strong satirical sermon to parsons, enough to make the younger ones gnash their teeth and the older ones their gums.

Next Sunday (June 29) the Battersea Branch will have a Tea and Soirée after the quarterly meeting. The tea will begin at six o'clock. Tickets can be obtained at the hall.

Mr. Foote's portrait is now on sale. The cabinet size is one shilling. Mr. Forder will send them by post, carefully packed, for thirteen-pence each.

The publication of the new edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* will begin on July 1. The first instalment will be *The Creation Story*.

The first eight, as well as the second eight, of our Freethinker Tracts are now ready. The last four, completing the twenty, are being printed. We have issued this large variety to hit all sorts of tastes. There is no reference to the *Freethinker* except at *the end* of each tract. This will prevent the ordinary reader from being alarmed at the outset. When he has read the tract through it doesn't matter.

The new edition of James Thomson's *Satires and Profanities* is now on sale. The price is one shilling. Those who read the advertisement on our back page will see that this little volume is one to be prized by Freethinkers.

We have in the press two works by the great Jeremy Bentham, the intellectual father of John Stuart Mill, the founder of the Utilitarian school, and the reformer of English jurisprudence. One is *The Church of England Catechism Examined*—a trenchant criticism of the instrument by which the State Church debauches the minds of children, and does its best to make them fools and slaves. This work is of considerable length. There will be a biographical Preface. The other work is a reprint of the early chapters of his Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. It contains a statement of *Utilitarianism*, and will bear that title. This is a smaller work than the first. Both will be useful to Freethinkers and to the Freethought propaganda.

A magistrate in South Australia, according to the Australian *Radical*, recently startled a lawyer who was endeavoring to discredit a witness because he did not believe in the Bible, by declaring that "nobody believed in it." The lawyer said he believed in it, and the magistrate laughingly remarked that the Bishop of Peterborough did not believe in it—probably to show that those who know it best believe it least. But of course Bishop Magee will say he does believe in it, though he don't think its adoption by the State practicable.

The Sunday excursion to Seaton, Devon, has been hailed with pleasure by a writer in the *East Devon Mail*. Such places want waking up, and a Sunday excursion comes as a tonic with lasting effects.

Captain Otto Thomson acknowledges the balance of £4 12s. 2d. from the Swedish Prisoner's Fund, and returns the thanks of Mr. Lennstrand and the Swedish Freethinkers for the generous aid received from the Freethinkers of England. Mr. Lennstrand will soon, we trust, be able to go on with his work as energetically as ever. But he must hasten slowly. Thanks to the bigots, he has had a touch of prison-consumption and must be cautious of his health for the rest of his days.

Our esteemed Swedish contemporary, *Fritankaren*, gives a brief notice of the N. S. S. Conference at Manchester.

Mr. William Rossiter, with whom Mr. Foote has had some controversy, sends us a memorial pamphlet entitled *Elizabeth Rossiter, Founder of Country Life for Poor Town Children*. We hope the claim made for Mrs. Rossiter is not correct, for it is a severe reflection on the Christianity and humanity of Londoners if they never before 1868 thought of taking poor children for a while into the country. Be this as it may, the

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exertions of the late Mrs. Rossiter in this direction deserve esteem as a work of practical secular benevolence.

It is frequently complained that the education given in government schools in India leads to Atheism. At any rate the scholars abandon their own faith and do not take up with any other. Sir Charles Aitchinson, ex-governor of the Punjab, says that many of the natives even prefer to send their children to Christian missionary schools rather than to those established by the government. According to our information some of the most decided Hindu sceptics have been turned out of these very missionary schools.

Dr. Specht, of Gotha, sends us, together with *Menschenthum*, a copy of his other publication, *Freie Glocken*, which inculcates the religion of Humanity in a somewhat lighter fashion.

Almost all the Liberal papers in Belgium are conducted by Freethinkers. Their attitude is expressed in the motto to the *Journal de Gaud* "Liberalism is either freethought or nothing."

Professor A. Dickson White takes "The Antiquity of Man and Egyptology" as his subject in the June number of the *Popular Science Monthly*. His account of how Egyptian chronology was twisted to make it agree with the Bible inspired idea that man is less than six thousand years old, shows the intellectual servility engendered by Bibliolatry.

"A PIOUS AND REVERENTIAL SPIRIT."

During my fifteen year's experience as a Freethought advocate it has frequently been urged against me by lugubrious gentleman of orthodox pattern, "that I do not treat solemn and sacred subjects in a proper spirit: that I allow carnal reason to overcome and destroy all the finer qualities of the human soul, and consequently all my discourses have very little influence for good."

If this charge were true I should be sorry. It is my highest ambition to be of some service to my fellow man—to be a true "Educationist"; for what is an educator but one who tries to make men think, who endeavors by a multitude of varying modes to draw out the faculties of his hearers? When I have heard this charge levelled against myself—and I have heard it made against men of far greater intellectual gifts that I can lay claim to—I have reasoned with myself in this wise: Do I then really laugh at the noble and good and pour ridicule upon the lofty and sublime? Have I ever taught men that good conduct only characterises fools, and that wise men were always rogues?—No.

Have I ever spoken in favor of murder, or theft, or lying, or adultery, or fornication, or any other offence against the community?—No.

Have I always protested with all my power against slavery, physical as well as intellectual?—Yes.

Have I always insisted that men could not evade the consequences of their own deeds?—Yes.

These subjects, then, were treated in a "proper and reverential spirit"?—Yes.

At what, then, have I mocked? at what have I jeered? at what have I pointed the finger of scorn?

To answer these interrogations I think for a moment of how biblical subjects were regarded twenty or thirty years ago by the whole Christian community, and what havoc destructive criticism has played with them during the time that has elapsed till to-day.

I think how, only twenty years ago, few dared to ridicule Samson's broad jawbone encounter with a thousand pudding-headed Philistines without bringing upon his heretical head a terrible storm of anathemas; and how to-day the "revised version" admits that after all it is only "poetry." I think of the time when few had the temerity to poke fun at Balaam's talkative companion, and how to-day Christians laugh as heartily as unbelievers. I remember how reverentially the "Devil" was spoken of when I was a Sunday-school scholar, and how we were always instructed in our amateur theatricals to say "What the deuce" instead of "What the Devil," and upon no account were we to inform any one (except in a pious way) that they would be *damned*. On the stage inferior comedians to-day who cannot give a funny sentence point without "gag," often succeed in arousing some merriment by adding a vigorous *damn* to make it go. The majority of the audience, who would consider themselves insulted if you called in question their Christianity, positively enjoy the vulgarity.

But what does it all mean? It means that the old pious and reverential spirit has gone out of the people. It has certainly gone out of me. I can never feel again as I felt in my old schoolboy days. But what Freethinker expects that I should?

What leads me to write in this strain is the fact that recently a clergyman of the Church of England and a City missionary both said that they felt in their hearts that I really did not mean to laugh at these so-called sacred subjects, but that I found my jokes pleased my audiences and that was why I keep to it. These gentlemen did not see that by so saying they were charging me with insincerity. No. They would fain believe that I had some remnant left of the "pious and reverential spirit" which had been imparted to me in my Christian days, but that I kept it in subjection for special occasions for my own use. The fact is, the article with me has been long "out of stock."

Pious I have not been since I restudied the Bible without the aid of theological spectacles. Reverential I have always been towards those things which at once commanded my respect and admiration—but to nothing else. But one of my Christian opponents recently said, quite sorrowfully: "But if we cannot defend these thing in the Bible you have pointed out, if we cannot answer your objections to the Christian faith, surely you will not try and destroy a religion that has done so much good in the past, and is a comfort and solace to thousands." In the first place, I question the "good" Christianity is said to have done; and I emphatically declare that I will endeavor to destroy everything that seems to me untrue. That is my great objection to Christianity. I could overlook a good deal in it if it were only true. But it isn't. I cannot take notice of the alleged "comfort and solace" a superstition may be to those who hold it. As soon as I know it to be a superstition my duty is to assail and, if possible, destroy it. Old delusions may have been very comforting to those who believed in them; we had to expose them nevertheless; and we have to expose the fallacies of Christian arguments and the folly of Biblical statements for precisely the same reason.

Arthur B. Moss.

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PROFESSOR HUXLEY TO PROFESSOR SKILTON ON "METAGNOSTICISM."

(From the "Popular Science Monthly.")

I have read the papers which accompanied your letter of the 25th of November with much attention; but, I regret to say, with the result that I can discover no good ground for the change of nomenclature which you propose. Permit me to trouble you with my reasons for that conclusion:

The term "Agnostic" was not suggested by the passage in the "Acts of the Apostles" in which Paul speaks of an inscription to the "Unknown God." It is obvious that the author of that inscription was a Theist—I may say an anxious Theist—who desired not to offend any God, not known to him, by ignoring the existence of such a deity. The person who erected the altar was, therefore, in the same position as those philosophers who, in modern times, have brought about the apotheosis of ignorance under the name of the "Absolute" or its equivalents.

"Agnostic" came into my mind as a fit antithesis to "Gnostic—" the "Gnostics" being those ancient heretics who professed to know most about those very things of which I am quite sure I know nothing.

"Agnostic," therefore, as the name of a philosophical system is senseless; its import lies in being a confession of ignorance—a warning set up against philosophical and theological phantoms—which was never more needed than at the present time, when the ghost of the "Absolute" slain by my masters Hume and Kant and Hamilton is making its appearance in broad daylight.

Your definition of "metagnosticism" says that "it relates to beyond knowledge." That is exactly what all the "absolute" philosophers profess the "Absolute" does; and it is precisely that profession which I consider to be futile and mischievous. To my mind science is exact and organised knowledge—neither more nor less. And the knowledge which goes "beyond knowledge" is something which my cognitive faculties do not enable me to apprehend.

The term "Evolution Philosophy" which you employ seems to have different meanings for different people.

For me, evolution is a name for a certain process, the occurrence of which in various groups of things is as nearly demonstrated as any historical event can be. And this, I think, constitutes a fair ground for the expectation that the whole cosmic process will turn out to be one of evolution. The business of philosophy, as I understand it, is, among other things, to arrive at a scientific theory of evolution; but these other things are quite as important as evolution. Philosophy, in fact, should embrace the whole of which the theory of evolution is a part.

Three or four generations of patient workers, cautiously feeling their way by the well-known methods of true science, may bring our posterity within sight of such a philosophy. For the present, while welcoming all attempts to foreshadow it, with due gratitude to their authors, and holding fast by that which is good in them, it is very necessary that we should not confound such scaffoldings with the edifice, the foundations of which are not yet complete.

I am, dear sir, Yours very faithfully,

T. H. Huxley.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REV. MR. KITSON,

Senior Chaplain to the Aldershot Division.

Dear Sir,—In the sermon which you delivered in All Saint's Military Church, Aldershot, at the 10.15 a.m., parade service, on Sunday the 8th inst., you made a violent attack on Freethinkers. If you were aware that there were any Freethinkers in church at the time who were compelled to listen to you, your choice of a subject was injudicious, unless you wished to promote some friendly discussion, but the tone of your sermon precludes such an idea. The fact is your sermon was a studied insult. The use of words to the effect that "Freethinkers were always men who rejected Christianity from purely selfish motives, such as, to obtain promotion, or to indulge in sensual pleasures," warrants no other conclusion. I suppose you justify such a cowardly lie by the reflection that you told it for the glory of God.

You were also good enough to taunt Freethinkers with being unreasonable in not accepting the myth of the resurrection as a fact on the evidence which you are pleased to call "sufficient." The Rev. Armitage asserted from the same pulpit some months ago that it was "conclusive."

Do you know what amount of evidence is necessary to establish the truth of such a story? Do you know the worthlessness of the evidence you adduce in support of it? The testimony of the Gospels is worthless (1) because they are mutually contradictory (2) because they are evidently anonymous.

Your argument from martyrdom contains a fallacy. Martyrdom proves sincerity of belief, not the truth of the thing believed.

In the spirit in which you scoff at "scientific theories," I recognise the same spirit which compelled poor old Galileo Galilei, under threat of Holy Inquisition tortures, to solomnly swear that the sun was not the centre of our solar system and that the earth did not move round it.

I should strongly advise you, sir, to let Freethinkers alone at parade services. Such sermons should be reserved for voluntary services. If you have any desire to attack any one on his religious views, why not confer with him in private? If you desire to attack a party do it through some one or other of its recognised leaders. It is cowardly to take advantage of the compulsory attendance of soldiers at your service to scoff at them for honestly disagreeing with your views. In conclusion, let me express the hope that the day is not far distant when soldiers and sailors will no longer be compelled to attend religious services in which they have no interest and from which they derive no benefit. Attendance at divine services is not in the least necessary for the maintainance of military discipline and the sooner this is recognised the better.

I remain, etc., A Soldier.

NEWS FROM HEAVEN.

Unlike the editors of our leading Christian journals, who are compelled to sneak up the ministerial back stairs to pick up important information, I can boast of being in direct communication with the celestial *haute volée*, and occasionally receive divine intelligence unsolicited. An opinion prevails at present on earth that Jesus Christ is an illegitimate child (Matthew i., 18—19), and in consequence of the Virgin Mary having been subjected to insults by Mrs. Putophar, Lady Castlemaine and other "saved beauties," the Trinity held a Cabinet Council, and it was resolved unanimously that a marriage must be celebrated forthwith between Mary (*l'ingénue*) and the Holy Ghost (*le paillard*), in order to save appearances.

The Devil, who was in attendance, as usual (Job i., 6), suggested that the bride should be given away by G. W. Foote, and that J. M. Wheeler *(pauvre garçon)* should act as best man. The *menu* of the wedding breakfast was also under consideration. It will chiefly consist of home produce —manna, motzos, roast quails, consecrated wafers, lamb with mint sauce, etc., to be washed down with Lachrymæ Christi. Truffles, eggs and oysters will be eschewed as amatory food. Should Jesus turn water into wines and spirits, there will be a heavenly spree. The Devil suggested pipes and tobacco, but this was opposed by the Trinity as savoring somewhat of hell fire. There is no doubt of the weed being introduced by Old Nick when the guests have well drunk (John ii., 10). His will be done in heaven as it is on earth!

Chas. Kroll Laporte.

REVIEW.

The Science of Life with the Philosophy and Economy of Self Help in Massage. By E. T. Craig, 10 Andover Road, Hammersmith, W. Price Sixpence.—The author of this, the veteran social reformer and author of *Rahaline*, is now eighty-six years. He is a wonderful instance of the success of his own hygienic system, which is founded on scientific experiments.

PROFANE JOKES.

And the Lord said unto Moses, Let Jews have big noses. And lo it was so.

A young lady about to marry a farmer, said, "Mother Eve married a gardener." She forgot to add that owing to the match the gardener lost his situation.

A gentleman was telling a friend of his that he was so good-looking that he was often taken for the Prince of Wales. "That is nothing," said the friend; "I was walking up Dublin the other day, when a man came up to me and got hold of my hand, and said, "Jesus Christ, is that you?"

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Resurrection: Did it Happen?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Witnesses for Christ." Social evening every Monday. Thursday (at 8 sharp), committee meeting. Friday, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Immortality."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Holy Ghost."

Mile End—Assembly Rooms, Beaumont Street, Mile End Road, E., 7, Mr. Cohen, "Evolution or Special Creation: Which?"

West Ham — 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Rational Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, a debate.

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Freethought and the Bible."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Bible against Progress."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. L. Keen, "I and my Father are One."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Miracles: Are they Credible?" June 25, at 8, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Bible and Progress."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Why Christians Libel Us."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, a Freethought lecture.

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Miracles; or the Fairy Tales of Faith."

Tottenham — Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Love, the Basis of True Secularism."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. Marshall, "The Death of Jesus."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "What is Freethought?"

Wood Green — Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "Diana of Ephesus."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "A Defence of Atheism"; 7, "Creation and Evolution."

Dublin—87 Marlborough Street, Saturday, June 21, at 8, Mr. H. Sutton Frizzelle, "The Pagan Origin of Christianity."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 7 (in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street), "Is there a Future Life?"

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. Clifton, a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Excursion to Hiveton Park; members and friends meet at the Victoria Station at 2.10 p.m.

South Shields—Seamen and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. Thos. Thompson, "Compensation or No Compensation?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — June 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Brook Place, Brook Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 29, Liverpool. July 20, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 22, Birmingham; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. THURLOW, 7, Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 22 (morning), Camberwell. July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 26.] SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request.
—BEN JONSON.

A RELIGION FOR EUNUCHS.

THIS is a strong title and it requires a justification. We have to plead that nothing else would serve our purpose. But is our purpose a sound one? That will appear in the course of this article. Let the reader finish what we have to say before he forms a judgment.

We purpose to criticise the view of Christianity recently put forth by the greatest writer in Russia. Count Leo Tolstoi enjoys a European fame. He is one of the classics of modern fiction. His work in imaginative literature, as well as his work in religion, said the late Matthew Arnold, is "more than sufficient to signalise him as one of the most marking, interesting, and sympathy-inspiring men of our time." Whatever such a man writes deserves the closest attention. Not, indeed, that this needs to be bespoken for him. He has the qualities that compel it. There is the stamp of power on all his productions. We pause at them involuntarily, as we turn to look at a physical king of men who passes us in the street.

For some years Count Tolstoi discontinued his work as a novelist. His mind became occupied with social and religious problems. He ceased to be a man of the world and became a Christian; and his being a most sincere nature, endowed with a certain large simplicity which is characteristic of the Russian mind, he did not rest in ecclesiastical Christianity. He embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, and began working it out to its legitimate issues. To him the Sermon on the Mount is divine teaching, not in a metaphorical sense, but in its literal significance. Accordingly he tells the Christian world, in such volumes as *My Religion* and *My Confession*, that it is all astray from the religion of Christ. He points to what its Savior said, takes his words in their honest meaning, and brands as un-Christian the whole framework of Christian society, with its armies, its police, its law courts, its wealth, and its institution of property. The Bishop of Peterborough and Count Tolstoi are at one in believing that if the Sermon on the Mount were carried out the State would go to ruin; only the Bishop of Peterborough shrinks from this, and jesuitically narrows the scope of Christ's teaching, while Count Tolstoi accepts it loyally and calls on Christians to square their practice with their profession.

Mirabeau said of Robespierre, "He is in earnest, he will go far." This is what we felt with respect to Count Tolstoi. Sooner or later he was certain to follow Jesus to the bitter end. After property comes the institution of marriage, upon which the teaching of Jesus may be found in the Gospels. Count Tolstoi now insists on this teaching being practised. He has written a novel, The *Kreutzer Sonata*, to show the evils, not only of marriage, but of all sexual relations. Since then he has written a sober article to justify the sentiments of the hero, or the protagonist, of that terrible story. It is no longer possible to say that Pozdnischeff's ideas are those of a person in a drama. Count Tolstoi accepts the full responsibility of them, and presses them still further. He is now the unblenching apostle of real Christianity—not the Christianity of the Churches, but the Christianity of Christ; and his new evangel will alarm the "advanced Christians," like Hugh Price Hughes, who are always canting, in their sentimental way, the very phrase which he developes in all its terrific meaning. To be a Christian, he tells them, is to crucify the body, to kill the animal passions, to live the pure life of the spirit, and, in short, to practise every austerity of asceticism.

Tolstoi did not jump to this conclusion. Writing on his novels, Mr. W. E. Henley called him "the great optimist." The *Kreutzer Sonata* is the work of a profound pessimist. Concluding *What To Do*, Tolstoi wrote a noble passage on the sacredness of motherhood. Now all that is changed. Motherhood must go too. It will take time, for the old Adam is strong in us. But go it must, and when we have all brought our bodies under, no more children will be born. The race will expire, having perfected its imitation of Christ, and the animals that remain will hold the world in undisputed possession; unless, indeed, they catch the contagion, and wind up the whole terrestrial business.

Before we treat Tolstoi's evangel in detail we must remark that he does not explain the "primeval command" of Jehovah to Adam and Eve—"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." This is very inconsistent with the gospel of absolute chastity. Jehovah says, "Get as many children as you can." Christ says, "Get none at all." If it was the same God who gave both orders he changed his mind completely, and having changed it once he may change it again. In that case the Koran will succeed the New Testament, and the *Imitation of Christ* give place to the *Arabian Nights*.

Revenons à nos moutons. The *Kreutzer Sonata* is a terrible story, but like all novels with a purpose it is inartistic. Othello kills Desdemona without moralising on the sinfulness of marriage, and Pozdnischeff stabs his wife from sheer jealousy. All the preaching is by the way. It might be cut out without affecting the work, and that is its condemnation. When the preacher steps forward the artist retires. And as we are dealing with Tolstoi the preacher we shall go straight to his article in the *Universal Review*.

Tolstoi admits that what he now teaches is incompatible with what he taught before. When writing the *Kreutzer Sonata*, he says, "I had not the faintest presentiment that the train of thought I had started would lead me whither it did. I was terrified by my own conclusion, and was at first disposed to reject it; but it was impossible not to hearken to the voice of my reason and my conscience." This is the language of earnest sincerity.

The conclusion is this—"Even to contract marriage is, from a Christian point of view, not a progress but

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a fall. Love and all the states that accompany and follow it, however we may try in prose and verse to prove the contrary, never do and never can facilitate the attainment of an aim worthy of men, but always make it more difficult."

This is sufficiently dogmatic. Chapman thought otherwise.

> Without love
> All beauties bred in women are in vain,
> All virtues born in men lie buried;
> For love *informs* them as the sun doth colors:
> And as the sun, reflecting his warm beams
> Against the earth, begets all fruits and flowers,
> So love, fair shining in the inward man,
> Brings forth in him the honorable fruits
> Of valor, wit, virtue, and haughty thoughts,
> Brave resolution and divine discourse.

Thus the great Elizabethian. Now for the laureate of the Victorian age.

> For indeed I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of fame, and all that makes a man.

Chapman's strain is higher than Tennyson's, but they harmonise. Tolstoi's is a harsher note. He vilifies the flesh to exalt the spirit, as though the two never mingled. He would abolish the springs of life to purify its stream! He bids us see in our passions "foes to be conquered rather than friends to be encouraged." Why not try to establish a just harmony between them? Is there no medium? Must the passions be kings or slaves, in prison or on the throne? "It is thought an injury to reason," wrote Diderot, "to say a word in favor of her rivals; yet it is only the passions, and strong passions, that can lift the soul to great things; without them there is nothing sublime, whether in conduct or in productions—art becomes childish and virtue trivial."

But let us hear Tolstoi simply as a follower of Christ. We cannot do better than reproduce some of his sentences *in extenso*.

"Christ not only never instituted marriage, but, if we search for formal precept on the subject, we find that he rather disapproved it than otherwise. ('And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or *wife*, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Matthew xix., 29; Mark x., 29, 30; Luke xviii., 29, 30). He only impressed upon married and unmarried alike the necessity of striving after perfection, which includes chastity in marriage and out of it."

"There is not and cannot be such an institution as Christian marriage. . . . This is what was always taught and believed by true Christians of the first and following centuries. . . . In the eyes of a Christian, sexual relations in marriage not only do not constitute a lawful, right, and happy state, as our society and our churches maintain, but, on the contrary, are always a fall, a weakness, a sin."

"Such a thing as Christian marriage never was and never could be. Christ did not marry, nor did he establish marriage; neither did his disciples marry."

"A Christian, I say, cannot view sexual intercourse otherwise than as a deviation from the doctrine of Christ—as a sin. This is clearly laid down in Matt. v., 28, and the ceremony called Christian marriage does not alter its character one jot. A Christian will never, therefore, desire marriage, but will always avoid it."

"In the Gospel it is laid down so clearly as to make it impossible to explain it away, that he who is already married when he discovers and accepts the truth, must abide with her with whom he has been living, *i.e.*, must not change his wife, and must live more chastely than before (Matt. v., 32; xix., 8–12), that he who is single should remain unmarried and continue to live chastely (Matt. xix., 10, 12). and that both the one and the other, in their yearning and striving after perfect chastity, are guilty of sin if they look on a woman as an object of pleasure (Matt. v., 28, 29).

Pozdnischeff, at the close of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, clinches all this by saying—"People should understand the true significance of the words of St. Matthew as to looking upon a woman with the eye of desire; for the words apply to woman in her sisterly character—not only to another man's wife, but also, and above all, to one's own."

If this view of marriage prevailed, and perfect chastity obtained, the human race would come to an end. Tolstoi says he cannot help that. Carnal love perpetuates the race and spiritual love will extinguish it. But what if it does? It is a familiar religious dogma that the world will have an end, and science tells us that the sun is losing its heat, the result of which must in time be the extinction of the human race.

The great Russian does not shrink from the logic of Christ's teaching. He follows Christ as St. Paul did; as Peter did, who forsook his wife; as the Fathers did in crying up virginity and running down marriage; as the monks and nuns did who severed themselves from the world and the flesh, though they often fell into the hands of the Devil. Still there is another step for Count Tolstoi to take. He has not pressed one important saying of Christ, and it is this.

> For there are some eunuchs, which were born so from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.—Matt. xix, 12.

The great Origen followed this advice and emasculated himself. Nor was he alone in the practice. All the disciples of his contemporary, Valens of Barathis, made themselves eunuchs. Mantegazza considers them the spiritual fathers of the Skopskis, a Russian sect dating from the eleventh century. They have been persecuted, but they number nearly six thousand, and regard themselves as the real Christians, the only true followers of Christ. They castrate themselves, and sometimes amputate the genitals entirely; the women even mutilate their breasts as a mark of their sex.

Will Count Tolstoi take the final step? It seems logically necessary even without the text on eunuchs, for the only certain way to avoid sexual intercourse is to make it impossble. In any case we are very much obliged to him for holding up the *real* Christianity, as far as he sees it, to the purblind and hypocritical mob of professed Christians. It will fortify Freethinkers in their scepticism, and warn the healthy manhood and womanhood of Europe against this oriental asceticism which pretends to be a divine message to the robust Occident. When Tolstoi goes the one step farther, and embraces the teaching of Jesus in its entirety, he will be the most powerful enemy of Christianity in the world. By demonstrating it to be a religion for eunuchs he will array against it the deepest instincts of mankind.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN WAS CHRIST BORN?

It is very certain that the Christian era, supposed to date from the birth of Christ, 754 after the building of Rome, cannot be correct, if the story of the early chapters of Matthew has any value. The death of Herod the Great, according to Josephus (*Ant.*, xvii., 8, 1; comp xiv., 14, 5; xvii., 9, 3), must have occurred before Easter in B.C. 4 (see Browne, *Ordo Sæclorum*, or any good chronology). Herod reigned over thirty years, so that, if the Matthew version is true, while Jesus may have been born much earlier, he could not have been born later than B.C. 4.* The learned German, W. D. Block, devoted a treatise (*Das wahre Geburtsjahr Christi*, Berlin, 1843) to showing that Jesus was born in the year 735 of Rome, or 19 B.C., so that if he is right we ought now to date 2009.

It must not be forgotten that, according to the Jewish accounts of Jesus, he was the disciple of Jehoshua Perachia, who was president of the Sanhedrim in the time of King Janneus, who reigned from 106 B.C. to 79 B.C., so that Jesus was probably a contemporary of Julius Cæsar.

* Matthew gives no in ication of the time spent in Egypt, but according to the Gospel of the Infancy (chap. xxv.) it was three years.

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According to Matthew, Jesus was born during the reign of Herod, some time before his death. Herod was succeeded by Archelaus, who reigned nine or ten years, and was then banished. Judæa was then made into a Roman province, A.D. 7, and Cyrenius was sent out as Governor, with instructions to take account of the people's effects for the purposes of taxation (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xvii., 13; xviii., 1).

This, which was over ten years after the death of Herod, was according to Luke ii. the time when Jesus was born. As Dr. Giles says in his *Christian Records*, "if Christ was born in the reign of Herod the Great, no Roman census or enrolment could have taken place in the dominions of an independent king. If, however, Christ was born in the year of the census, not only Herod the Great, but Archelaus also, his son, was dead." The contradiction is flagrant and palpable. It is, moreover, one of many discrepancies between the birth-legends of Matthew and Luke, but one so serious and casting such doubt upon the whole narrative, that every device has been resorted to in order to evade the difficulty.

Some—since it is clear from Josephus that no taxing did take place till many years after the death of Herod—suggest that what Luke refers to was an enrolment or registration by Cyrenius. To this it is sufficient to say that there is no historical reference to any such enrolment, which, indeed, would have been an indignity to Herod the Romans would not have ventured upon, and no evidence of Cyrenius being in Syria before A.D. 6. In B.C. 6, when the ablest orthodox writers place the birth of Christ, Q. Saturninus was governor of Syria, and after him Quintilius Varus.

Others contend that instead of Cyrenius, whose correct name, by the way, was Publius Sulpicius Quirinus (see Suetonius *Tib.* 49, Tacitus Ann. ii., 30), we should read Saturninus or Quintilius. It is sufficient to answer that no manuscripts have either of these readings. Those who are a shade more honest, as Ammon and Weisse, suppose it was a mistake or misrecollection on Luke's part. Upon this we can only say, if so, it is a very grievous one, impossible to one who had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." Then it is pretended that Cyrenius may have been twice governor of Syria. This assumption is inconsistent with the language of Josephus, who speaks of Cyrenius as one who had been consul, and who had passed through various magistracies before becoming consul. His governorship is then spoken of in a way indicating it to be a new magistracy. Moreover, if Cyrenius ever had before been governor of Syria, the difficulty would not be removed save by supposing an unrecorded assessment under his first administration. But the taxing referred to by Josephus was a new thing. It was manifestly the first attempt of the kind, as it resulted in a serious revolt. Others play games with the Greek and endeavor to make it mean *this* taxing took place *before* Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Others, not quite so ready to make a fool of Luke and of history, suggest an emendation so as to make it read, "This was the first census, but a second took place under Cyrenius." Lardner suggests, "This was the first assessment of Cyrenius, the governor of Syria," but does not get over the difficulty that there is no proof, or likelihood, for the Romans did not send the same man twice, that Cyrenius was governor of Syria until after Archelaus was deposed, B.C. 6 or 7.

Another mode of wriggling out of the difficulty is sanctioned by the name of Calvin. This makes it read, "In those days there went forth a decree that the whole land should be enrolled; but the enrolment itself was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Calvin further held that Josephus was mistaken in the account he has given of Cyrenius. But it is evident, even from the allusion in Acts v., 37. that the taxing was a remarkable event, leading, indeed, to the outbreak of subsequent rebellions, and it is not conceivable that Josephus, the governor of Galilee, with access to the archives, could have made a mistake on a matter within the knowledge of his readers. Others, again, fly to the last despairing resource of the orthodox and say, with Olshausen, the passage in Luke is an interpolation.

Now we say the very history of the attempts of orthodox Christians to get out of the difficulty but rivets it tighter. One and all are shifts to avoid a palpable contradiction inconsistent with their theory of inspiration. The difficulty has never been removed. As Schleiermacher observes, the indispensable conditions for its removal are wanting. Our own opinion is clear. The stories both of Matthew and Luke are legendary. It is unhistorical that Herod in alarm at a supposed prophecy slew all the children in Bethlehem, "and in all the coasts thereof," from two years old and under. Such an event must have been recorded by Josephus who sets down his other crimes. The story of Luke that "there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" is equally unhistorical. Not only is it unrecorded by any historian, but Suetonius does mention that Augustus only a few weeks before his death caused to be engraven on bronze tablets an epitome of his public acts. A copy of this inscription is still extant in the ruined temple of Augustus at Ancyra. It records the enumerations of Roman citizens which took place in his reign, and therefore, if there had been a decree that the whole world should be taxed it would certainly be found there. As this is not the case, it is as clearly proved as possible that no such decree was issued.

As to when Christ was born, we are confident that of that day or that hour, or even that year knoweth no man. Next week we shall see that the date of his death is as dubious as that of his birth.

J. M. Wheeler.

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH-BED.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

Delivered Sunday, June 1, 1890.

We are as certain as we can be about anything that we shall die. We do not *absolutely* know that we all shall die, but because no human being has ever been known to live more than a certain number of years we arrive at the conclusion that we and all persons will come to a similar end and in a similar way. There is a Jewish and Christian tradition about a person named Enoch, who "walked with God three hundred years," and then God took him. That is, that at the age of three hundred he was wafted away to heaven on a breeze or cloud, or in some other manner translated into the place where God and the angels and elect men and women live, without suffering the pangs of death. There is a similar tradition about the prophet Elijah, who was whisked from earth in a whirlwind, but comparatively few persons believe these stories, and among those who do, none expects similar apparent good luck to befall him or her. Death is before us, and it is useless to deny that to our superstitious minds it is a disagreeable fate, even to those who do not approach it with fear and abhorrence.

For my own part I confess that when I meditate upon the subject I am conscious that I cannot do so with complete mental composure. It sometimes frightens me to think of death. I have seen so many persons go out of life, that the physical aspects of dying are repulsive to me. Heroes and heroines in novels and poems die very beautifully, but the actual physical facts about death and the process of dying are anything but romantic or poetical. They are everything that we wish they were not. Every one of our senses is offended by them. The eye is shocked by a ghastly sight, the ear is appalled by gruesome sounds, the sense of smell is horribly offended, the sense of touch is cruelly outraged, and bitter indeed must be the taste of death.

No one, I think, can rationally complain or rebel against the repulsive surroundings of death. They are hateful, but that seems to me to be a fortunate circumstance. Each of us has

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times of trouble, discouragement, and almost utter hopelessness. At such times, if death were really as beautiful as poets make it, we might be tempted to weakly quit our lives. No doubt each of you, each even of the young among you, have passed through hours of darkness during which, if death were a thing of beauty and sweetness instead of a repulsive horror, you would have killed yourselves. See how many suicides there are even now, when the grave is the saddest, coldest, and most lonesome place in the world. If the tomb were a place of good cheer, and the company of the dead less ghostly to our thought, in a world as full of trouble and a life with as many heartaches as this, few men or women would reach the age of maturity. Unhappy husbands and wives, children whose peace and joy are nagged away by fretful parents, lovers with their terribly painful misunderstandings, men who now pass their days in slavery in shops and mines, women who are hitched to stoves, washtubs, and sewing machines—all the miserables of the world—if the draught of death were sweet, would drink it.

If we assume that the continuance of the human race is desirable it is a fortunate circumstance that our only exit from life is surrounded with such hateful associations that only those to whom existence has become unbearable seek it.

You may readily infer from what I have said, that I do not look upon death as a joke. To my mind it is not a fact over which to make merry or to treat flippantly. It is a solemn crisis that you and I must meet. Christians and other religious persons are entirely right in warning us of its approach and exhorting us to prepare for it. Those who believe that after death they will be brought before an avenging judge who will require from them an account of the deeds done in the body, and will take them to heaven or consign them to hell, very naturally prepare for death by trying to placate and please God. Sometimes they do not begin to prepare until they fall dangerously ill or are about to be hanged; but when they do get ready for death, it is by doing some religious thing, such as confessing their sins, praying for their forgiveness, or having a priest put oil on them. And it is supposed to be a good thing even among those who have very little use for religion in business or society, to have a small quantity where they can lay their hands on it in case of sickness or death. Just as you will find a bottle of arnica or Jamaica ginger in every house and a flask of brandy in many gripsacks, to be used in case of need, so a large number of persons keep a small supply of religion on hand to use in special emergencies like death.

Some religious persons make it the business of their lives to prepare for death. Life has no meaning for them except as a time in which to get ready to die. What they call "this life" is regarded only as a preface to what they call "the next life." Such, I mean, is their theory. Very few persons indeed live entirely or nearly in the light of "the next world," but the theory is that life is not worth living and nothing is worth doing for this world alone. This, they say, is not their abiding place; heaven is their home.

Religion—a belief in God and a hope of immortality—is believed by many to be quite necessary to die by. It certainly is a great comfort to many in hours of sickness and approaching death. And there undoubtedly are very many persons who really believe that a death-bed without religion must necessarily be more awful than when the consolations of faith accompany one through the valley of the shadow. Hence whole cyclopedias of stories about the death-beds of repentant or frightened infidels, some of which are true and some of which are pious lies that many well-meaning persons implicitly believe.

I recall that when I was a child, almost as far back as I can remember, I had an uncle, one of the happiest and most charming of young men, who was what people call an Infidel. He died, away back there in my dim past, and I can just remember an awful impression made upon my childish mind when I was told that he went out of life calling upon God for mercy and shrieking in an agony of fear. I have no doubt he died as they said he did. And not very long ago a young man who used to attend our meetings in Newark fell sick. Before he died he sent for a minister and passed away in the faith. The minister spoke of his case on the following Sunday, and warned the young people that, while my kind of preaching might be this, that, or the other, it would not serve in their dying hour.

(*To be continued.*)

At Church.—She: "Jacob, this is disgraceful; why do you snore so much?" He: "Beg pardon dear; sorry I woke you up."

ACID DROPS.

Three years ago the London Trades' Council issued a leaflet on "sweating" in religious circles, from which it appeared that while all the Freethought printing offices paid the Union wages, many of the biggest Christian journals were printed at "sweating" offices where lower rates prevailed. Yet some of these Christian journals make very large profits. They gush about the working man, and what Christianity has done for him, but they pay him as little as possible for his work, leaving him to be properly paid by the "infidels."

Now comes Mr. Walter Besant with a trenchant attack on the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, a summary of which appeared in Monday's *Daily News*. This Society is redolent of piety. It is a large concern, and last year it made the very handsome profit of £7,660. But it mercilessly sweats the writers of its books. Sometimes it buys on false pretences. "The author"—we quote from the *Daily News*—"is led to understand that his signing away his copyright is not much more than a matter of form, and that he will receive generous consideration in the event of the success of his book. The copyright, however, once signed away, the sight of his own signature is considered a sufficient answer to all subsequent appeals for a recompense." In other words, the Society cheats its authors, and promotes Christianity with the proceeds.

Here is a special illustration, extracted by the *Daily News* from Mr. Besant's pamphlet: "There is the case of C. D., a writer not unknown in literature, who a few years ago wrote a work of an historical character, involving much research, reading, and study, and who was paid twelve pounds for it, 'with a vague promise of further money if the book was successful.' The work reached a fifth thousand, and the author wrote to remind the Society of its promise. 'He was refused curtly, being told that he had sold the copyright, and had no claim.' Finding it, later on, advertised as in its seventh thousand, he wrote again, and was again refused."

According to Mr. Besant women are the chief sufferers. They have a poor knowledge of business and are easily taken in. "So they wear their fingers to the bone for the Society." Bah! It is simply sickening. And if it be all true, this Christian Knowledge Society should be given through tickets for heaven, or whatever other place is open to receive such caitiffs. Let them deny it if they can. Mr. Besant is not a swashbuckler. He is one of the last men to trump up false charges against a religious society. Still he *may* have been deceived. In that case he will of course apologise. But the Society will very likely say nothing and let the storm blow over. Christian knowledge must be promoted at any cost—or *anybody's* cost.

Max O'Rell is sarcastic on the missionary schooner (English, you know) which is moored on the Seine, close to the Pont de la Concorde, under the very shadow of the Chamber of Deputies. Her crew is composed of Evangelists and her cargo of tracts. How many converts are made is as great a mystery as the Trinity. Max O'Rell has a firm belief that there is more wickedness in one square mile of London than in the whole of Paris.

Charles Dudley Warner, the American humorist, is quoted as saying that the difference between the "faith cure" and the "mind cure" is that the "mind cure doesn't require any faith, and the faith cure doesn't require any mind."

Some people's Protestantism sits on them lightly. At Goleen Father Cowley was summoned at the suit of the rector, the Rev. Mr. Hopley. In indignation fifty families attended mass in the Catholic church in a body, and publicly renounced their previous faith. Cardinal Manning has been congratulating himself on the less hostile attitude now assumed towards Roman Catholics. We suspect it proceeds mainly from religious indifference.

The battle of the sects among themselves is far keener than their war with their common foe, the infidels. A correspondent of ours, who is a commercial traveller, casually let the fact escape, in the presence of two brothers in the

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profession, in the commercial room, that he was an Atheist. They immediately attacked him. Presently the two Christians discovered that they were of different beliefs, and fairly jumped at each other. The Atheist, now abandoned, settled down in his chair and enjoyed the spectacle of the rival Christians furiously endeavoring to tear to shreds each other's religion.

Among items of religious intelligence from America are the following :—Bishop Bowman has been deprived on a charge of untruthfulness. The Rev. Dr. T. C. Carter, editor of the *Methodist Advocate*, is charged with immorality with Sister Mary Ann Ramsey. The Rev. F. T. McLeod has been sentenced to one year's imprisonment for bigamy at Chicago. St. Peter's Catholic Church at Lexington has been set on fire by lightning.

Moses is sent to an asylum. He turned up in Westminster Abbey, where he mounted the pulpit, pulled out a Bible, and began to preach a sermon. He said he had a mission to convert the people. He was removed, however, by a gentleman in blue and locked up. When brought before the magistrate at Westminster, he proved to be the possessor of another name. Edmund Akers. His wife deposed that he had been five times in an asylum, and Dr. Jones that he had "delusions on religious matters." Evidently the poor man is born too late. Two or three thousand years ago he might have made a name. But these are hard, sceptical times, and prophets are very badly treated.

Many years ago Herbert Spencer, the Agnostic, explained the ethics of gambling. The winner gets something without working for it, and his gain is always another man's loss. Of course there is something else to be said. Many people gamble in a small way with no particular desire to win money. They are satisfied if they don't lose, or only lose a little; and they have bought their excitement, they think, at a cheap rate. This is necessary to be borne in mind by those who write on gambling, or they will make human nature a good deal worse than it is.

Herbert Spencer's powerful article did not cause a flutter in the churches. At that time they were all safe and sound, and all their joy was kingdom-come. But things have changed rapidly. Doctrinally the Churches feel they are breaking up They have therefore to invent fresh excuses for their existence. They are now on "the moral lay," attacking "social evils," and trying to persuade society that they stand between it and moral anarchy, in which case, of course, they are naturally worth what they cost. Among these "social evils" is gambling. It affords a happy hunting-ground for the Christian zealot, eager at once to reform the world and secure his own "screw." But when these people take up a cause they generally make it stink in the nostrils of sensible folk. They are only half-sincere, and they have no sense of proportion. They cant like Stiggenses, and thunder against vices as though they were crimes. Every gambler is "a thief," if he only plays halfpenny whist or farthing card-dominoes. This is the style of Hugh Price Hughes and his gang. They don't mind a good bouncing lie, all for the glory of God—and the preacher; but their virtue is like a hedgehog when they hear of human peccadilloes which they don't happen to share.

These zealots will only aggravate the evil. Their brutally intemperate language will do for gambling what it has done for drink. They have run up the drink bill, if they have done anything, and they will increase gambling. They spoil everything they touch, with their blatant Pharisaism. If they would only stop howling, the voice of common sense and common humanity would be heard, in other and more persuasive accents than those of the professional soul-saver.

Modesty, thy name is *Christian Commonwealth*. "For variety, freshness, and independence," it (we mean the paper) claims "a first place," and "no one will dispute the claim who has carefully read the paper for a few weeks." Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Here is a specimen of its "freshness." After saying that Greece nourished "a heroic patriotism," produced the loveliest creations of art, and intellectually "erected monuments that will last while the world endures," it observes that the force of Greece was only "destructive" in religion. Poor old Greece couldn't construct anything. It turned out such wretched abortions as Plato and Æschylus, instead of a *Christian Commonwealth* with its magical "freshness and variety."

Here is another specimen of "freshness." For some weeks the *C. C.* has been publishing, under the head of "Is the Bible True?" a series of extracts from great writers, compiled by that intellectual luminary, John H. Mitchell. None of the extracts touch the Bible. They all deal with the existence of God. But what does that matter? The *C. C.* boasts of its "independence," and that is a fraud if your title cannot be independent of your contents.

J. H. Mitchell is a proof that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." He quotes from Darwin's *Descent of Man*, and prints in italics, the statement that the question whether there exists a creator and ruler of the universe "has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever lived." Mitchell doesn't know that, in the second edition, Darwin modified this into "*some* of the highest intellects." Again, he does not know that Darwin disavowed all belief in creation, and expressed his regret at having used the term Creator. All this is set forth in Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*—a little work which every Freethinker should keep by him in order to silence the unscrupulous Christians who, after denouncing Darwin for a whole generation, are now trading upon his name and falsifying his opinions.

Mr. G. W. Child, in his book on *Church and State*, just issued by Messrs. Longman, allows that the Church has continued in every respect what Henry VIII. and Elizabeth made it, "simply a department of the State," yet it continually objects to the State exercising its control. As Mr. Taylor Innes allows, in his work on the same subject, the only influence the laity have on the Church is that exercised by their representatives in Parliament. These have the right to do with it what they will.

The lucrative priestly business of "apparitions" is not confined to Italy. According to the *Enniscorthy Guardian*, the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared at Ballyfoyle, about six miles from Athy. The lady never puts in an appearance without bringing grist to the priestly mill.

Dr. Barnardo has been taken to task for giving out in the so-called "National Anthem" the lines

> Confound their politics,
> Frustrate their Popish tricks.

Yet this is the earliest known version. Since Catholic emancipation it was thought advisable to substitute the synonym "knavish" for "Popish."

Bishop Thornton, of Ballarat, at a meeting of the Church of England Assembly, while condemning the new Divine Law of Victoria, expressed himself in favor of opening museums, art galleries, and libraries on Sunday, under cautious regulation that it should come as little into competition with his own business as possible. This liberal prelate would "even incline to one Sunday train both ways upon our railway lines, perhaps at high fares, to meet the frequent emergencies of human life," which of course only happens to those who can pay high fares.

"God so loved the world."—Scripture.—On Sunday he sent a tornado over Northern Illinois, which destroyed fifty farmhouses, and ruined all the buildings, fences, and crops. Two schoolhouses were blown to pieces, and the schoolmasters and children killed and mangled. Let us pray.

Dr. Plumptre, the Dean of Wells, is wroth with the Churchmen, like the editor of *Lux Mundi*, who are giving in to the great Biblical critics such as Wellhausen. He declares that if the theory they are accepting be true, the "Old Testament in its narrative and its laws is simply the most false and fraudulent history in the literature of the world." Well, that is just the truth. A Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel!

Exeter Hall boasteth a magazine. It is conducted in the interest of the Young Men's Christian Association. The

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intellect of its readers—and editors—may be judged by its "poetry." Here is a specimen.

Ram it in, cram it in,
Young men's heads are hollow;
Slam it in, jam it in,
Still there's more to follow.

Evidently the writer knows his public. "Young men's heads are hollow"—at Exeter Hall.

The Exeter Hall magazine is as good at serious as at comic "poetry." Look at this.

Think! Think! Think!
As on the awful brink
Of the Eternity!
Think! Think! Think!
Whilst still your soul may drink
Of love's infinity.

Eternity and infinity are excellent rhymes. As for drink, brink, think—why, as Touchstone says, "I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners, and suppers, and sleeping hours excepted."

Dr. Parker unloaded his mind last "Lord's Day" on Sunday observance. From present appearance, he said, Sunday may be considered dead. At present there is hardly any Sunday at all. Even many of those who nominally keep it would be glad to get rid of it. Sunday is given up to cycling and lawn tennis; part of it is piously kept by going to the churches where there is most music, and avoiding those where there is most prayer. In the West End "at homes" are held on Sunday. Dr. Parker says it is idle to blink these facts. Still he thinks that Sunday is only momentarily eclipsed. It will come up again and reassert itself. For our part, we take a different view. The religious Sunday is doomed. The day will not be given over to work. Men are not such fools as that. But it will be devoted to recreation and mental and moral improvement. Anyhow we welcome Dr. Parker's admission. It proves the progress that has been made in secularising the Sunday.

A short time ago a gentleman who "ruled the planets" in Liverpool failed to detect a police emissary in a person who solicited his aid, and now Henry Harding, of Birkenhead, has been sentenced to two months' hard labor, in default of paying a fine of £20, for "pretending to tell fortunes with intent to deceive and impose" on various persons. He advertised himself as "Zenophon," and about 150 letters containing from 1s. to 5s. each were found in his possession. These people who "rule the planets" should be more careful. There are high dignitaries, in receipt of good emoluments, who profess to have great influence with the Ruler of the Planets, and they are held in greater respect. Henry Harding did not fly high enough.

E. Osmotherly writes a long letter in the *Gravesend Reporter*, which must be short of copy to print such nonsense. Against "the blind and mythical speculations of Darwin and Spencer" he quotes Scripture, remarks "God said that," and bids the scientists regard themselves as squashed. The poor fellow is a Baptist. We suspect his proper name is Grandmotherly.

According to a Dalziel telegram, the Humboldt Freethought Society at Leipzig has been dissolved by the police. While awaiting further information from one of our German exchanges, we can only remark that the incident, if true, is a curious comment on the "new era" of the young Emperor. The freedom he talks about is apparently a freedom to accept his schemes. Any independent thought is not to be tolerated. And this is the country of Goethe and Heine, of Büchner and Haeckel!

Fortunately we are not so bad as this n England. But who knows what might happen if the anarchical party of "law and order" and "Church and State" had a seven years' innings in England as well as in Ireland? Especially if Cardinal Manning had what he always tries for, a finger in the pie!

Stanley told the Edinburgh folk that he was in the habit of visiting churches to see if he could meet with a good sermon. He hadn't found one yet. The preachers all grind away at doctrines and forget the present needs of the people. But what is the use of their trying to do otherwise? The real needs of the people are being looked after by statesmen and social reformers. Let the ministers preach kingdom-come. It isn't a useful occupation, but it is all they are fit for.

The Bishop of Manchester recently consecrated a burial-ground at Bolton. We believe the performance was well paid for. What wonder, then, that the Bishop denounced cremation? He had no doctrinal objection to it, but he thought we should reverence our dead, and that was best done by continuing to inter them. In other words by continuing to pay Bishops for consecrating the ground. As for reverencing the dead, we fail to see it in the practice of putting them underground as a feast for worms. Of course if people feel for the poor worms, and wish them not to be defrauded of their repast, the sentiment is a respectable one. But we never yet saw it put in that light. It is not the worms that count, but ignorant prejudices and clerical fees.

Theologians have been so anxious to distinguish God from matter, that they have been in danger of confounding him with space. One writer at Sydney, indeed, says that "the ether of space is the godhead." According to this, the way to find God is easy. Take a box 12ft. by 12, exhaust the air, and you can say you have 144 feet of solid deity.

An Oxford firm, having a shop also in Farringdon Street, London, reduce the deity to smaller compass than this. They supply what they call the Cowley Portable Altar, an arrangement by which not only the Holy Sacrament, the body, bones and divinity of Jesus Christ can be carried about from house to house, but supplying chalice and wafer-dish from which to eat and drink him, and Christmas candles to light up the festive scene, all in a nice box no bigger than a lawyer's brief bag. Who says that religion does not progress with the times?

The Rev. Joseph Ferguson has been complaining at Sunderland of the sinister way in which the Church parsons attack Dissent. He also finds that "there are more than twelve hundred parishes in England and Wales without a School Board, which means that tens of thousands of our children are drugged on week-days with doses of superstition, as vicious as the rankest Popery." How shocking! But these very dissenting Dissenters are quite ready, in their turn, to drug the children of Freethinkers with *their* doses of superstition. It is so hard to make a Christian understand fair-play. What he usually wants is freedom for himself and the right to tyrannise over others.

The Postmaster-General is a pious gentleman. So is his first underling, the philanthropic Blackwood. No wonder, therefore, that they are down on the poor postmen who met on Clerkenwell Green to ventilate their grievances and start a Postmen's Union. Some of the men, who have been twenty years or more in the service, have had their good conduct stripes taken away, which means a loss of three shillings a week. Others have been suspended. No doubt they will all understand in future the holy saying of St. Paul that we must all obey the powers that be, especially when the powers that be feel they are "ordained of God" and fall like a ton of bricks on anyone who has the presumption to canvas their doings.

A curious mistake occurred at the Highland cemetery, Southsea, at the interment of two gunners of the Royal Artillery, who had died in Portsmouth garrison. One was a Roman Catholic and the other a Presbyterian, and both Father Collins and the Rev. A. Halliday were in attendance to read the funeral services peculiar to their respective churches. By some mischance the coffins got mixed, and the Roman Catholic rites were performed over the body of the Presbyterian, while the Presbyterian prayers were offered over the remains of the Roman Catholic. Fortunately the mistake was discovered before the actual interment and the whole services gone over again, otherwise Lord knows what would have happened. The Presbyterian might have found himself in the Catholic department of heaven surrounded by a set of Irish howling Howly, howly, howly, while the Papist would have felt out of water in the Scotch department of heaven, where they cry Hooly, hooly, hooly!

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 29, Forester's Hall, West Street, Reading; at 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; at 3, "Secular Salvation"; at 7, "Is there a Future Life?"

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. DOEG.—Very likely he is not particular with whom. We are. Thanks for cuttings. We hope the Liverpool Branch will strike while the iron is hot and forge out a new Building scheme.

F. GOODWIN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

C. WATTS.—The Branch must "keep pegging away," and we are delighted to hear that it intends to. There is fine scope for open-air lecturing in Manchester.

LUCRETIUS KEEN.—We are sorry to hear of your being hustled in Finsbury Park, but since you have brought your experience to our notice we think it right to say that we have received several letters from Freethinkers complaining of your injudicious advocacy. Lecturers must learn to accommodate themselves to their audiences, and this can be done without any sacrifice of principle. Courtesy and good temper are *indispensable* when lecturers are breaking new ground, as they are *useful* at all other times. If there is a prejudice against you at Finsbury Park—and there seems to be—why not speak elsewhere, and give the feeling time to subside?

W. HOLLAND.—We are obliged for the jokes.

E. H. JONES.—It would hardly be prudent to alter the time of the Manchester meeting at this late stage. The outdoor lecture might go on concurrently.

W. BOWDEN.—We do not think you can obtain the American Freethought papers except by subscribing for them yearly.

W. T. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks. Mr. Wheeler has written on the same subject this week.

J. W. WITTERING.—Such letters in the local press are useful to the cause. We are glad to see the *Grimsby News* is liberal enough to insert them.

J. K. SYKES.—If a deformity, however slight, is a divine judgment, there are a lot of "judgments" walking the earth. The conduct of the fellow you allude to is disgusting. But what can you expect from a worshipper of the Bible God?

J. G. WARREN.—We thought there was something wrong. Thanks for the information.

J. ELIAS.—You will see we have dealt with the matter.

C. TURNER.—Your visit to the North Middlesex stations on Sunday was an unlucky one. No lecture at Tottenham, and no literature to speak of for sale anywhere, is an unfortunate state of things. We hope your experience was exceptional.

W. B.—Rénan does not accept the Josephus passage as it stands.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Mr. Foote has written on the subject.

S. M. PEACOCK.—We are sorry to hear the North Eastern Federation has run short of funds. Surely the Freethinkers in the district will support an organisation which is doing such excellent work.

FREETHINKER.—There is nothing about the pyramids in the Bible and we fail to see the connexion.

C. RANTZEAN.—Pleased to hear you are taking three copies weekly. Solomon built the first Temple. For the life of David see Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*, where you will find references in the footnotes. Neither Philo nor Josephus (in any authentic passage) mentions Jesus Christ.

WILL the Liverpool gentleman who paid Mr. Foote 5s. for the Central Fund kindly send us his name and address. Mr. Foote has mislaid the memorandum.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Open Court—De Dageraad—Reading Observer—La Verité—Bournemouth Guardian—El Radical—Phonetic Journal—People's Press—Portsmouth Evening News—Stoke-by-Wayland Magazine—Loyal American.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £66 1s. 8d.

[The Tenth List is postponed till next week. Meanwhile intending subscribers are desired to lose no time in remitting.]

SUGAR PLUMS.

Last week's *Freethinker* ran out of print before Saturday, and several orders could not be executed. We regret that we did not print enough, though we allowed for an extra demand. Our circulation is steadily improving, and if all our friends will do their best to promote it still further—by taking extra copies and introducing the paper to newsagents—we shall soon be able to announce that the editor is receiving journeyman's wages for his work. The corner was turned some time ago.

Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences at Liverpool were so so. The weather was inviting out of doors, and Camden Hall, since the structural changes, is far from a thing of beauty. Fortunately the evening lecture in the large Concert Hall drew a capital audience and a very enthusiastic one. The only opponent was Mr. G. Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society.

After the evening lecture some friends met in the anteroom. One of them, a builder, offered handsome assistance if the Branch would go in for a hall of its own. He declared, apparently with truth, that many people will not go to Camden Hall. Mr. Foote pressed the Committee to take immediate action, and they promised to start a Building Company forthwith. We hope to make a more definite announcement next week. Meanwhile we beg the Liverpool Freethinkers to hold themselves in readiness to support the scheme.

The new departure at Manchester promises to be a great success. Mr. Wakefield addressed a good open-air meeting last Sunday. There was some discussion, and a good deal of literature was distributed.

Members of the Finsbury Park Branch of the N. S. S. and other Freethinkers residing in the locality, are earnestly requested to meet Mr. Rowney at his house, 155 Winston Road, Green Lanes, on Monday, June 30, at 8.30 p.m., for the purpose of re-organising the Branch.

Over a hundred new members have joined the National Secular Society since the Conference. The President finds the signing of their certificates a monotonous pleasure.

The Branches are slow in electing their corresponding members of the Council. They should perform this duty *forthwith*, as it is necessary to print fresh prospectuses with the altered rules and the new names of officers.

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At the close of Mrs Besant's lecture at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening, that lady made a most interesting and important statement which was received with tumultous applause. Recalling the great and sustained support given to her by Freethinkers more than a dozen years ago, when proceedings were taken against her for the removal from her of her daughter Mabel, she thought it would please her friends to know that her son, who was now of age, had returned to her of his own free will, and that her daughter, although not legally free until next August twelve months, was again with her. Miss Besant had expressed a desire to be present there that evening, but Mrs. Besant to avoid any unpleasant complications had advised her not for the present. My daughter, said Mrs. Besant, notwithstanding her training and surroundings, and without a practical knowledge of Freethought, already expresses her detestation of the religion that separated her from her mother, marring the happiness of her childhood, and causing her mother such poignant sorrow.

Mr. G. J. Warren has obtained the views of the various Liberal and Radical candidates for the Tower Hamlets divisions. The following have promised to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws:—S. Buxton, M P. (Poplar). J. Haysman (Mile End). J. M. Macdonald (Bow and Bromley). S. Montagu, M.P. (Whitechapel). B T. L Thomson (Stepney). J. S. Wallace (Limehouse). St. George's-in-the-East is at present without a Liberal candidate.

We hope Mr. Warren's example will be followed. Every Liberal and Radical candidate should be pointedly questioned as to his attitude in regard to these infamous laws.

Mr. J. M. Robertson's lecture at Hammersmith was a great success. His subject, "The Dishonesty of the Church," roused the ire of one clerical opponent. Many questions were asked and suitably replied to. Mr. Foote ends this course of Free Lectures on Thursday evening, June 26, a few hours after this paper is in the hands of its London readers. Place—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Hammersmith. Time, eight o'clock. Subject, "Freethought and Christ."

The Lancashire Branches are requested to bear in mind the meeting to be held at Manchester on Sunday, July 6, at three o'clock, when a Lancashire Federation will be publicly inaugurated. Every Branch should send delegates. Individual members are also invited to attend.

The ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost, one of whose discourses we print elsewhere, is one of the most energetic Freethinking lecturers in America. Every week he prepares a new discourse, which he delivers in three places. In Newark in the morning, Brooklyn in the afternoon and New York at night. After that it appears in the *Twentieth Century*.

In the *Revue Bleue* M. Louis Havet has an article on his father, the late Ernest Havet, who he claims destroyed the legend of the Jewish writers being anterior to the Greeks. Some time since, in an article on the Modernness of the Prophets, we drew attention to M. Havet's views. This distinguished critic, who was Professor of the College of France and Member of the Institute, held that the earliest Jewish writings dated only from the Macedonian age, and were consequently infiltrated with the Greek spirit. This thesis, which we can by no means consider fully established, is defended by his son.

Dr. Voelkel, of Magdeburg, is now bringing out a German translation of Paine's *Age of Reason*. The work should have a good sale, especially among Germans in America.

James Stirling, the Government geologist of Victoria, has been lecturing at the Melbourne Hall of Science. At Sydney they have a new lecturer, Mr. Gammell, who is recommended by Mr. Collins and Sir Robert Stout, of New Zealand.

The Melbourne *Age* of May 12, declares that the manifestoes issued against the Victorian Divorce Law by Bishop Goe as the head of the Church of England in that colony, and Dr. Macdonald the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, have not been exceeded in "fatuous folly and wrongheadedness," by any bull issued from the Pope at Rome. The more it is recognised that such followers of Jesus are behind the age the better.

Mr Herbert Spencer expresses a high opinion of the late Miss Constance Naden. Writing to Dr. Lewis, who has founded a Constance Naden medal at Mason College, he says:—"I can think of no woman, save George Eliot, in whom there has been this union of high philosophical capacity with extensive acquisition." Her receptivity and originality, he says, were equally great. At the same time he utters a warning against a too sudden development of woman's mental powers. He "cannot let pass the occasion for remarking that in her case, as in other cases, the mental powers so highly developed in a woman are in some measure abnormal, and involve a physiological cost which her feminine organisation will not bear without injury more or less profound." Mr. Spencer is not able, however, it would seem, to indicate how this danger is to be guarded against. It looks as though woman's mind will have its swing, and natural selection be left to decide the issue.

A crematory has been set up at Copenhagen. Cremation is certainly extending on the continent. There are Siemen's furnaces in Dresden, Breslau, Gotha and Zurich. At Zurich a regulation is in force by which the ashes of the dead remain in separate urns at the cemetery for twenty years. Then the nearest of kin may take the urn in his dwelling. The crematories at Milan and Paris are more patronised than ever.

Mr. Lennstrand's lecture, "Is there Another Life?" translated by G. Nelson, appears in the *Boston Investigator*. Mr. Lennstrand's friends are still anxious on his account. He has again to be tried on July 6 for the lecture "Why I attack Christianity," and if again imprisoned it is feared his health is such that he will certainly succumb. We hope for the best.

Mr. Wheeler has written a sort of biographical preface to our reprint of Jeremy Bentham's *Church of England Catechism Examined*, which is nearly through the press and will be ready for sale in a week or ten days. Mr. Wheeler has turned over some Bentham manuscripts in the British Museum, and has made some important discoveries as to the depth of Bentham's scepticism. What he has unearthed will be of great interest to Freethinkers, and likewise to all students of English literature and thought.

Next week *The Creation Story* will be on sale. It is the first instalment of the new, revised, and greatly amplified edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*. From the constant applications for this work we expect a large sale, and we are printing accordingly.

Mr. Forder has bound in two volumes, cloth gilt, all the pamphlets of Colonel Ingersoll published at our office. The price is 3s. 6d. per volume. No doubt there are many who would like to have the set in this convenient form.

The imperial size portrait of Mr. Foote is now on sale. It is a very fine production and does the photographer great credit. The price is three shillings.

Our next number will contain an article from Mr. Foote's pen on *Lux Mundi*, dealing chiefly with the essay of the editor of the volume, the Rev. Charles Gore, on the Inspiration of the Bible.

Professor Huxley is writing an article on *Lux Mundi*. It will appear in the July number of the *Nineteenth Century*.

PROVIDENCE.

"One day a dozen years ago," said a stoop-shouldered tramp, as he rubbed his hand over the deep pits in his face, "I came along to a house in the outskirts of Pekin, Illinois. I wasn't much struck with the house, but what did hit me was a lot of coats, vests, and pants hanging on a clothes line. I was on my last pins for clothes, and as I saw them hanging there I said to myself: 'Moses, old boy, I've allus told you to trust in Providence, and you now see the result. Them duds was hung out there for you. Go and git 'em.' I crawled along a fence, got over among some bushes, and after a little trouble I got a whole suit and got away with 'em. Nine days after I blossomed out with one of the prettiest cases of smallpox you ever saw, and some farmers drove me into an old barn and let me fight it out. When I knew what had got hold of me I says to myself: 'Moses, old boy, I've allus told you to trust in Providence, and you now see the result.'"

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"THE LION AND THE LAMB."

THE Irish Freethinker gifted with a sense of humor is rarely in want of material to excite his risible faculties. Every now and then events occur in Ireland so ludicrous in their nature and so childish in their motives and objects, that he cannot help being intensely amused even while pitying his fellow countrymen whose love of God tempts them to acts of the grossest folly.

There is a pious fiction given credence to by Christians that the day will come when "the Lion and the Lamb will lie down peaceably together." This is the Oriental round-about way for saying that all mankind will one day unite in harmony in accepting the doctrines of Christ without doubt or reserve. The intensity of this belief is not shaken by the obvious facts that there is no perceptible advance being made by Christianity amongst the heathens, and that every day there is greater divergence than ever between the numerous sects that comprise the Christian world. While each Christian sect is positive that *it* possesses the doctrines of Christ in their purity, and while the tendency is plainly towards an increase of sects, it requires no great insight to conclude that the day is indeed far distant when anything like Christian unanimity will be possible. It is all very well to talk of the Lion lying down with the Lamb; but when all the sects pretend to act the part of the Lamb, the Freethinker is justified in coming to the conclusion that there is a greater probability that the sects will devour each other after the fashion of the historic "Kilkenny Cats," than that, metaphorically speaking, the Lion will lie down "cheek by jowl" with the Lamb and refrain from having that innocent for supper, as a sensible Lion ought to.

The religious folk have a queer method of bringing about the blissful day when the Lion and the meek Lamb are to lie down together. Animated by what they call "a love of God and Jesus Christ," they act towards their neighbors in a manner that ought to make the meanest of gods ashamed of the "love" of such canting "critters."

Here in Ireland, we often hear the expression "God is Love." It is a favorite text for Protestant sermons, and is much affected by young men of that persuasion, and of the "goody-goody" order. Occasionally we are treated to practical illustrations as to what the expression means. And at the present time there is being given at Arklow, in county Wicklow, a series of object lessons illustrative of the way some people regard their God of Love. There is such discord about the matter that the police, in great force, have had to interfere, God being so strongly impartial that he allows the opposing factions to decide among themselves which loves him best, or which hates him most.

The troubles came about in this way. Three Protestant clergymen and a Methodist individual agreed, for the nonce, to join forces, and to carry the light of the scriptures amongst the benighted Papists, who have this merit at least, that they are in total ignorance of the contents of the anything but Sacred Bible. These four pious worthies say that they feel that they have not disseminated the scriptures as much as they should have done, "considering how ignorant some persons are, and how the people around them had not their hearts influenced by the love of God." They assert that they do not want to convert anybody, but only "to bring the love of Jesus before them." Accordingly, they decided to go into the streets in which the Catholic poor lived, and to preach there that the Papists were ignorant and did not know "the light." They carried out their resolve; they preached on Sundays in the Catholic quarters in the open-air; they expounded the Scriptures; they sang hymns; and they exhorted the poor ignorant folk to come out of their cabins and listen to the word of God. They were fond of saying also that their duty was to love all men, and that their watchwords were "Christ, Co-operation, and Charity."

But the Catholics naturally did not want that sort of love and charity which found expression in taunts as to their ignorance. And—out of love of God, of course—they adopted means to teach the ranters a lesson.

The Catholics of Arklow are mainly fishing-folk, and are rather rough and ready in their arguments. When, therefore, the Protestant clergymen persevered in their extraordinary conduct, the Catholics turned out in force; they shouted so loudly that they drowned the voices of the preachers and singers; they beat old tin cans; they blew horns; the women said things not quite nice; mud was thrown; stones were heaved; and as a climax one of the preachers was hit with an old kettle. Other Christian acts of politeness were exchanged, and matters now stand in this way, that the several sects in the town are showing their love for God by hating each other heartily; the police are at their wits' end how to keep the peace; the papers are giving partizan and colored accounts of the business; questions are being asked in Parliament; and altogether the "Lion and the Lamb" cause is in a very mixed and disturbed condition in Arklow town.

There is a point that I must not overlook. One of the Protestant clergymen has written to a local paper saying that in Protestant England Catholic clergymen would be allowed the luxury of open-air preaching. The local editor retorts that the majority in England is not Protestant at all, but is composed of "Pagans or Freethinkers, Deists or Atheists." The clergyman now "talks back," and says that if this is so the Catholics of Ireland could afford to learn a lesson in toleration from the Atheists of England—which is the truest thing that this particular "man of God" has said up to the present.

But to me the whole row seems very funny. As an Irishman I feel a little humiliated that such silly scenes could take place at a time when the schoolmaster is so much abroad; but as a Freethinker, I cannot help looking on with a smile, and consoling myself that the "Lion and the Lamb" age is not upon us yet, and that such bickerings as this may end in illustrating the proverb, "When rogues fall out honest men get their due." J. O'DONOVAN.

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(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.

(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

At the Methodist New Connexion's annual Conference the Rev. Dr. Cocker moved a resolution, which was carried, against the practice of reading sermons in the pulpit. Henceforth all the slow-minded preachers will have to spout extempore. God knows how some of them will manage it. Here is a clear case for divine assistance.

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ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

How England came to take St. George as its patron saint is a question which opens up some curious points of history and mythology. The real history of the saint in the Christian calendar is told in the twenty-third chapter of Gibbon's great work. George was the son of a fuller of Cappadocia. From this obscure origin he rose by the talents of a parasite; and his patrons procured him a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. He accumulated wealth by the basest arts of fraud and corruption and with it purchased the bishopric of Alexandria. In course of time "the infamous George of Capadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter." How this came about is in part explained in an interesting article in a recent number of the *Cornhill Magazine*. The earliest original of St. George and the Dragon is the Egyptian god Horus slaying the crocodile, the symbol of darkness. In one of the bas-reliefs in the Louvre, sculptured in Egypt in the late Roman period, Horus is represented in full armor on horseback slaying a dragon. Had the head been wanting the Egyptian deity would have been unhesitatingly set down as an early representation of the Christian saint. Christianity borrowed its religion and symbols wholesale from Egypt, and among the rest Horus was incorporated in St. George, who is to this date patron saint of the Coptic Church of Egypt. It is difficult says Mr. Loftie to persuade a Copt Christian that his guardian saint, with the same white horse, green dragon and other accessories, holds a similar post in England. Of course the Egyptian Saint was imported at the time of the Crusades. Fighting as they were against the dragon of Mohammedanism, it is small wonder the soldiers of the cross chose the warrior saint for their especial veneration.—LUCIANUS.

A WATER-CURE.

"London Wept."—New Version.

A globe upon a pillar stood;
It was not stone it was not wood:
It was alive and made of bone,
And, strange to say, it could intone.

Although this globe could plainly speak
It seems sometimes, it had a leak.
And could turn on, by force of brain,
A flood of sympathetic rain.

It could upon occasions spout
To put its foes to utter rout,
Yet many said the stuff was dry;
But that, of course, was All my eye.

Well 'twas the eye that did the play
And work in quite a curious way—
Whether bright with hopes or dark with fears,
It shed a bounteous lot of tears.

It wept for things upon the cross,
It wept for gain, it wept for loss:
It wept for want, it wept for sin—
Yet kept a sharp look out for tin.

I'll name this funny watering place,
Which is adorned with so much grace.
Well, if through London streets you tread
You'll find it at—"*The Bishop's Head.*"

DOLPH.

THE TALMUD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It is utterly impossible to read a page of the Talmud and of the New Testament without coming upon "striking parallels." To assume that the Talmud has borrowed from the New Testament would be like assuming that Sanskrit sprang from Latin, or that French was developed from the Norman words found in England—*Emanuel Deutsch*, "*Literary Remains*," p. 54.

A little miss of the city was in a meditative mood the other morning and said: "Mamma, I want to die and be an angel." The mother remonstrated, saying: "Daughter, you must not talk that way. I want you to live a long time—to be a woman and an old lady." The little miss replied: "Well, I tell you what it is right now, mamma; I'm not going to die and be an old grey-headed angel."

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Will you allow me, while thanking Mr. Wheeler for his friendly and discriminating review of my *Christ and Krishna*, to correct one or two misapprehensions which I find in it? Mr. Wheeler writes that "For Mr. Robertson to go to Devaki [? type broken] and Krishna for the origin of the worship of the Virgin Mother and child, is travelling far for what certainly existed in Egypt two thousand years before the Christian era. His theory that Isis and Horus may have been derived from India must be dismissed as utterly without evidence." This is to me a surprising misconception of my position, and I suppose I must have failed to put it clearly. I do not at all mean to argue that the Virgin and Child worship *originated* in the cult of Devaki and Krishna. I use expressions which exclude that view. I merely contend that not only is such a worship older than Christianity in India, but that it *may* have arisen there quite independently of Egyptian influence. Tiele had laid it down that the figure of Horus on the lotos was "certainly" borrowed from Indian pictures, and suggested that in turn India might have borrowed from Egypt the child-suckling Isis. I merely suggest on the other hand (p. 39) that there is no evidence for the latter hypothesis; and that if Egypt borrowed in the one case from India she *might* have done so in the other. But I myself have no "theory" of such borrowing; and I twice remark that if India *did* "borrow" the child-bearing Goddess from a non-Indian cult, "the idea might obviously have been derived from the Isis-figures of Egypt before Christianity came into existence" (p. 38; see also p. 40). My own notion is that a child-bearing Goddess was worshipped in India and elsewhere throughout Asia at a very remote period indeed. On that view the cult would be (as I think Krishnaism is) pre-Aryan, and there might be a racial connection between it and the Egyptian system. But I deprecate any positive assumption as to the idea "originating" in this region or in that.

I may add that I do not for a moment claim to have "proved" that the tax-paying motive is pre-Christian. I speak of that view (p. 137) as a "fair surmise."

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

A PIOUS FABLE.

Canon Pennington has a queer notion of evidence—queer, that is for a sane man, though normal enough for a Christian. Writing on "Light and Liberty" in the *Quiver*, he said—"We always recur with great delight to the testimony of a Deist, who, after having publicly labored to disprove Christianity, and to bring Scripture into contempt as a forgery, was found instructing his child from the pages of the New Testament. When taxed with his flagrant inconsistency, his only reply was that it was necessary to teach the child morality, and that there was nowhere to be found such morality as in the Bible. We thank the Deist for this confession." Now for the sequel. One of our readers asked Canon Pennington for the name of this Deist. The Canon replies on a postcard that he is unable to give it. He borrowed the story from "the late Canon Melville," who told it in a sermon before the University of Cambridge, and "it has never been disputed." That is how the Christians reason. A pious yarn is started; names, places, and dates are withheld so that it cannot be disproved; and finally they say it must be true for "it has never been disputed."

PROFANE JOKES.

Many a man who is a good shot in this world hopes to miss fire in the next.

Teacher: "Who was the first watchmaker known to have existed?" Boy: "God; he set a watch over the gates of Eden before Adam was a year old."

"Why did you put that sixpence with a hole in it in the contribution plate?" "Because I couldn't put in the hole without the sixpence, and I had to put in something."

"Make the paling very high and strong, John," said a minister in the North to his beadle and man-of-all-work, who was erecting a boundary paling in the garden, "for my Christianity can't stand the test of my neighbor's poultry grubbing up my plants." "I believe ye, sir," said the beadle, "because I hae aye noticed that there was an end to a' peace, guid will, and religion whaun there wasna a fence."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "I and my Father are One." Members' quarterly meeting after the lecture.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 3 sharp, quarterly meeting, election of officers; 6, tea (tickets 9d. each), soiree at 7.30. Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Christ Hallucination."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Why we Reject Theistic Views of Creation."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Shelley, Poet, Atheist, and Republican.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey. "And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. S. Standring, "Christ on the Labor Question."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Crucifixion of Christ."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford. "The Gospel Christ Unhistorical."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Foolishness of Prayer to God."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. Harry Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring "Old Testament Morality." July 2, at 8, Mr J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed"

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "God and his Book."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Two Revelations."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, a Freethought lecture.

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. T. Smith, "God so Loved the World."

Tottenham — Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Romans xiii., 1, 2."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Mr. Gladstone's Impregnable Rock."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam "The Life and Times of Voltaire."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Mysteries and Perplexities of Faith."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. S. G. Middleton, "Science and Happiness."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, quarterly meeting, members earnestly requested to attend.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. J. Needles, "Secularism Reviewed."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, committee meeting and Tontine Society; 7, Mr. H. Smith, "Will God Hear his Cry?"

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Socialism and the Middle Class"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 6.30, "Hypnotism: the Fact and the Explanation."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, monthly financial meeting of members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A. R. Atkey, a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Mr. John B. Coppock, 11, "The Origin of the Present Phase of the Universe"; 3, "The Age of the World"; 7, "The Fate of the Present Phase of the Universe."

South Shields—Seamen and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation Street, 7, election of officers.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — June 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 29, Liverpool. July 20, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 27.] SUNDAY, JULY 6, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

SCIENCE and scholarship have not been at work for nothing even at Oxford. Old-fashioned as English universities are apt to be, they cannot for ever keep out the results of inquiry and speculation. The atmosphere, so to speak, becomes suffused with the advanced thought of the age, and it penetrates everywhere. The very man in the street is affected by it unawares. And as the subtle influence of an east wind cannot by any device be excluded even from a sick chamber, it need not surprise us that the scepticism which is "in the air" has crept into the halls of Oxford and stolen into the mental blood of their denizens.

Slowly, but surely, the old order changes. The well-informed champions of Christianity see that it must adjust itself to altered conditions of knowledge and sentiment; that, if it is to live at all in the future, it must flow with the stream of secular thought. Anathemas and excommunications have lost their terror. The world reads them and smiles. Nor is persecution a resource to be depended on. Now and then a heretic may be harried, a member of Parliament may be kept out of his seat, a mother may be robbed of her children, or an editor may be sent to prison. But such things have as little effect on the broad tendency of the age as flies on the back of an elephant. They exasperate, perhaps, but they do not check. They only emphasise the progress of Freethought and the growing impotence of Ecclesiasticism.

Putting these reasons together, it is easy to account for such a volume as *Lux Mundi*. The sub-title is "A Series of Studies in the Light of Incarnation." But that is the disguise. The real object of the book is to bring Christianity, if possible, into a line with as much of the results of criticism as can no longer be ignored. The writers seem to say to their fellow clergy, "Let us cease playing the ostrich, let us raise our heads from the sands of dogma, let us meet the hunter Reason half way, let us pursuade him that we are his natural colleagues, and induce him to let us all go hunting together."

No wonder the more orthodox clergy are alarmed. Their heads are fast enough in the sand. They are seeking truth "at the centre." If a deluge comes they will be drowned tail upwards. Archdeacon Denison, the ever-faithful watch-dog of the flock, barks ferociously. Occasionally his voice runs to a plaintive howl, like a canine hypochondriac braying the moon. He threatens to bring the matter before Convocation, and anon he pleads with the "advanced" clergy not to rend their dear old Mother Church. For our part, we hope he will be as good as his word. A debate in Convocation on another heresy case will be a plum to the profane. The bigots will rave, the hypocrites will hum and ha, the knowing ones will sprinkle cool patience on the heat of the distemper. But the upshot will be *nothing*. For proof of this forecast see what has happened in Scotland. Drs. Dods and Bruce have gone farther than Professor Robertson Smith had gone when he was turned out of the Church; although, of course, he has gone a great deal farther since that auspicious event. But the Church has not expelled them. By a considerable majority it has whitewashed their reputations. "Gentlemen," the Church says, "we will not turn you out. It would not do. The heathen would laugh, the infidel would jibe, the men of the world would sneer. We gained nothing, and lost a good deal, by turning out Dr. Smith. That folly is not to be repeated. You are therefore to stay in the Church and enjoy your salaries; and, gentlemen, draw it as mild as you can."

Archdeacon Denison's attempt will come to grief. But there is more in the Bishop of Lichfield's proposal. He wishes that discussions like those in *Lux Mundi* could be carried on in Latin. Why let the multitude into the secret? Why not go on bamboozling them? It is a game that pays. Once upon a time the entire language of the Church was Latin. Hymns, liturgies, the Bible itself—everything was in the sonorous language of Rome. The good old times cannot, indeed, be restored. We must pray, sing, and read the Bible in English. But these unsettling discussions, and these alarming admissions, might still be couched in Latin. Only a select few could understand them, and the ball might be kept rolling with as much delight to the players, and a great deal less information to the spectator. Honor amongst—parsons!

There *is* more in the Bishop's proposal, but is it not too late to be very useful? The discussion is not confined to the clergy. It does not even begin in clerical circles. It originates in the learned world, chiefly of Germany, Holland, and France, and only reaches the clergy by infiltration. *Their* secrecy is thus of little value. Whether *they* discuss in Latin or Sanscrit, the noise of the debate will reach the ears of the people. It is far broader than the Church. The sound reaches to the ends of the civilised world. And are there not cheap "infidel" papers that act as telephones—ay, and *interpreting* telephones—between the giants of criticism and the working masses? Are not the conclusions of patient scholars in their studies shouted from the housetops by bold bad men, who think that if there is any truth knocking about in the world the working masses are the very people who need it? They do need it, and so far as we can help them, they shall have it.

To return to *Lux Mundi*. The volume is written entirely by clergymen, a fact that would hardly have delighted Sidney Smith. They are in a certain sense old friends. This is what we find in the Preface.

> "The writers found themselves at Oxford together between the years 1875-1885, engaged in the common work of University education; and compelled for their own sake, no less than that of others, to attempt to put the Catholic faith into its right relation to modern intellectual and moral problems. Such common necessity and effort led to not infrequent meetings, in which a common body of thought and sentiment, and a common method of commending the faith to the acceptance of

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others, tended to form itself. We, who once enjoyed this happy companionship, are now for the most part separated But at least some result of our temporary association remains which it is hoped may justify and explain the present volume.',

The writers are men of education as well as clergymen. The reference to "the Catholic faith" shows they are High Churchmen. The Rev. Charles Gore, who edits the volume, is the Principal of Pusey House, though his article is enough to make Dr. Pusey turn in his grave. The book as a whole, therefore, is of distinguished authorship. We are not dealing with guerrilas or petty skirmishers, but with staff-officers of the army of Faith.

Lux Mundi is a volume of five hundred pages. It is impossible to treat the whole of its contents in a single article. We have elected to deal with the editor's article, which is appropriately the most important. Its subject is "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration." Consequently it goes to the root of the matter. The existence of God and the immortality of the soul are doctrines of Natural Religion. They existed before Christianity and they may survive it. They are also common to other religious systems. Christianity is Revealed Religion. It lives in and through the Bible. Even the Romish Church, which claims to speak the living voice of God, is a castle in the air without the Scriptures. Whether and how the Bible is inspired is the supreme, and at bottom the *only* question for Christian theologians. We are thus testing the very foundation of Christianity.

(*To be continued.*)

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN DID CHRIST DIE?

THOSE who have read my previous article, "When was Christ born?" will understand the little mistake made by those who fixed the Christian era. Taking as a basis the statement of Luke that when Jesus was baptised he began to be about thirty years of age (the age, by the way, of the adolescent Horus), and that John began to baptise in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, and allowing one year for John's prior ministry, the birth of Jesus would fall 14 years before the reign of Tiberius—the date of our era. But they overlooked the fact that Herod died four years before this. So since this little error has been pointed out they remove the birth of their Savior to 6 or 7 B.C., forgetting that then Luke ought to have made Jesus at least thirty-six years of age when baptised by John.

But, as we have seen, Luke's own statement as to the taxing under Cyrenius, which certainly did not take place till after the banishment of Archelaus, reduces the birth of Christ until some seven years after our own era, so that there is a difference of some thirteen years between the accounts of Matthew and Luke, the only writers who give any hints of chronology, for Mark and John have nothing to say on the wondrous birth of their hero. According to Luke's own evidence then in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Jesus was only twenty-one or twenty-two years of age, and as his ministry, according to the first three gospels, only lasted one year he was crucified at a very early age indeed.

From Matthew iii. and 1, it would appear that "in those days," *i.e.*, when Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt to Nazareth, John the Baptist was already preaching in the wilderness, while according to Luke John was only the senior of Jesus by six months. But the question of the length of time of the ministry of John and also of Jesus is much disputed. The former, judging by Jesus being taken for John the Baptist risen from the dead must have been very short indeed. For the latter, as I have said, there is nothing in the Synoptics to render it necessary to suppose it extended over a single Passover. The arrangement which lengthens the public life of Jesus to three years is obtained from the fourth gospel, but John presents a fatal contradiction to the rest by describing the crucifixion as preceding the Passover, whereas in the Synoptics Jesus had already kept the Passover with his disciples on the evening before he suffered.

Eminent authorities in the Chrisiian Church differ as to the date of the crucifixion and have assigned it to various periods extending from 28 to 34 A.D. Eusebius makes it to have been 33 A.D., and this date has been generally adopted, though Clement of Alexandria affirms that Jesus suffered in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, A.D. 29, and Tertullian not only says the same but fixes the day, March 25th. But it has been calculated that, according to strict usage, the fourteenth of Nisan could not have fallen on Friday in any of these dates, and it is moreover certain that the Jews never permitted trials and executions on their holy days, so that the evidence of Matthew, Mark and Luke is completely discredited.

There used to be quoted on this subject the testimony of Phlegon, a freedman of Hadrian, who is said to have written that in the fourth year of the two hundred and second olympiad there was an eclipse of the sun greater than was ever known before. But as Gibbon says, this testimony is now wisely abandoned. The words of Phlegon are lost, and one citation of this fragment makes it the one hundred and second olympiad. Bayle long since pointed out that although Phlegon was a writer intent on recording the marvellous, he does not notice the extraordinary circumstance of the alleged darkness at the crucifixion, that it took place at the time of full moon. Moreover, as Gibbon remarks, "It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of nature—earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses, which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe."

The testimony of Irenæus (bk. ii., chap. 22), the first writer who mentions the four gospels, is that the ministry of Jesus lasted about twenty years and that he was over fifty years old when he was crucified. And for this statement Irenæus claimed to have the authority of all the elders in Asia. He argues, too, that had Jesus been only thirty the Jews would have said, "Thou art not yet forty years old," instead of "not yet fifty" (John viii., 57). Their object being to remind him of his youth they would not have added twenty years in specifying the limit he had not reached. As, however, Pilate was removed A.D. 36, this argument rather tends to throw the birth of Jesus back than his death forward, and since Christians now allow he was born from 4 to 7 years B.C., we do not see why they should not make it 17 B.C., or even earlier.

Altogether the evidence is so conflicting that it is possible to question whether Jesus ever really died at all since this position was taken up by early Christians and is held by Mahommedans even to the present day.

J. M. WHEELER.

A dying Irishman, when asked by the priest if he would renounce the devil, said "Oh your honor don't ask me that; I'm going into a strange country and I don't want to make myself enemies."

By the way, is it proper to call vergers, bell-ringers, pew-openers, and such small fry *infra-dig*-nitaries of the Church?

"That Adam and Eve were born gamblers
Is as easy to prove as to say;
They were caught at a game in the garden,
And their pair-o-dice taken away."

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THE SUNDAY QUESTION IN BELFAST.

A DISCUSSION having some interest for Freethinkers is going on at present on the above subject in the most popular of the Belfast evening papers *The Telegraph*. A correspondent started the matter by suggesting the opening of the Free Library Reading Room on Sundays, and cited the example set by the City Council of Oxford, which has decided to open the Free Library of that city on Sundays from November next. Belfast is principally Presbyterian, and that of the narrow Scotch character, so that such a proposition was sure to be received with the fiercest hostility, but strangely enough the opponents of Sunday opening have had the least to say on the entire question. The numerous correspondents in favor of Sunday opening have been the most intelligent and logical in their arguments and some of them have expressed views startling in their liberality, and such as are seldom found outside the ranks of professed Atheists. The last letter, as I write, contains the following strong expressions:

"There are people in the world who do not think the reading of a good story or decent newspaper on a Sunday an unpardonable sin, people who, after studying the New Testament through and through, are unable to find therein anything authorising the absurd Sabbatarian views held by a, fortunately diminishing, section of the community. Sunday is not the Sabbath day, and the keeping of the Fourth Commandment is no more obligatory on Christians than are the many other obsolete and curious commands contained in the Mosaic code."

This should be a bombshell in the camp of Presbyterianism. The shorter catechism, which is taught daily in the national schools, under Presbyterian management, sets out expressly the obligations of the Fourth Commandment on all Christians, on pain of God's condemnation to the third and fourth generation of those who do not keep it. The austerities of Sunday observance in Belfast are disappearing rapidly. Excursion trains are popular—so popular as to somewhat decimate the attendance at the churches during Sunday services, with the result that the sky-pilots are protesting against the terrible desecration of the Lord's day, and calling on the shareholders—often themselves—of the various railway companies to put a stop to Sunday travelling. But it is useless; the pious shareholders pocket their increased dividends thankfully, and turning their eyes upwards deplore the wickedness abroad in the land, but they do no more.

The parks are open all day on Sundays, and the attendance is steadily increasing. I can remember when the parks were almost deserted during the hours of service; at present there is scarcely an appreciable difference. Comment is needless. Crowds of bicyclists start on journeys to the surrounding country, every Sunday morning during the summer months; and they are becoming so regardless of appearances that they do not sneak away early in the morning and return after dark as they used to do, but ride boldly in the daylight. Even the people on their way to church have ceased to be horrified at such things, and they will sometimes stop to look at a friendly race between two cyclists, turning away from the amusing spectacle with a sigh, and sadly continuing their dull journey to hear a duller sermon.

Pleasure steamers cater successfully on Sundays for a larger number of customers than all the Presbyterian churches in the city would hold, and judging from the favorable conditions enjoyed by these Sabbath breakers the God of the Presbyterian is either asleep or gone on an excursion himself.

All these matters, small in themselves, show most emphatically the loosening of the hold that religion has on the people, and the substitution of rational views on the Sunday question as on other and more Secular subjects.

W. M. KNOX.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A FREETHOUGHT MUSEUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Paris possesses an incomparable Freethought Museum in the shape of the Musée des Religions, established by M. Emile Guimet. It would be hopeless for England to expect all at once such a magnificent endowment as that. But I have cherished the idea that a small museum and library might be instituted, in which should be found books and relics illustrating the history of Freethought. To this I should think many would gladly contribute. At any rate the idea is worth broaching, to see if it awakens any response.

CIVIS SUM.

A TRIBUTE TO BRUNO.

In the smiling land where the Tiber flows
On its winding way from the mountains down;
The sun of a far-off day arose
On a seven-hilled city of past renown.

It shone on pillar and tower and arch,
On church and temple and statue fair,
On a mob of black-robed priests who march
To a chosen spot in a public square.

It sees the man they have brought and bound,
It sees them driving the martyr's stake.
And while they are piling the fagots round
Their curses and maledictions break.

We look, and the cowled and howling crowd
Of Roman ruffians and Romish priests
Scowl dark on their victim, angry-browed
With the brutal passions of savage beasts.

No friend is present to take his part,
Nor venture the protest of groan or sob,
Save that some woman of tender heart
Weeps low at the outskirts of the mob.

The hands of assassins have lit the fire,
But the martyr, erect, unawed, unbowed,
Looks out from the smoke of his funeral pyre
Serene as the stars look through a crowd.

The deed is done, and the crowds disperse,
And Bruno, the noble, once more is free,
For the waves of the Tiber, a sombre hearse,
Flow down with his ashes toward the sea.

Ah, this was Rome when the Church had power
And owned the soil that the patriot trod;
This was the bloom of the papal flower—
Yea, this was Italy under God.

But the sun shines still, round goes the world,
And another era has dawned on Rome;
The vicar of Christ from the throne is hurled,
And the land of the popes is the free man's home.

On the spot where Bruno died that day
A marble statue confronts the eye,
While the priests in their cloister curse or pray,
And bemoan the worth of a time gone by.

And Italy's sons, while the Tiber flows,
Will guard that statue from break or fall,
And Bruno's lovers shall fame disclose
As the noblest Romans among them all.

Ah, this is Italy, free at last
From the curse of the sacerdotal clan;
Undoing the crimes of a brutal past,
Lo, this is Italy under Man.

G. E. MACDONALD (in *Freethought*).

MICHAEL O'RAFFERTY'S AGE.

An Irishman got a job from an undertaker to make a coffin, the job to include painting the inscription on the lid. This he was too ignorant to do, but did not like to confess it. By dint of following the written copy given him, he managed to get as far as "Michael O'Rafferty, aged—," but try as he would he could not imitate the twenty-eight. At last he remembered that he could write 7, and that four sevens made twenty-eight, so he finished the inscription, "aged 7777." When they came to bury Michael, the coffin stood at the graveside, and the priest spoke as follows: "Ah, he was a fine lad, though he's lying there so still, taken away in the very prime of loife. Young he was, too, only——" Here the priest looked down at the coffin-plate to see how old Michael was, "He was only" said his reverence again, and he put his glasses on, and went nearer, to see how old he really was. "He was only—" he continued "he was seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven years. Thunder and turf! how did he escape the Flood?"

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JESUS CHRIST IN LONDON.

For long—very long—I have continually thought of the reception that would be accorded to a Savior who took it into his head to incarnate himself in this matter-of-fact age—say in London, for instance. Why, the whole affair would be so absurd that even the newspapers would only have a few lines of notice stating that a poor carpenter's wife, suffering from mania, was brought before the magistrate at Southwark charged with obstruction in consequence of causing a crowd to collect by asserting she was about to bring forth a Savior. Poor Joseph would certainly have to put her away privily in the local asylum. Supposing the birth had taken place in a manger at Pickford's stables; his lodging with his parents in a court in the Borough; his turning a reservoir of water into wine, thereby astonishing householders when they turned on the kitchen tap; cursing the tree in Cheapside because it would not produce fruit—all the comic paper-power of this town could not produce so uproarious an effect. Imagine this young carpenter God arguing with the bishops and arch ditto at St. Paul's or the Abbey; the idea is too funny. Again, his triumphant entry into the City would not in these days be on a donkey, but no doubt on a bicycle—one perhaps of the "bone-shaking" kind, his means not enabling him to hire one of the better sort, not being able to leave a large deposit. And then picture his life at home—one small, ill-ventilated room, with the washing about, the under-clothes being dried on strings stretched across the room; Mary, his mother, ironing to the best of her ability; Joseph, tired with his day's work, seated by the small fireside drowsily smoking a short clay pipe.

The whole idea brought down to present time is too ludicrous, although the plea of Christians is that the recorded birth and doings of this third part of a God took place many many years ago in an uncivilised part of the world, amongst unlettered and grossly ignorant Easterns. But surely if the deity considered them of such importance as to cause his son to appear at such an insignificant place—surely there is more need for him to send his third part of himself now amongst his children, in the largest and most civilised town in the world, should he think of a present day incarnation.

Imagination fails to think of the Shah, the Sultan, and the Mahdi being guided to London by a star to search out and pay homage to this wonderful child. Try to think of the reigning monarch here being so jealous of this young deity, that an order goes forth to destroy all the male infants round about, so as by this clumsy arrangement to include the death of this one child. Why parliament would have an all night sitting, and pushing aside the Irish question depose the monarch by an unanimous vote, not by a majority of four.

Then there would have to be the trial for sedition. The judge would press for the death penalty—and suppose this God was cast for hanging—it would be done in the usual unromantic way—black flag run up on prison roof—inquest, burial with quicklime (thereby making any attempt at levitation very difficult), wax effigy at Madame Tussaud's, etc. Suppose ascension was tried, balloons containing reporters would hover about the spot with carrier pigeons to convey the news quickly to Fleet Street—special editions of the papers would be issued—the streets would be made hideous by flying, panting nomads, folding their papers as they ran, shouting "start of Christ," "easy go up," "latest betting on the event."

After the Resurrection when the disciples had to meet Jesus in the country near London—it would have to be a cheap tram fare distance, and no doubt in consequence of our variable climate Christ would have the family umbrella under his arm. The last supper would have to be held at a place to suit their moderate means, say at a fried fish and stewed eel restaurant. If these absurd things were told me as having occurred this week, well! I might smile, but no serious thought would be given to the tissue of nonsense, and yet denunciation takes place because credence is not given to similar events said to have occurred 1800 years ago in an out of the way corner of the earth. What a pity, if the descent of a God was necessary, a populous city—say Rome—had not been chosen. It would have been the very best place for a Savior to have appeared, both for publicity and giving greater scope to his or her mission.

London, I contend, offers a splendid opportunity for one of the numerous sons of God to try his skill at salvation now, and so wrest it (the Salvation dodge) from the hands of those who are playing it down so very low—I mean the Boothites, with their mad antics mixed with the braying of what they facetiously call their *musical* instruments. Besides, if he came quickly, all the vast incomes of the bishops, archbishops, deacons, curates, canons, presbyters, priests, etc., would be saved.

ACID DROPS.

Under the heading of "Blasphemous Publications" the London *Chronicle* reports that the New South Wales Cabinet has decided that the circulation of indecent literature shall be prosecuted. "This step," it is said, "has been taken in consequence of the recent arrival of blasphemous publications from Melbourne and London."

We are delighted to hear that the Freethought literature sent out from our office is a cause of alarm to the New South Wales bigots. But why do they use the word "indecent"? We think we know. They use it to bamboozle the public. Under the lying pretence of "indecency" they want to put down "blasphemy." Let them try.

It appears that the Humboldt Freethought Society of Leipsic, Saxony, has been definitely suppressed, and all objects which might serve to continue the society, as furniture, cards of membership, etc., confiscated by the Government. This is the extent of liberty now enjoyed in "king-deluded Germany," which claims to be a nation of thinkers. Since the advent of the pious young Emperor, who considers himself under the immediate patronage of God Almighty, no professor can utter his thoughts on theology without danger of losing his chair, and a society which seeks to replace religion by science is forcibly suppressed.

In keeping with this inquisitorial act is the indictment for blasphemy of Karl Schulze, editor of the *Nordhauser Volksblatt*, for publishing an Easter poem in which, according to our exchanges, there is no blasphemy whatever. In the Reichstag the Catholics rule the roost, and unless the German people wake up they will be in danger of seeing the State become a department of the Church.

Providence is distributing the weather badly. In London it is wet and cold, the glass only registering a little over sixty in the first week of July. In Chicago it is fearfully hot. Twenty-five deaths from sunstroke were reported on Monday. By-and-bye we shall have to go in for Home Rule for this planet. The imperial government has too much to do, in looking after the general affairs of the universe, to attend properly to the wants of mankind. Those wandering comets have to be coerced, and the rings of Jupiter, perhaps, have to be kept from premature separation. That is all very well, of course, but why not hand over local matters to a local government?

Mr. Gladstone never travels on Sunday. He thinks out articles on the Bible instead. When they are written he gets a big cheque. Good Old Man.

Henry Oatman, editor of the *Morning Call*, Pittsburg, has been officially notified by the Methodist Church he belongs to that he must cease publishing a Sunday edition or leave the Church. He refuses to do either. The world awaits the result with breathless suspense.

Catholic Opinion calls Count Tolstoi's views a revival of the heresy of the Albigenses that marriage is sinful. It ought to know that the doctrine in question is founded on the words of Christ, and was held by many of the orthodox fathers as well as by numerous heretics, long before the existence of the Albigenses.

At the Conference of the Catholic Truth Society at Birmingham, the Rev. Dr. Barry, who recently had an article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the same subject, contended that Christianity had ceased to influence the lives of the masses in our large towns. He said that hundreds of thousands were growing up outside the pale of every Church, and that "Christianity lagged terribly behind." A notable confession to come from the priests of a divine religion. What is perhaps yet more noteworthy is that the priests hope to regain influence, not by divine help or

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prayers, but by "taking interest in strikes and labor disputes."

The Catholic Truth Conference has also been discussing the Salvation Army and as to how far it is desirable to imitate that belligerent body. Father Lawless appropriately began the discussion. This gentleman has been getting up Catholic processions in the streets of Poplar. The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom has made a start on almost exactly the same lines as the S. A.

The Roman Catholic Guild of our Lady of Ransom, whose special object is the conversion of England and the salvation of apostates, has, in addition to White, Red, and Blue Cross Ransomers, a special Children's Crusade for those under the age of fourteen. In imitation of the S. A., they have a Red Cross Banner with the motto "Rather Die than Deny," and altogether aim at a military aspect. Two journals are devoted to their interest, *The Weekly Register* and a monthly, *The Faith of Our Fathers*. Here is a verse of one of their hymns:

We go on to conquer, we cease not from war,
Till the dowry of Our Queen is brought back from afar,
Till the chant of thanksgiving, the altar restored,
Proclaims your mild triumph sweet Wounds of our Lord.

The lines are in the forcible-feeble vein, but we can assure our readers the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom has the special blessing of the Pope and is no joke. A crocodile's egg has a very innocent appearance before it is fully hatched.

Mr. Foote's recent article on "Jesus at the Derby" has inspired a Chester-le-Street religious genius with a pome which appears in the local *Advertiser*. As a choice specimen of Christian sentiment and poetic art we enshrine two verses in our pages.

To what a state have we arrived
In horrid caricature,
When men on syllabus, on bills,
Mock their own Creator;
And others post them on their boards,
And run all in a hurry,
And set them out that folks may read
Jesus at the Derby.

But was he there? Yes, oh yes!
We ask, where is he not?
He's in the palace, mansion, hall,
And in the humble cot;
He's in the sea, he's in the earth,
And sweeps the heavens starry,
He's here, he's there, he's everywhere,
Then sure he's at the Derby.

There are four more verses of this beautiful composition, but we think this is perhaps about as much as our readers can stand.

"Sister Mary Agnes" has written an account of *Nunnery Life in the Church of England*. The lady was persuaded by Father Ignatius to become a bride of the much married Christ. She took the veil and, after a long process of disillusionment, broke her vows, and returned to the world after sixteen years experience. According to her account the nuns are treated with the utmost harshness, for instance eating off the bare floor is a device intended to cure inattention to the convent bell. The book suggests that there is much reason in those who urge that all convents should be inspected.

Talk about Jesus at the Derby! Here is *Joyful News*, who connects the Jericho taxgatherer Zaccheus with the modern publican, and says "This is not the first time Jesus went to a public-house, and it won't be the last by a long way."

The Queen has permitted the inhabitants of Windsor to come on the Eastern Terrace of the Castle and hear the band of the Coldstream Guards on Sunday afternoons, thus letting them share in a pleasure she has long enjoyed. Meantime provincial barbers and sweetstuff sellers are still occasionally prosecuted under the Sunday Law of His Most Gracious Majesty Charles II.

Alexandre Jacques, the French fasting man at the Aquarium, is going to beat the record of Succi, Dr. Tanner and Jesus Christ. He will fast for 42 days, and is in a fair way of performing his feat without assistance from ministering angels.

A conflict has taken place between Turkish soldiers and Armenian Christians at Erzeroum. The Turks, suspecting an Armenian church to be used as a storehouse for Christian arms and ammunition, sent a party of soldiers to search during the time that service was proceeding. During the search an Armenian among the worshippers fired upon and killed the Turkish officer, this act being followed by a tumult, in which the soldiers fired upon the Armenians. The latter rejoined with revolvers, and in the mêlée four Armenians and eight Turks were killed and a number of others wounded.

A shocking murder is reported from Melbourne. A man named McGrath who had been suffering from religious mania, quarrelled with one Conrad Rattzlaff on some religious topic and then struck him over the head with a heavy door scraper. He also violently assaulted a constable who tried to arrest him. When secured he raved and shouted in the wildest manner, declaring that he had visited hell and found a sister there, that it was necessary for him to sacrifice a victim in order to release her, and that having done so he was happy. Rattzlaff was alive when picked up, but died before the hospital was reached. McGrath probably derived his inspiration and insanity from the Bible.

Last Saturday Thomas Hadon, a Wesleyan local preacher at Bedworth, committed suicide at Bulkington.

Bow Bells' correspondence column contains the sad case of B. T. F., a young man of Portsmouth, who has been engaged to a lady of twenty-three. His affianced began to read the works of Spencer and other scientists, and "has become a decided infidel." She has offered to release B. T. F. from his engagement. His father has said he shall not inherit a shilling if he marries anyone not a Christian. What is he to do? *Bow Bells* says—"If the lady is unchangeably set in her infidel views, and you are a devoted Christian, it is your duty not to marry her." We wonder if such cases happen often. Usually the difficulty is when the young man has become "an infidel."

The Bishop of Manchester has been defending Jael, the murderess of Sisera, selecting as his text Judges v., 24, "Blessed above women is Jael." According to the bishop, this pious woman, "who loved the God of Israel," killed her country's enemy with the best of motives; "the conflict in her mind would seem to be between a life pure and righteous and a life oppressive, cruel and of the basest and foulest immorality." It is needless to say there is nothing of this in the story. Sisera was at peace with Jael's husband; she invited him into her tent and treacherously slew him in his sleep.

Sisera being an enemy of the Jews, they praised Jael, and the bishop says, "though Jael committed a crime, it was one of those inspired crimes that had no ignoble motive and were at the worst the consequence of a splendid mistake." The rhetoric of a bishop is well employed in turning a treacherous assassination into a splendid mistake.

"I will make you fishers of men" is a queer title for the frontispiece of the "Young Women's Christian Association's Almanack."

A newsagent at Reading was asked to exhibit a bill of a Freethought lecture on "Darwin *versus* Moses." "What's that," said he, "a debate? I thought Darwin was dead." "Well," replied the Secularist, "I thought Moses was dead too." "Oh, ah," said the Christian, "I forgot that."

Here is a specimen of what the poor pedagogue has to put up with at the hands of parsons. It is an advertisement from the *Schoolmaster*—

"Certificated MASTER. Decided Christian. Advertiser seeks Converted, God-fearing Man (2 Cor. v., 17; Phil. iii., 3) for Mixed Country School. Exceptionally healthy part. 52 on Books. Married. Abstainer. Sing, play Organ. Wife or Needlework. References as to personal piety. One who values Gospel Ministry would find a happy Home. Present salary about £100 (may be increased), with good house and garden.—Rev. W. Woodward, Dalehead Vicarage, viâ Clitheroe."

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When the "converted God-fearing" schoolmaster gets the situation at the magnificent salary of £1 18s. 5½d. a week, which is apparently to include his wife's services as a needlewoman, he will have to eke out his income with the advantages of the "Gospel Ministry." He will go to church, lead the singing, play the organ, and act as factotum to the Rev. W. Woodhead—we beg pardon Woodward. (The first syllable of one word got mixed with the second syllable of the next.) But if he perseveres his salary "may be increased." Perhaps it will be made up to £2 a week. And as he must be "an abstainer" he will soon be able to invest heavily in government stock. Happy man in a "happy home." Woodhead (no, confound it! Woodward) for ever!

Some sceptical person at Bournemouth heard the gospel account of the choking of the swine in the sea given as a proof that pigs cannot swim. He addressed a query to the local paper and was answered with instances of pigs being capital swimmers. Now the question is, can pigs swim with devils inside of them?

A proposed Act of the American Congress "to Suppress Fraud and Deceit in Alleged Spiritual Manifestations" has been stoutly opposed by the spiritists and withdrawn.

There was a debt-ridden church near Pittsburg, and Carnegie *didn't* come to the rescue. But the Lord did. Oil was struck in the churchyard, and the flow is now 1,000 barrels a day. Some other churches would like the same luck. But the oil is likely to get into the minister's sermon, and some of them are oily enough already.

Here is a chance for sinners! According to a circular issued from the Oratory, South Kensington, those who confess and communicate there, on the three days devoted to the Blessed John Juvenal Ancina, will be granted an Indulgence of 100 years on each of those days, and a Plenary Indulgence up to date. "Both indulgences are applicable to the souls in Purgatory."—Walk in sinners, walk in. Clear off the old score and start afresh. For three days in every year, for a century, you will be able to "go it blind" with impunity.

Mr. Bradlaugh's seat at Northampton is assailed by a Mr. Mahon, who takes time by the forelock and issues an address of four foolscap pages to the electors. He seeks to outbid both Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Bradlaugh by advocating the eight-hours legal day, State workshops, and better housing of the poor. Mr. Mahon claims to represent the labor party, but it is surmised the funds for his expenses are more likely to come from wealthy Conservatives than from laborers.

A Chinese railway is to be constructed entirely through Mongolia to the Russian frontier. The orientals are gradually waking up to the benefits of Western science. But they will not have our religion at any price.

Chinese Christians, what there are of them, have to bear the taunt of having adopted the religion of "the foreign devils who are making China into a hell by their opinions." This is from the *Methodist Times*.

The National Anti-Gambling League is a Christian body, and of course it is no respecter of persons. We expect to hear of its making strong representations to the Prince of Wales, Lord Randolph Churchill, and other members of the aristocracy. "Do ye?" grins our printer's devil. After wiping off the contents of a quart bottle of ink, he has gone to bet the office-boy two to one that we wait till the Greek Kalends. That is our way of putting it. *His* language is more forcible.

"Was the wine made by Christ at the marriage feast intoxicating?" asks a correspondent of the *Christian Commonwealth*. No, replies the editor; had it been so "they would have been already inebriated without a further supply." Indeed! Why it is just when drinkers are "well on" that they are most anxious for "a further supply." Try again.

Archdeacon Blakeney is too exacting. He wound up a discussion at Sheffield on "Brotherhoods" by remarking that he should think more of the Bishops who supported them if they set the example of celibacy, poverty, and obedience. He forgets that Bishops are only guide-posts. They show the way. It is too much to ask them to travel as well as point.

Dr. Parker has made the discovery that "God did not write the Bible in English." It is high time he did though, for the translations vary, and hundreds of sects are founded on diverse interpretations. God might write the Bible over again in English, and then we should all read it alike. But that would put an end to the clerical business. No wonder, therefore, that Dr. Parker is satisfied with the Bible as it is.

Dr. Cuyler has been preaching on "Mules." Can he mean the "advanced" clergy—a cross between reason and faith, with the proverbial infecundity of hybrids? We might have found out by reading the sermon, but we had read several before, and we had such a fit of yawning that we could not proceed. All we could master was the title.

The Rev. Newton E. Howe, vicar of Old Swindon, who came to that town three years ago invoking the prayers of the inhabitants, has for some time been in hot water with his parishioners, and now the most disgraceful charges are urged against him. Pending an investigation he has placed his resignation in the hands of the bishop. On Saturday and Monday a mob surrounded the vicarage intent on administering a novel form of baptism in the adjacent Wilts and Berks canal. But the vicar had fortunately departed and failed to put in an appearance at the parish church on Sunday. The inhabitants seem to doubt if he did really receive the Holy Ghost at ordination.

They are fond of sport in the north, and even contrive to mix it with their piety. The *Newcastle Chronicle* tells how recently a Church hymn-book had to be reprinted, and the work was given to a local tradesman. Whether for a freak, or for a deep design, several persons got each set of twelve or sixteen pages printed on paper of different colors in such wise that when the sheets were bound into a book and the edges gilded, it was impossible to detect the colors beneath. Not once, we are assured, but scores of times, have pennies in this town been betted in church on the simple chance of sticking a pin between the leaves of a specified color.

"Love not the world nor the things of the world"—especially theatres, where wicked authors like Shakespeare compete with the men of the pulpit. The Rev. George Hack and the Rev. Sidney Dunman, of Cardiff, two hot and strong Methodists, have just been denouncing playhouses; and this leads the Welsh correspondent of the *Methodist Times* to remark that "Puritanism in Wales is in a healthy condition."

Dr. Thain Davidson recently preached on "Rubbish." There was no lack of matter. He had the Bible before him.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

OBITUARY.

We regret to notice the sudden death of Mr. T. L. McCready the associate editor with Mr. H. O. Pentecost, of the *Twentieth Century*. Although Mr. McCready wrote mainly on Social subjects, his utterances were always thoughtful and manly. They will be missed from our welcome exchange.

We regret to announce the death of Leonard Hemingway, aged 4 years, youngest son of Mr. A. Hemingway, our esteemed secretary, which took place on the 24th. inst. He was interred at the Southern Cemetery, Manchester, on the 26th. Mr. Pegg reading Austin Holyoake's Burial Service.—C. Watts

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. B.—The Victorian law allows as reasons for divorce—1, adultery; 2, desertion, without excuse, for three years; 3, habitual drunkenness and neglect of home responsibilities; 4, seven years' imprisonment.

W. HERON.—Buckle's *History of Civilisation*. The subject will be dealt with exhaustively in a future volume—now preparing—of *Crimes of Christianity*. Cassell and Co. publish a History of the American Civil War. We don't know the price.

E. M. VANCE.—See "Sugar Plums." The party is much indebted to you for undertaking the work.

C. TURNER.—You certainly did say there was no lecture at Tottenham on June 24. We note your correction. Mr. S. Standring, who manages that district, is working with too slender resources both in men and money.

R. G. LEES.—We have not the addresses by us. Apply to Mr. Forder.

ATHEIST.—Mr. Slater, of the Salvation Army, was never a Freethought lecturer. He is a personal acquaintance of Mr. Wheeler's. Mr. Foote has seen him, always accidentally, about three times in seven years, but has never had any conversation with him. We do not believe that Mr. Slater told the Salvationist you refer to that Mr. Foote "did not believe what he preached." Whether he did or not is a matter of indifference. We cannot stoop to contradict such nonsense.

INCOG.—See "Acid Drops."

W. LIZ (Dum Dum, India).—The rumor that Mr. Bradlaugh is seceding from Secularism to Theosophy is *too* preposterous. Some persons in India seem to have softening of the brain, but Mr. Bradlaugh is not yet so afflicted.

E. S.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

B. HARRIS.—Shall be glad to hear the result of your inquiries.

H. J. STACE.—We are surprised to learn that the Committee of the Westminster Branch wishes to have its own separate excursion, and not to join the Federation excursion on July 20. As the Branch is affiliated to the Federation, it certainly seems to us a matter on which the members have a right to be heard. Branches should not stand aside from the Federation arrangements unless there is a principle at stake. If they do, then co-operation is an empty sound.

E. MAGNIER.—We have handed the complaint to Mr. Forder. It shall be attended to.

W. T. GRIFFITHS.—You do not say what special branch of Religion you wish to read. It is impossible to recommend books unless you mention the specific subject—the Bible, the Life of Christ, Miracles, or what not.

J. PRUETT.—Thanks. See acknowledgment in List.

H. COURTNEY, 8 Norland Road North, Notting Hill, W., will be glad to hear from Mr. Smart, late secretary of the Kensington Branch. He has something important to communicate.

STUPID AWE.—Pleased to learn that your newsagent, by displaying a bill, has run up his sale to fifteen copies. All the *Freethinker* requires is to be put before the public. Thousands would be glad to buy it if they found it easy to obtain.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec., N.E. Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subs.:—N. S. S. Executive, £5; H. Richardson, £2; Mr. Fleming, 1s. 6d.; Mr. Roberts, 5s.; A Friend, 2s.; Middlesbro' Branch, 3s. More funds are urgently needed.

T. E. N.—The verse is hardly up to the mark.

S. STANDRING.—No one who knows you could doubt that you do your best. The wonder is that you get through so much work. We understand what a sacrifice you make for the cause every Sunday. The only advice we can give is that you apply to the London Federation or the N. S. S. Executive for assistance.

W. G. R.—Any London Branch can have old *Freethinkers* by calling at Clerkenwell Green for them. We have a lot left still.

W. HOLLAND.—(1) Our views on Theosophy and its relation to Secularism are already expressed in two pamphlets. We need not repeat them. (2) Yes, you can have the tracts assorted.

YOUNG SCEPTIC.—Your verse is not bad, but not good enough for publication. How can you expect your first attempt to be so? Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. We believe the Sunderland Branch is reorganising. Read, if you can get them, Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, and *Supernatural Religion*. Both should be in the library.

GAMIN (Leicester).—Mr. Forder will see to it. We are unable to answer the other questions at present.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Joyful News—Independent Pulpit—People's Press—Chester-le-Street Advertiser—Joyful News—La Verite—North Wilts Herald—Swindon Advertiser—Market Rasen Mail—Preston Herald.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £66 1s. 8d.

Tenth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
M. Weatherburn	0	2	11	J. Moffatt	0	5	0
J. Temple	0	2	6	D. R. B.	0	5	0
E. Holland	0	10	0	W. R. Munton	0	10	0
Daylight	0	5	0	J. Powell	0	2	6
T. B. (Natal, South Africa)	5	5	0	J. Pruett	0	5	0
				T. A. Sutton	0	2	0
S. Middleton	0	2	6	C. Simson	0	1	6

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectured three times at Reading on Sunday. Considering the recent establishment of the Branch and the summer weather, the audiences were very satisfactory. The discussion was not of a particularly edifying character, the Christian side being poorly represented. The Branch now numbers over thirty members, nearly all of whom are working men of a very superior type. Fortunately there are a few outside sympathisers who assist financially.

Several members of the Swindon Branch, about a dozen in all, paid Mr. Foote a handsome compliment, besides showing their earnestness in the cause, by travelling a distance of forty miles to hear him lecture. Bigotry is very strong in Swindon. A hall for a lecture cannot be got for love or money.

The London Secular Federation's annual summer excursion takes place on July 20. There will be high jinks in Epping Forest unless the weather is spiteful. Each Branch is organising its own brake party, but an extra contingent will start from the Hall of Science. Tickets for this division can be obtained (2s. 6d. each) at the Hall, at 28 Stonecutter Street, and of Mr. Pownceby, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C.

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Mr. Foote concluded the London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures at Hammersmith on Thursday, June 26, his subject being "Freethought and Christ." There was a crowded audience, many persons being unable to obtain admission. The side windows were pulled down, and some stood and listened outside, their heads being just visible from within. The proceedings lasted from eight till eleven. Among the five opponents were two clergymen, Messrs. Donaldson and Ward. The chair was efficiently occupied by Mr. H. Courtney. We believe the collection more than defrayed the expenses.

The local Branch has determined to continue these lectures during July. Mr. C. J. Hunt takes the first two Thursdays, and will be followed by Mr. Heaford.

One result of these lectures is the starting of an open-air lecture station at Hammersmith Bridge. This more than compensates the lecturers and the other workers for their trouble. It is very evident that Freethought simply requires an active organisation, with sensible direction and a moderate amount of money, to make its way with rapid strides.

The Battersea Branch N. S. S. held its quarterly meeting last Sunday, and decided to allow members to join at 1s. per year if they could not afford 1s. per quarter. After the meeting the members and friends sat down to a substantial tea, during which the Salvation Army came and played some "sweet music" outside the secular hall. If the Salvationists had come an hour later the Freethinkers might have utilised their band for the *soiree* they were about to hold.

An adjourned meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch will be held at Mr. Rowney's, 155 Winston Road, Green Lanes, on Monday, July 7, at 8.30 p.m.

Miss Vance, the secretary of the North-West London Branch, and one of the new N. S. S. vice presidents, is to be congratulated on her energy and enterprise. On behalf of the London Secular Federation she undertook to re-start the open-air lecture-station at the Midland Arches. A spot has been chosen for the platform at the corner of Battle Bridge and Wharf Road, nearly opposite the old station, and a convenient distance from the hymn-singing crew. Mr. Forder delivers the first lecture to-day (July 6). We hope the Freethinkers of the neighborhood will gather round him and form the nucleus of a big audience.

Mr. Charles Watts, the editor of *Secular Thought*, Toronto, and lecturer to the Canadian Secular Union, will soon visit England. He is to lecture at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, July 20, on "Unbelief: a Plea for Mental Liberty"; and at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday, August 10. He will return to Toronto early in September.

The Newcastle friends have started a penny monthly called *Sunday Notes*, as an organ of the Sunday Music League. We wish it success.

Bruno's statue at Rome is not to be the only eyesore to the clericals. The Freethought associations have appointed a committee to carry out a plan for erecting a monument to another victim of the Church—the famous monk, Arnaldo Da Brescia, who was burnt in the Piazza Del Popolo in 1156. His chief crime was teaching that the clergy should forswear wealth.

The veteran Dr. Ludwig Büchner, of Darmstadt, author of *Force and Matter*, has published a new work entitled *Zwei Gekrönte Freidenker*—Two Crowned Freethinkers. The work gives an account of the Emperor Akbar of Hindustan and Frederick the Great of Prussia.

The *Independent Pulpit* for June has a capital varied list of contents. We notice especially "An Inquiry into the Antecedent Probability that Christianity is Divine" by S. J. Matthews.

Mr. R. B. Westbrook, President of the American Secular Union, has put forward *A Few Plain Words regarding Church Taxation*. The boasted separation of Church and State in America cannot be considered complete while churches have the unjust advantage of exemption from taxation.

The *Loyal American* advocates, among other matters, that "all wills to be signed thirty days before death, or failing that the State shall divide the estate among the heirs." This is intended as a blow at the perquisites of the Catholic priests who find attending the death-beds of the faithful so lucrative.

Harper's Magazine for July is made interesting to Freethinkers by an article on the great Italian poet, "Giosue Carducci and the Hellenic Reaction in Italy" by Frank Sewall. Mr. Sewall says, "So thorough is the reaction exhibited at the present day in Italy against the dogma and authority of the Church of Rome that we are led to inquire whether, not the Church alone, as Mr. Symonds says, but whether Christianity itself has ever 'imposed on the Italian character' to such an extent as to obliterate wholly the underlying Latin or Hellenic element; or prevent these from springing again into a predominating influence when the foreign yoke is removed."

Mr. Sewall points out that Carducci differs from his contemporaries and the classicists in "the utter frankness of his renunciation of Christianity," and the bold substitution of a Pagan ideal. At the same time he allows Carducci to be the mainspring of the revival of poetry in Italy. Some tranlations of sonnets and odes are given in one of which he addresses the Christian idol:

> Crucified Martyr! Man thou crucifiest
> The very air thou darkenest with thy gloom.

There is also a translation of Carducci's hymn to Satan, which we shall probably present to our readers.

There is a Progressive party in the Jewish Church in England, who propose that at the installation of the new Grand Rabbi, which will shortly take place, there also shall be instituted an Ecclesiastical Board empowered to make reforms in worship. The orthodox Jews, who are mostly of German or Polish descent, urge that all reforms hitherto made in Germany and America have had the effect of weakening allegiance to their faith, and the same result will probably follow in England. It is likely the dispute between the orthodox and the progressives will lead to a split.

Under the heading "Olla Podrida" the *Market Rasen Mail* gives insertion to some cuttings from the *Freethinker*.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie's pen is frequently found in the pages of the *Echo* with some suggestive scrap of Freethought. For instance, recently a correspondent suggested that the Pope should forbid the manufacture of Chartreuse. Mr. Mackenzie points out that "Such an interdiction would be an implicit condemnation of Christ's anti-teetotalism. A teetotaller would, if he could, turn wine into water. Christ is said to have turned water into wine, of a quality that met with convivial approval, and all for the delectation of feasters already 'drunk.' I fancy that Christ's 'wine-bibbing' will stand in the way of his Vicar's conversion." This is a good instance of the way in which a ready penman may take occasion to put in a word for Freethought.

Mr. Thwaites, a veteran Secularist of Stockton-on-Tees, has taken the whole of our back page for three weeks. May we remind some of our readers who are in business that the *Freethinker* is a good advertising medium? It has a good circulation—far larger than some journals that live on advertisements, and it is read and often kept the whole week in the house, to say nothing of the copies that are bound up in volumes.

Those who wish to obtain Mr. Foote's portrait must order it by post. The price is fixed very low for a cabinet portrait, and does not admit of trade discounts. The purchaser reaps the benefit if he only takes the trouble to post his order.

The Creation Story, the first Part of the new edition of Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances," is now on sale. This number is a double one of sixteen pages, and the price is twopence. Most of the succeeding parts will be one penny as before. Mr. Foote has used only a few sentences of the old edition of *The Creation Story*. The new edition is new in the fullest sense of the word. It is replete with information, and a great number of references are given in the footnotes.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE Meeting June 25, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present—Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, Bater, Bentley, Heath, Hunt, Ivatts, Killick, Reynolds, Smith, Standring, Truelove, Warren, Wheeler, and Forder (Secretary). Mrs. Thornton Smith moved, and Mr. Hunt seconded, "That Miss Vance, Mrs. Burton, Messrs, C. Herbert, C. Williams, G. Burton, G. Standring, R. O. Smith, W. H. Reynolds, V. Roger, J. Robertson, and G. J. Warren be the Benevolent Fund Committee for 1890-91"; carried. Mr. Hunt moved, and Mr. Warren seconded, "That Mrs. Thornton Smith be added to the Benevolent Fund Committee"; carried. Miss Vance moved, and Mr. Truelove seconded, "That Messrs. Smith, Standring, Reynolds, Warren, and Roger be the Organisation Committee for 1890-91"; carried. Mr. Warren moved, and Mr. Bater seconded, "That Mr. J. F. Henley and Mr. C. Herbert be the Finance Committee." An amendment was moved and seconded, "That Mr. V. Roger and Mr. C. Hunt be the Finance Committee." The amendment was carried by seven to four. Mr. Reynolds moved, and Mr. Bater seconded, "That the N. S. S. affiliate with the Hall of Science Club and Institute for the ensuing twelve months"; carried. The consideration of the sale of the shares presented to the Society by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant was proceeded with. After some discussion Mr. Hunt proposed, and Mr. Ivatts seconded, "That they be offered for sale through the *National Reformer* and *Freethinker*"; carried. Mr. Hunt moved, and Mr. Smith seconded, "That the Secretary be instructed to proceed with the issue of a new prospectus without delay, and that the President be authorised to append a paragraph on the back thereof explaining the meaning of the minimum subscription to the Society"; carried. Mr. Forder having reported that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant had determined not to issue again the N. S. S. Almanac, a discussion ensued on the advisability of the Executive issuing that publication. Mr. Reynolds moved, and Mrs. Thornton Smith seconded, "That the question of issuing an almanac be deferred until next meeting"; carried. The Secretary was authorised to insert a paragraph relating to questions to be put to all candidates for Parliament at the next general election. Mr. Forder having reported that he had received an application for the secretaryship, Mr, Reynolds moved, and Mrs. Thornton Smith seconded, "That the qnestion of the appointment of a new secretary be referred to the Organisation Committee"; carried. A question arose respecting reports of the Executive being sent to the *Freethinker*, and Mr. Foote having expressed his readiness to insert them, the Secretary was instructed to send such reports in future. A report having been made to the Executive of disturbances in Finsbury Park at the outdoor lectures, Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder undertook to report thereon to the next meeting. Mr. Bater moved, and Mrs. Thornton Smith seconded, "That the sum of £5 be given to the North-Eastern Secular Federation"; carried.

R. FORDER, *Secretary*.

SECULAR HALL SHARES FOR SALE.

The following shares presented to the N. S. S. by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are hereby offered for sale, the proceeds of which will go to the funds of the Society. Eighteen shares of One Pound each in the Lambeth Progressive Club; seven shares of One Pound each in the Rochdale Secular Hall Company; eleven shares of One Pound each in the Portsmouth Secular and Radical Hall Company; five shares of One Pound each in the Grimsby Hall of Science Company; eight shares of One Pound each in the Manchester Secular Hall Company; thirty shares of One Pound each in the South London Secular Hall Company; and twenty-eight shares of One Pound each in the Hanley Secular Hall Company. All the above are fully paid up. Also twenty-five shares in the Ball's Pond Secular Hall Company of One Pound each, on which £17 10s. has been paid; and three in the same Company of One Pound each, fully paid up. All the above are those handed over by Mr. Bradlaugh.

Mrs. Besant's shares are—Five of One Pound each in the Grimsby Hall of Science Company; thirty of One Pound each in the South London Secular Hall Company; nine of One Pound each in the Lambeth Progressive Club; seven of One Pound each in the Rochdale Secular Hall Company. All these are fully paid up. And twenty-five shares of One Pound each in the Ball's Pond Secular Hall Company, on which fifteen shillings each has been paid. Applications, with offers, for these shares to be sent to R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

PROPOSED SECULAR HALL FOR LIVERPOOL.

A special meeting of the Committee of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. was held on Sunday, to consider the feasibility of obtaining a secular hall in which more effectually to carry on the propaganda. The present hall is inconvenient in many respects, and there is little doubt that in more suitable premises the movement would have much greater success. A sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Newcombe, Smith and Hall, were appointed to consider the various suggestions made and report to the committee meeting this day (July 6). Several friends have already promised support to the project, and the assistance of others willing to help is earnestly asked. —C. DOEG.

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH-BED.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(*Continued from page* 304.)

It is quite true that many unbelievers weaken in the presence of death and recant all their infidelity. This is because they have followed somebody into unbelief without working out their religious problems for themselves, for there are some blind followers of the liberal lecturers, just as there are many blind followers of the theologians; or it is because religious beliefs, absorbed in early life and retained for many years, are very apt to assert themselves against all our best reasoning, especially when the mind is in the second childhood of illness; or it is because when with weakened faculties one faces the grim monster he is frightened out of his best senses. I knew of a case of a German-born man who came to this country, when a mere child and utterly forgot his mother tongue, but before he died in periods of delirium he talked in German just as he did when a little child. The child-mind and what was in it came back to him, or he went back to childishness. It might be and often is so with one's early religious training.

It would not surprise me at all if on my death-bed, or if I should fall very ill, I would recant all the most certain conclusions I have reached in perfect health, but if I do it will mean nothing except that under physical weakness and fear I will go back to the impressions that were part of my very being until I was no longer a young man. What is engraved on my mind and worked into the character in thirty-five years is not rubbed off in a jiffy. So far as I am concerned, I doubt if I ever get over the inclination to pray when I get into trouble. I think I never went into the pulpit in my life without first spending a few minutes in prayer, for a blessing to attend my preaching, and to this day at about a certain hour on Sunday morning my impulse is to ask God to bless the address that I am about to deliver to you. Every Sunday morning I have to pull myself together and remember that nobody can help me deliver the address of that day but you by your sympathetic attention, and that it will have no power except that of the truth that is in it, the honesty with which I myself believe what I am saying, and the earnestness and forcibleness with which I say it. Knowing thus by experience and observation the tenacity of old habits of thought, I wish to say that no matter what I may say on a sick-bed or death-bed I desire my friends to take my utterences while I am in my sound mind and not scared, as the expression of my views.

This, however, is by the way. I am concerned just now in giving you a rational explanation of how it happened that some Freethinkers revert to former superstitions when they come to grapple with the king of terrors and they know that he is about to fling them off into the silent night of the voiceless and pulseless tomb. But you must not forget that it is the rarest occurrence in the world for a Freethinker who is really a *thinker*, who has worked out his conclusions for himself, to recant at death. I do not believe that when Voltaire or Paine died either of them changed his mind, and we know that Gibbon, Hume, and a host of others died like the philosophers they had lived. In our own day Courtlandt Palmer has shown us how an Agnostic can die, and I venture to say that Robert Ingersoll will not call in a priest when death taps him on the shoulder.

Now, I want you to understand why a Freethinker should not fear death any more than a Christian nor as much. A Christian never can know that he is one of the elect or that he has faithfully believed and performed everything necessary

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to his salvation. It is always possible, therefore, that he may drop on the prongs of the Old Boy's pitchfork. Hell is for him always a possibility; though it is intended for somebody else. To a Christian there is always an element of fear about death. But whatever else a Freethinker may be afraid of, a literal, fiery hell is entirely out of the question.

I want you to understand why a Freethinker should meet death as calmly as a religious person. I say calmly and not triumphantly, for there can be nothing ecstatic about a Freethinker's death except to look back over a well-spent life. If we can meet death with no more than ordinary fear, if we can meet it serenely, this is all that can be reasonably expected of us. And I think I can show that our philosophy of life is better calculated to enable us to do that than any other.

When I use the expression Freethinker in this connection I mean one who knows nothing upon which to base a hope of a continuous personal existence after death.

The average Christian philosophy of the future life makes death a terrible calamity. It is a toss up with an ordinarily decent person whether he would rather go to the Christian heaven or the Christian hell. How could an ordinary decent person enjoy heaven, knowing that his father, mother, sister, brother, child, friend, or indeed, anybody else, was in hell? The only philosophy of the future life that I know of that is not horrible is the Unitarian, Swedenborgian, Christian Scientist, or Spiritualist, all of which are practically the same, and either of which is far better than anything that orthodox Christianity has to offer. But even that general philosophy keeps people alive through all eternity who might wish to be dead, and the thought of being obliged to live forever if you didn't want to is worse than horrible.

(To be concluded.)

REVIEWS.

Stepping-Stones to Agnosticism. By F. J. Gould. London; Watts and Co. (1s. 6d.).—Mr. Gould is a pleasant writer of good English. He is also an Agnostic, which is a longer word for Atheist. His essays are intended to lead Christians away from their creed. With this object he makes many concessions, though we doubt if they will be accepted with gratitude. "All or nothing" is the Christian's motto. You are a Christian, or you are not; there is no medium. Mr. Gould says to the Christian, "See, we have much in common; cross over to me." But what if the Christian replies, "Well, as we have so much in common, suppose you cross over to me?" The essay on "The Immortal Bible" makes too much of the Jew Book, and we must smile at the sentence that "In the unbounded devotion of Protestants to the Bible we see a passionate respect for truth." But Mr. Gould speaks, with or without a commission, for "cultured Freethinkers." Culture or no culture, we cannot follow Mr. Gould's chronology of the Bible books, and what he says about the relation of Mark to Matthew and Luke seems to us the reverse of truth. This comes of relying too much on Dr. Davidson. Mr. Gould's best essay is "The Noble Path." But why is the philosophy "terrible and repulsive" which "sees no mystery in the universe"? And where is that philosophy found? After all, however, we are not bent on detraction. Mr. Gould thinks for himself, and his book may be read with some pleasure by all, and with profit by many.

Medical Essays, vol. iii. By Dr. T. R. Allinson. London: F. Pitman (1s.)—Like the two previous volumes, this is reprinted from the *Weekly Times and Echo*. It is full of hygienic information by a practical doctor, who has discarded mystery and gone in for science and common sense. Dr. Allinson's books may be heartily recommended. They tell people how to live healthy lives, which is a great deal better than circulating bottled drugs. Freethinkers would do well to keep these *Medical Essays* constantly by them, and try to carry out their sensible advice.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "How Christianity has Cursed the World." Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion. Members' subscriptions now due.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 6, quarterly tea and soiree, members 6d., public 9d.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Forgiveness of Sins."

Westminster—"Duke of Ormonde," 13 Prince's Street, 7, half-yearly general meeting of members.

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Science v. Genesis."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. Soddy will lecture.

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, a lecture.

Camberwell — Station Road, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "The Woman of Samaria."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Miracles of the Bible: are they True?" A meeting of members after the lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Protestantism the Stepping Stone to Atheism."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "An Hour with Adam." July 9, at 8, Mr. G. Standring, "Freethought and the Bible."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Christians without Christianity."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Barbarities."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Christ and Working Men."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Fall."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ."

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, a Freethought lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. F. Haslam, will lecture.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Christianity to Civilisation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. H. Blan, "What Christianity has Stolen."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Common Sense."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham — Baskerville Hall, Crescent, annual picnic to Henley in Arden; brakes leave the hall at 9.30.

Chester-le-Street—At the house of Mrs. McLean, 6.30, business meeting, election of officers, etc; subscriptions due.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, a reading by Mr. J. Adams, "The Range of Knowledge."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11.30, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Wandering Jews."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—On vacant land at corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 11, Mr. H. Smith, "Profitable Christianity." In the hall, 3, conference of Freethinkers to inaugurate the Lancashire Federation; 6 30, Mr. H. Smith, "Bondsmen for Ever."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, business meeting of Sunday Music League; 7, on the Town Moor, grand concert by Mr. T. Wood's band.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, excursion to Stoke; leave G.N.R for Gedling at 2.50, p.m.

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Death's Test." Admission free.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street. — 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Mr. Jonathan Taylor, "Housing of the Poor."

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End (evening). Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—July 20, Liverpool.

E. Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—July 20, Sheffield.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—July 6, Portsmouth. Aug. 10 (morning), Midland Arches; 24 (morning), Plaistow. Sept. 21 (morning out doors, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 28.] SUNDAY, JULY 13, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

(A Review of "Lux Mundi.")

(CONTINUED.)

BUT before we deal with Mr. Gore's views on Inspiration, it may be worth while to notice his attitude towards Scepticism. Mr. Gore is too intelligent and well-informed to echo the old nonsense about sceptics being wicked, nor will he so much as countenance the ineptitude of quoting the Psalmist who remarked that "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." The object of this plausible High Churchman is inconsistent with discourtesy. He desires to keep the sceptically inclined within the Church, and he knows that his purpose would only be defeated by sneers and jibes at those who have followed their intellects to "the bitter end." Indeed, to do the *Lux Mundi* writers the barest justice, it must be admitted that their tone is unexceptionable. Whatever may be thought of their arguments, no one can deny their urbanity. Mr. Gore writes like a gentleman, even when he pointedly addresses the unbeliever.

> "If any man comes to us and says that he has studied and assimilated the Christian Creed with all the care and reverence in his ability, and has rejected it because he finds it irrational and false, we cannot complain of him. We cannot ask him to accept it though he thinks it false. We do not at all complain of his having inquired and thought freely—only we venture to assure him, with a confidence that can hardly fail to be irritating, because it is confident, that he has thought not only freely, but erroneously."

Mr. Gore further declares it to be "the test of the Church's legitimate tenure that she can encourage free inquiry into her title-deeds." He remarks of the Church that "It is her note to be tolerant, morally and theologically. She is the mother, not the magistrate." This is a view which is not justifiable by an appeal to history. We oppugn it with "a confidence" no less "confident" than Mr. Gore's. But we cordially acknowledge that tolerance is a "note" of Mr. Gore's spirit, and we venture to express a hope that he will give effect to his sentiments by assisting to repeal the Blasphemy Laws.

Now for Mr. Gore's theory of Inspiration. Apparently he holds that, in some degree, *everything* is inspired, all life being animated by "the breath of God." But man has a peculiar share of this influence. "A special in-breathing of the Divine Spirit gave to man his proper being." As the footnote shows, this is an allusion to the verse in Genesis, where God breathes into Adam "the breath of life," so that he becomes "a living soul." But surely Mr. Gore is aware that the same operation was performed on the lower animals. According to the Jewish scriptures, the breath of life was precisely the same in animals as in men, and there is absolutely no contradiction between the second of Genesis and the third of Ecclesiastes.

Presuming man, however, to be in some special sense animated by the breath of God, how is it that he advances so crookedly? How is it that he is so capable not only of folly, but of sin? Mr. Gore's answer is that man is endowed with free will. His spirit must co-operate with God's before any good can result. The Holy Spirit guides, but cannot control him. Such a theory is to our minds a very grotesque puzzle, for if all the spirit man has is an emanation from God, the spirit within him and the Holy Spirit outside him are really one and the same. Nor is a divided responsibility any more conceivable than a divided operation. To speak of man as constantly "baffling" God is a poor compliment to Omnipotence; and to ascribe all the good that man does to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and all the evil to the independent action of his own "cussedness" is a poor compliment to a man. Logically, Mr. Gore has no possible escape from the doctrine of an ever-active Devil. Pushed to its legitimate end, his theory arrives at Martin Luther's position that man is like a poor jackass, whom God and the Devil contend for; when God mounts him he runs towards Heaven, when the Devil mounts him he runs towards Hell, he himself being without any choice in the matter.

God is apparently to be very much pitied. He created man for loyal followship with himself—at the moment, we suppose, when the anthropoid got down from the trees, and began to use his feet for regular walking. But man—through that "pure cussedness" which God did not foresee—always in the main chose rebellion. So the Holy Spirit "ever baffled in the mass," fell back upon a remnant, the "elect." "Rejected in the world," Mr. Gore says, "he secures for himself a sphere of operations in the Jews." But even by the Jews he was perpetually "baffled." So he fell back again upon a remnant of the remnant, the elect of the elect. These were the prophets of Israel, whose "inspiration" is preserved in the Old Testament. Finally the Holy Spirit found in Christ—who, be it remembered, was really himself—a specimen of perfect and complete humanity, in "ungrudging and unimpaired obedience to the movement of the Divine Spirit."

Now from the call of Abraham to the birth of Christ is nearly two thousand years. During the whole of that period God was preparing the Jews for the advent of the Redeemer; and so beautifully did he prepare them, that when the Redeemer came they crucified him between two thieves. No wonder that Mr. Gore lays stress upon "*the gradualness of the Spirit's method.*" No wonder, also, that he is obliged to find something by which to retrieve the character of the Holy Spirit. If all the world was neglected, or set aside as hopeless for two thousand years; if, during the whole of that time the Holy Spirit concentrated its energies upon the Jews; and if, at the finish, the result was so ignominious; this Holy Spirit must be far more incapable than the secular sages and teaches of mankind, who have wrought infinitely more brilliant effects. How is this to be explained? Mr. Gore resorts to a theory which is by no means novel. It has been affected by eminent Catholic theologians, and it was adopted by

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one of the chief writes in *Essays and Reviews*. We will give it in Mr. Gore's own words.

"Every race has its special vocation, and we recognise in the great writers of each race the interpreters of that vocation. They are specially gifted individuals, but not merely individuals. The race speaks in them: Rome is interpreted by Virgil, and Greece by Æschylus or Plato. Now every believer in God must see in these special missions of races, a divine inspiration. If we once get down to the bottom of human life, below its pride, its wilfulness, its pretentiousness, down to its essence, we get to God and to a movement of his spirit. Thus every race has its inspiration and its prophets."

Now if this view of Inspiration be correct the Bible will have to relinquish its special claims. It will have to stand, not *apart from*, but *amidst* the world's literature. Moses (not that he really wrote anything) will stand with Homer, Isaiah with Sophocles, Jesus with Buddha, and Paul with Seneca or Epictetus. But is not this fatal? Does not the general "inspiration" of genius practically destroy the particular "inspiration" of any single writer? Is it not the same thing, in fact, as leaving us to our own judgment? And if all genius is inspired, then clearly the English people may set aside the Jew Book. They have a vaster, nobler treasure-house of thought and sentiment in Shakespeare. In the mighty dramatist, according to Mr. Gore's theory, we are to recognise an English "revelation." Very well then. We reject the supernatural idea, but we welcome the exchange. Let the Bible be closed, and let us open Shakespeare. But no. Mr. Gore does not mean that. What then *does* he mean? In reality nothing at all of what he says. The Bible is still *the* Revelation. The "inspiration" of other races than the Jews was for them only, after all; and so, at the end of the argument, the great Protestant fetish is left fixed upon its towering pedestal, with the old word hung out in front of it, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me."

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

If I should write with a levity ill befitting a story of human suffering, let no reader think I would jeer at any real human tragedy. I hold, not as any outward profession of faith, but in my heart of hearts the sentiment of the Pagan poet—*Homo, sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*. Educated in the orthodox faith, reverence and sympathy for a man Jesus long outlasted belief in his Godhead. Further investigation, however, showed me how little there was that was historical, how much mythical in the gospel stories, and now in regard to the incidents with which I am dealing, I consider that they are as much works of fiction as those of the *Arabian Nights*. Let the reader examine and compare the narratives for himself, and if possible obtain the opinion of an educated Jew.

All the first three gospels speak of the last supper as the passover. It was the first day of unleavened bread * (Matt. xxvi., 17; Mark xiv., 12; Luke xxii., 7). Jesus calls the meal the passover (Luke xxii., 15-16.) The apprehension, trial and execution all took place on the following day. Now did this ever occur? If we read of some one being executed on Good Friday or Christmas Day, we should at least inquire narrowly into the circumstances. The day was required to be observed as a Sabbath day and even more solemnly as a day of Holy Convocation. (Exod. xii., 16; Levit. xxiii., 7-8; Numb. xxviii., 18; Deut. xvi., 8.) By Jewish law it was forbidden to administer judgment on a high feast or holy day [Youn. Tob. v., 2] and the Mishna distinctly forbids that a capital offender shall be examined in the night or on the day before the Sabbath or any feast-day.

Rabbi Wise says (*Martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 66): "The whole trial from the beginning to the end is contrary to Jewish law and custom as in force in the time of Jesus. No court of justice with jurisdiction in penal cases could or ever did hold its session in the place of the high priest . . . No court of justice in Israel was permitted to open its sessions at night, and in cases of capital crimes no session could be extended after the evening hour (Mishnah Sanhedrin iv., 1.)"

Rabbi Wise further points out that no court of justice could commence a trial on a Friday or the day previous to a holy day, because it was not lawful to adjourn such cases longer than over night or to continue them on the Sabbath or holiday.

According to John—who wrote letters and perhaps had heard objection against the monstrous incredibility of this story—Jesus ate no paschal meal, did not live to see that feast, was arrested the evening before passover, and crucified before the feast opened. If John's date is true, that of the Synoptics is not, or *vice versa*. Both cannot be true, but both may be false. And that they are so is evident from this, that the supper with its long discourses, the adjournment to Gethsemane, the sleep of disciples, the betrayal by Judas and capture at the Mount of Olives, the examination first before Annas* and then Caiaphas and all the chief priests, elders, and scribes, the witnesses sought for, found and examined; the examination before Pilate, the remittance to Herod of Galilee, the taking back to Pilate, the release of Barabbas, and the crucifixion at Golgotha are all crowded into the space of one night and the following morning.

According to Mark (xv., 25) he was crucified at the third hour, *i.e.*, 9 a.m., Annas, Caiaphas, all the chief priests, scribes and elders, false witnesses, guards, Pilate, Pilate's wife, Herod of Galilee and the soldiers must have had a busy night. John saw something was wrong, and as he differs from the Synoptics as to the day, so also as to the hour. He says (xix., 14) it was about the sixth hour—*i.e.*, noon—when he was condemned. But perhaps Jesus was crucified at nine a.m., and then put up again in the afternoon.

Look briefly at the details. A person seated at a supper table offers bread and wine as his own flesh and blood. God prays to God that his cup may pass from him, is betrayed by one disciple and deserted by all the rest, who had not only seen his miracles but were endowed with power to work miracles themselves. Though none of them are said to have been present, they report proceedings before various courts, accuse the Jewish judges of suborning false witnesses, and of spitting on a defenceless prisoner. They make a Roman governor not know his own jurisdiction; and execute ignominiously a man in whom he found no fault, in obedience to the clamors of a mob, and then use a Jewish symbol, washing his hands, to repudiate the responsibility of his own act. The sun is darkened for three hours, the veil of the temple is rent, the dead rise from their graves and go into the city, yet the Jews calmly ask Pilate that the legs of the crucified man may be broken, and, when angels roll away the stone of his sepulchre, invent a story that Roman soldiers slept at their watch! The whole narrative has fiction written on its face.

Jewish judges never did try a prisoner at night, spit on him, buffet and strike him. No Roman governor, in obedience to a clamoring crowd and in

* Josephus also calls the 14th of Nisan the first day of unleavened bread. [*Wars* v., 3.]

* In Acts iv. 6, Annas is called high priest, but there was no Annas high priest till 48 A.D (Josephus, *Ant.* xx., 5, 2). Luke iii., 2, speaks of Annas and Caiaphas as both being high priests evidently unaware there could not be two high priests; while John says "Caiaphas" was high priest that year (xviii., 13), apparently under the impression that the office was for one year only, whereas it was for life.

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violence to his expressed conviction that he found no offence with the man, ever handed him over, not only to be crucified with thieves, but scourged (Matthew xxvii., 26), which was not demanded by the mob. History has no precedent and no parallel. Rabbi Wise says (p. 77): "Not one point in the whole trial agrees with Jewish law and custom. It is impossible to save it. It must be given up as a transparent and unskilled invention of a Gentile Christian, of the second century, who knew nothing of Jewish law and custom, and was ignorant of the state of civilisation in Palestine in the time of Jesus."

Some points may be explained. The Hebrews in the second century expected the Redeemer to come on Passover, the time of Israel's redemption from Egypt. Hence "Christ our Passover," "The Lamb of God," was made to accomplish the redemption on the day when the lamb was slaughtered, although that day never fell on a Friday. Again, according to Hebrew tradition [see Wise *op. cit.*, p. 114], the revelation on Sinai took place on Friday between twelve and three. So Calvary was, by tradition, made into a mount, and Zech. xiv., Ps. xxii., xlix., and Is. liii. used to embellish the scene.

The Mithraic rite of the Eucharist was a substitution for the Passover, and consequently the Lord's supper was said to be instituted at the time of the feast of unleavened bread. As to the crucifixion itself, it is certain the Jewish punishment for blasphemy was by stoning and hanging. (Peter said Jesus was hung: Acts v., 30; x., 39; xiii., 29.) Rabbi Wise suggests that the popular sympathy felt for Antigonus, the last of the Maccabees, who was whipped, crucified, and then had his throat cut [B.C. 37], may have been the origin of the Christian story of a crucified king of the Jews, which there is no evidence of being in existence until after the destruction of Jerusalem. J. M. Wheeler.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.

What is Christianity? A thousand different answers are given by a thousand different persons "who profess and call themselves Christians." Yet Christianity is old enough to be a definite belief. Now as it cannot be expected that we should accept every definition given by a believer, our best plan is to take such definitions as are given by representatives of the various Christian Churches or sects, and see how far Christianity has promoted or fostered those principles and actions of mankind which result in what we call civilisation.

The Catholic defines Christianity to mean faith in an infallible Church with Christ as the spiritual and the Pope as the temporal head, belief in Christ as the Savior of mankind, and the priest as the representative of God on earth. The Protestant takes the Bible as God's revelation to mankind, and alleges that it contains within its pages all that is necessary for the salvation of mankind in this world and another that is to be hereafter. Dissenting bodies of Christians believe the same, but insist that Christianity means not only belief in the Old and New Testaments, but especially the manifestation of such belief by acting up to the rules of conduct as laid down by Christ. So that we may take it that, in the most liberal interpretation we are capable of putting upon it, Christianity implies—first, a belief in God as the author of the Bible, which contains a revelation to mankind; secondly, belief in Christ as in some special sense the Savior of mankind; and thirdly, belief that conduct based upon the teachings of Christ is calculated to promote the highest possible happiness for the individual and for the race.

The next point for consideration is, What is the meaning of civilisation? Undoubtedly this is a hard term to define. Emerson puts it admirably when he says: "A certain degree of progress from the rudest state in which man is found—a dweller in caves, or on trees, like an ape—a cannibal and eater of pounded snails, worms and offal—a certain degree of progress from this extreme is called civilisation. It is a vague, complex name of many degrees. Nobody has attempted a definition. M. Guizot, writing a book on the subject, does not. It implies the evolution of a highly-organised man, brought to supreme delicacy of sentiment as in practical power, religion, liberty, sense of honor, and taste. In the hesitation to define what it is we usually suggest it by negations. A nation that has no clothing, no iron, no alphabet, no marriage, no arts of peace, no abstract thought, we call barbarous. And after many arts are invented and imported, as among the Turks and Moorish nations, it is often a little complaisant to call them civilised."

Civilisation, then, means growth—intellectually and morally—and in action it means the development of the arts and sciences and their application to the concerns of daily life. Now if God gave man a revelation that was to be sufficient for this life, surely he would have given such instructions as would have enabled man to readily acquire knowledge of natural phenomena, and by the application of such knowledge make steady but certain progress. As a matter of fact, however, if the Bible be true, God only revealed himself to a limited section of mankind and left the rest to struggle and shift for themselves.

It has been satisfactorily demonstrated that all human beings were once in a state of barbarism. What, then, caused the first steps to be taken in the road of civilisation? Necessity—stern necessity—the struggle for existence. The first tribe of savages that made a fire and kept themselves warm while the wild animals about them perished with cold took a decided step onwards. God did not teach the savage this. The next great step was language—articulate speech. God left the savage to construct his own speech. Every nation has had to make its own language. The revelation from heaven was not vouchsafed until men had learnt the most difficult of all arts—the art of speech. Then men are still savages, and one set of savages or semi-savages conquers another and makes them slaves. The divine revelation endorses their action, tells them to make slaves of the heathen round about them, instead of saying that slavery was opposed to God's will, and subversive of all progress, social or moral. The population of the earth grows. The people are brought more and more in contact. Then warfare becomes more general.

Now in so far as warfare has promoted civilisation—and there can be little doubt that the lower forms of civilisation were promoted by this means—believers can take a fair measure of credit for the assistance rendered by the teachings of the Bible in causing and promoting aggressive warfare, in various parts of the earth. And even to-day Christians can claim that the merciless onslaught on the Egyptians a few years ago, who were according to Mr. Gladstone "rightly struggling to be free," had the sanction and approval of the chosen representatives of the Church—viz., the Bishops; while Freethinkers of all shades of belief—Positivists, Agnostics, Atheists—made an unanimous protest against such injustice.

Of course it would be absurd to say that Christians have been opposed to every form of progress. There are a multitude of actions that every rational human being can heartily support in every nation of the earth—actions that have aided very considerably the progress of mankind. No class of men would be against agriculture as a means of augmenting the food supply of the people. Yet agriculture pursued as a livelihood has tended greatly towards civilisation wherever adopted.

Building houses too is a most civilising agency—Yet all peoples, without regard to religious belief—

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have built houses to meet the needs of an increasing population. These are not the things, however, by which to test the disposition of a people to advance. What is the test? The Christian maintains that the practice of his religion has promoted civilisation. If however he means the practice of such teachings of Jesus as "Take no thought for the morrow," "resist not evil," "Lay not up treasures on earth," etc., and other such doctrines from the "Sermon on the Mount," I deny it; I think that the very opposite is the truth. I am willing to admit that many persons who call themselves Christians are not opposed to many civilised agencies at work to-day. No Christian is against the printing press to-day. But history shows that the Christian Church was opposed to it in times past. Indeed it is opposed even in this advanced age of the world's progress to the circulation of heretical books—especially cheap works circulated to disturb the minds of believers.

Many Christians are not opposed to the teaching of the physical sciences—provide their application to modern thought and the teachings of the Bible forms no part of the study. Next to the printing press the steam-engine has been a great civilising power. It carries intelligence as well as food wherever it goes. Then telegraphy—by this means intelligence is transmitted from one part of the globe to another at lightening speed. Then the penny post. This is a wonderful agency for promoting progress.

But what has Christianity to do with these things? Nothing whatever. If Christianity had never been heard of, such things would have played as important a part in the world's history as they do now. They are the necessities of the age, they satisfy a want, and they are always the result of secular effort. And though Christianity may in some small way have promoted civilisation—in the same way as any other great religion may have done—I think we may fairly conclude that Necessity—the desires and wants of the people, have promoted civilisation in all European nations, apart altogether from creeds, whether Christian or otherwise. Necessity was always the mother of invention, and therefore necessity may be truly said to be the one fruitful source of our civilisation.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL Meeting held at Hall of Science, July 3. Mr. G. Standring in the chair.—The Secretary read a letter from the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, explaining his and Mr. J. M. Wheeler's absence, and mentioning that at the next meeting he would propose some plans for an active winter campaign, to commence in September. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and signed. A deficit on course of free lectures at Milton Hall was ordered to be discharged. Applications for grants in aid of out-door propaganda were referred to the Open-Air Committee. Mr. Turner (East London) moved, and Mr. V. Roger (Westminster) seconded, "That the editors of the *National Reformer* and *Freethinker* be asked to insert official reports of the proceedings of the Council of the L. S. F."; carried. Mr. Courtney reported that the course of free lectures given under the auspices o the Federation at Hammersmith had been very successful, and the work was to be continued by open-air lectures at Hammersmith Bridge. Mr. Standring mentioned a report of these lectures which had appeared in the *Church Reformer*, and to which he had replied. The lecture list for August was ordered to be printed. Mr. Enderby introduced the matter of disturbances at Freethought lectures in Finsbury Park, and after some discussion the subject was deferred, it being understood, however, that a committee of the N. S. S. had been appointed to inquire into the matter. The treasurer, Mr. R. O. Smith, made a satisfactory financial statement. A motion "That the Federation consider the advisibility of conducting science classes during the coming session," was met with some opposition and was not put to the vote. The Council then adjourned till the first Thursday in August.

EDMUND POWNCEBY.

ACID DROPS.

During his "Darkest Africa" travels Stanley met with some curious specimens of the Genus Homo. Many of the dwarfs had "small, cunning, monkey eyes, close and deeply set." One "monkey-eyed woman had a remarkable pair of mischievous orbs, protruding lips overhanging her chin, a prominent abdomen, narrow, flat chest, sloping shoulders, long arms, feet turned greatly inwards, and very short lower legs, as being fitly characteristic of the link long sought between the average modern humanity and its Darwinian progenitors." Such an interesting specimen of the human race, which is of course made in the image of God, would be very serviceable in England. It might be taken round to point a sermon in every English town on the holy anthropology of Genesis.

On the other hand some of the superior African breeds were, if anything, rather more moral than Christians. One of Stanley's officers, being seized with a vertigo, reclined and sank in the grass, where he was left, his comrades not noticing the incident. Presently there came up a native warrior, armed with spear, bow and arrows. Did he kill or rob the stranger? Not he. He went off and returned in half an hour with a large gourd filled with fresh, cool milk. This revived the officer, and he marched forward to join his party. That poor savage never heard the story of the good Samaritan. He did not want Jesus Christ to tell him to help a fellow man in distress.

Stanley is rather wild with Emin because he didn't want to be rescued, and wouldn't come to Europe, and wouldn't be licnised, and wouldn't eat public dinners and exhibit himself for a big figure on lecture platforms. "His love of science," Stanley says, "borders on fanaticism. I have attempted to discover during our daily chats whether he was Christian or Moslem, Jew or Pagan, and I rather suspect that he is nothing more than a Materialist." *Poor Emin!* This is his last sin in the eyes of pious Henry Stanley. Still, having Stanley's opinion of Emin's materialism, we should like to have Emin's opinion of Stanley's religion. Some day or other, perhaps, it will leak out, and the not-too-modest Christian may then spend a bad quarter of an hour.

The Bishop of St. Asaph was badly reported. Addressing his old parishioners at Carmarthen, he referred to "his younger and rasher days," and the papers turned it into his "younger and *masher* days."

Resurrection is a Christian doctrine, but it does not get much recognition in the law courts, although "Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land." A will case was heard in the Court of Queen's Bench the other day, and it was stated that the ghost of the testator had recently visited a sexton and expressed disapproval of the disposal of the property. Lord Justice Bowen facetiously asked if the ghost was to be summoned as a witness. Of course it would be difficult to subpœna the ghost, but it might turn up in court of its own accord, and furnish some good copy for the morning papers.

Deibler, the French executioner, is perhaps neither a scientist nor a metaphysician, but he has seen death in all its nakedness more than most people, and his opinion on the subject is worth noting. After the recent execution of Vodable, a most brutal murderer, Deibler talked to a couple of journalists. He maintained that the guillotine was the most painless way of killing people. "As to the notion of there being an after-life," he added, "I can only say that I have seen nearly three hundred heads fall under the knife, and I do not believe a word of it."

The Ritualistic *Church Times* is not sanguine as to the purport of the coming judgment of Archbishop Benson upon the Bishop of Lincoln's case. It says: "The authority by which the Archbishop sits in the court in which he is trying the Bishop of Lincoln is either Papal or Erastian." This should show their mistake to those who fancied the Archbishop's authority would please all parties. The truth is the Ritualists will acknowledge no law that does not endorse their own proceedings. They know the judgment of the Archbishop will be an attempt to compromise between two

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parties, and hope, by showing themselves the most refractory, to make the balance incline their way.

The *Church Times* makes a point against the *Rock* when it asks whether, in the event of the Bishop of Lincoln succeeding to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, the anti-Ritualists would accept him as the supreme and sole spiritual authority in the Province. Of course they would not. The Church of England is a house divided against itself, and it only contrives to stand because all parties are united on the one basis of preserving the loaves and fishes.

The Church Congress at Hull next October will be something like a clerical social science congress. To make their proceedings attractive they find they have to give the major portion of their time to secular subjects, such as the hours of labor and the housing of the poor.

Gambling is one of the subjects set down for the attention of the Black Congress. The utterances of the clergy on this topic usually show gross exaggeration. They forget that gambling, like every other vice, is sanctioned by scripture. Palestine was divided among the tribes by lot, and a successor to Judas was chosen in the same way. They forget, too, the Church bazaar, raffles, lottery tickets and trickery for pious objects. Above all, they forget the gambling with truth and conscience for which their own order is pre-eminently distinguished. No doubt we are in need of moral improvement in this as in other respects, but we doubt of its coming through these blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

What with the police difficulty, and that of the postmen, one would think the London papers were under no necessity of inventing big gooseberries and sea serpents. However, they are printing (at least the *Echo* is) a prize cook-and-bull story about a young French miracle worker, who cures the sick by putting his feet against theirs and making mystic movements with his hands. Patients unable to walk are carried to him on their beds, just as the sick were brought to Peter in the Acts of the Apostles. This wonderful Frenchman is only eighteen. What will he do by the time he is forty? We should say that ascending to heaven is the smallest feat that could be expected of him then.

A Church vicar taking a Wesleyan superintendent by the collar is an edifying illustration of Christian charity. Such a scene was recently witnessed at Coatham. The vicar insisted on reading the Church burial service over the corpse of a Wesleyan teacher, and when the Wesleyan superintendent afterwards led the singing of a hymn, the irate representative of the established form of skyology collared him and ordered him to desist. According to the papers, what followed "baffles description." Amen.

The founder of the Jezreelites, who was never to die, went the way of all flesh; and his wife, who also was never to die, soon followed him. Since then poor Noah Drew, a Michigan farmer, whom they induced to sell his estate and give it all to Jezreel "for the Lord," has also died, it is said of a broken heart, and as the Jezreelites refused to bury him he was interred in a pauper's grave.

A true epitaph, setting forth these facts, was drawn up for a tombstone subscribed for by some persons who pitied the fate of poor old Noah Drew. But the Chatham Burial Board would only sanction the first six lines, on the ground that the rest was "controversial matter." Perhaps they did not like to see the crimes of any Christian sect recorded so flagrantly.

Dean Plumptre has been defending the Mosaic authorship, or at least the antiquity of Deuteronomy. What he does is to point to certain customs which probably arose before the temple worship was established. But those who contend that the books ascribed to Moses were *written* nearly a thousand years after his date do not deny that they contain references to earlier institutions than those existing when they were written. What Dr. Plumptre has to do is to show that the elaborate tabernacle worship was set up in the wilderness, and that the laws concerning the same were not only given but recorded there. It is needless to say he does not attempt this.

Poor old Moses! Even the *Methodist Times* is "not confident" as to "the harmony, between Geology and Genesis," and "looks with suspicion upon all such enterprises as poor Hugh Miller so chivalrously undertook and failed in."

Dr. Bruce, the Scotch heretic who *isn't* turned out of the Church, has been holding forth on faith in Christ. He declares that the sceptic who does not bow to the yoke of Jesus has the lawless freedom of the wild colt. Perhaps so. But isn't that as good as the lawful servitude of the domestic jackass?

Now for a sample of the yoke of Christ's influence on the intellect. Dr. Bruce has just issued a new edition of his book, *The Kingdom of God*, one part of which deals with the now much-debated question of Inspiration. According to Dr. Bruce, "the Evangelists have various degrees of exactness," or, in other words, various degrees of inexactness. He tells us that "inspiration does not exclude the hypothesis that the Evangelists may in some instances have modified the form of our Lord's words, for good and worthy reasons, such as a regard to the spiritual needs of their first readers."

Could anything be more monstrous? God Almighty—or at least a third part of him—comes to give a revelation to mankind. He "inspires" a number of gentlemen to report his words, and they, not thinking his words altogether what is required, report them with considerable improvements. What a compliment to God Almighty! What a tribute to the "inspiration" of his reporters! And what a puzzle to set ordinary people is this problem of finding out what God did say from a large mass of what he did not say! Freethinkers may well be proud of their wild freedom if this jugglery with reason is the moral result of bowing to the yoke of Christ.

The *Church Times*, in noticing Prof. Huxley's *Nineteenth Century* article on "The Lights of the Church and the Lights of Science," says "he satisfies himself that the story of Noah's flood is unhistorical. But he thinks that for some generations to come people will on the whole, continue to be *irrationally* convinced of the truth of the Bible. And here at least we are glad to find ourselves in agreement with the Professor." Just so. It is natural for the *Church Times* to rejoice in irrationality. The more irrational people are the more glad it would be.

The Rev. Charles Gore, of *Lux Mundi* notoriety, in advocating Sisterhoods for India, said, "We had alienated the sympathies of the Hindoos by treating him with an exclusiveness and contempt which the Pagan Romans could hardly have exceeded." No doubt this is true of Christians in India, and the statement shows what protestations of Christian brotherhood are really worth. If a Hindoo becomes a Mohammedan he is treated as a brother in Islam. If he becomes a Christian he is not one whit nearer a position of social equality than before.

Dr. MacRae and the Hawick Kirk are in arms against the local mill-owners who kept their mills going on the last Fast Day. The men are to have another holiday, but this does not satisfy the religionists. It is not the men's welfare or comfort they are anxious about, but the observation of their special times for solemn foolery.

The Rev. B. Forster, of the Willesborough School Board, is a facetious gentleman, though we suspect his humor is of the order which is called unconscious. There was a row on the Board about the officious visits of the Rev. T. F. Dixon to the school, but the Church majority passed a resolution thanking him for "the valuable religious instruction he has so kindly given to the children." During the debate the Rev. B. Forster remarked that "if any distinct doctrines were taught, children did not comprehend or understand them, and so no harm was done."

Several instances of the disastrous results of superstition are given in Sir Alfred Lyall's account of official Polytheism in China in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*. The regard paid to the propitiation of spirits is a tax not only on private individuals, but on the Government. A memorial from the Governor of Formosa, recorded in the *Pekin Gazette* describes an outburst of pestilence in the

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island, where the savage tribes "endeavored, according to their ordinary custom, to avert it by putting people to death." The New Testament notion that disease is the work of evil spirits has often led to such atrocities. In India, says Sir A. Lyall, "a mysterious and apparently aimless murder may be occasionally explained as the fulfilment of a secret vow to one of the fiercer divinities." In China human beings were formerly sacrificed at the burial of great persons.

Sir A. Lyall says "That the plain, unvarnished worship of ghosts, demons and animals may be traced upward to the higher forms of anthropomorphic religion, is a well-known and well-evidenced theory, supported by the survival in the later stages of some incongruous habit or function obviously belonging to the earlier conceptions." Some such survivals may even be traced in Christianity. Baptism, the sign of the cross, the consecration of burial grounds, and bell-ringing are all originally rites to ward off evil spirits.

Sir A. Lyall supports the idea that the gods of polytheism were deified men. This view, he says, is supported by direct observation in India, "while in China it not only rests upon ample evidence, but is officially attested."

Russia is quite the classic land of liberty. A Lutheran pastor at Riga has been deprived of all civil rights and condemned to ten years' exile for converting two or three members of the Orthodox Greek Church to his own persuasion. To complete this noble act of justice it only remains to punish in the same way the wicked persons who got converted.

The Rev. H. Higgins writes to the *Morning Post*, Allahabad, and declares that there is something rotten in the missionary system. Of the 2,000 delegates to the Indian Congress, he reckons that only 28 were Christians, and "amongst these are included a proportion of natives who have found occupation by a change of religion." The missionaries have provided a large number of Hindus with a good education, but the Christianity that was mixed with it has just passed out of their systems without being assimilated.

The Wesleyan Methodists have patched up their missionary quarrel, and not a moment too soon. We have just seen a printed circular, which states that the condition of Methodism at the present time demands the serious and anxious attention of all who love it." Its "spiritual power has become greatly impaired," prayer-meetings are neglected, coldness has crept into the public services, and "for many years past the returns have compared very unfavorably with those of earlier periods."

Piety, says Euthyphero, in his dialogue with Socrates, "is an art which gods and men have of doing business with each other." A "Constant Reader" of the *Christian Commonwealth* tells how he brings the powers that be to terms. He was, he says, in difficulties as to meeting a payment. He had sufficient goods but not enough ready cash, so earnestly prayed God to send him a customer to whom he could dispose goods sufficient to meet the amount. He says, "I called upon heaven, earth, and the Bible, as it were, to bear testimony to my prayer and petition with a reserved feeling that if it were not answered and granted, I should disbelieve a good deal of that which I had for years been taught to believe in." This reserve did the business. Old Jacob adopted a similar attitude towards Jehovah, and at once brought him to terms. So the *Constant Reader* was able to chronicle a success. A customer came and he was enabled to pay his debt. God cannot afford to disoblige a man of such robust faith as this.

As a pendant to this case of answered prayer read the letter of the poor man Oakes, who, with his wife, killed themselves after destroying their child. "We have now done everything that we possibly can think of to avert this wicked proceeding, but can discover no ray of hope." God sends a customer to one man to enable him to pay his debts punctually. Another starves with his wife and child, and is driven to suicide without any assistance.

An inquest has been held at Grays on the body of Reuben Vaughan, aged four years and four months, who died of diphtheria. His parents belonged to the Peculiar People. On the father being asked by the coroner what doctors were sent for if not to be used, he replied that those who love the Lord prefer oil and faith. Yes, and so should every Christian. That is the New Testament prescription. Of course the coroner "wished those people would come to their senses," but it would be well for him to recognise that they are real Christians while he is only a pretender.

Most people prefer health to sickness. But not so Spurgeon. He regards a good disease as one of the greatest of blessings. A month of rheumatism, he says, would mellow some men marvellously, especially the preachers, who would deliver better sermons if they had "a twist now and then." Perhaps they would. Anyhow we don't mind the thing being tried. If pain is a blessing, we hope the Heavenly Father will send it all to the elect. Any Christian can have our share on application.

There is a poor harmless lunatic who frequents Ramsgate in the summer. He sits near the sands with his face to the rolling deep and his back to the people. Holding the Bible open in his left hand, and using the other to pick up grains of sand or bits of other stray matter, he reads out texts and comments upon them. The other morning he was holding forth to "the sad sea waves" and three irreverent boys on the parable of the lilies. Presently he came to "Solomon in all his glory." This gave him a fine chance to air his knowledge. Solomon, he said, was not arrayed like the lilies, that could suit themselves to all weathers. When the wise king went to the seaside, he had to take an overcoat for the cold evenings, and an umbrella for the wet days. Doubtless the poor fellow didn't know that umbrellas are a very modern invention, and that Solomon with a gingham was a frightful anachronism. However, the poor lunatic preacher was harming no one. His comments were not very profound, and his history was mixed; but, after all, you may hear as indifferent sermons in church. And when all is said and done, Solomon's umbrella is not a greater absurdity than three-fourths of what is droned from the pulpit by the professional men of God.

The clergy of Lille refused Christian burial to a lady who had contracted a civil marriage after being divorced from her husband. She was a lady of blameless life. But the Church does not recognise divorce except after a special dispensation from the Pope, and that can only be obtained by persons of great wealth or position. Persons of inferior means or standing are granted no such indulgence. They must bear the full weight of the Church's yoke.

According to a private advice from Sydney, the New South Wales Cabinet, at a meeting on May 15, resolved to prosecute any person selling the London *Freethinker*. We fancy the authorities out there will fail in their crusade against this journal. Unfortunately, as Australia is so distant, we have to wait for news as to the result of the Cabinet's decision.

SPURGEON ON THE GROWING HERESY.

Is it not a serious question for our country how far existing want of honesty may be traceable to the corrupt example set by the professing church, when, by its ministers and members, it sets aside solemn covenants, trust-deeds, and confessions of faith, and deals with them as current opinion demands? If the foundations of morality be destroyed, what can the nation do? What will be done in the matter? We don't care to prophesy; but if our Scotch brethren have degenerated to the English level, they will do nothing. The sound will shield the unsound, the Evangelical will pat the Rationalistic on the back, and say that "they trust they will not go too far"; and all will live together in that form of peace which is not peace, but treachery to God and His truth. The scribes and priests of Israel are now linked in unhallowed confederacies, in which there is unbounded toleration for error: at the rate at which they are now advancing, those same confederacies will soon have no tolerance for orthodoxy. Even now the sneers and sarcasms at the old faith are more than self-respecting and truth-loving men ought to bear. Yet behind the ruling cliques there are hosts of plain, godly men, who will be heard of before very long.—*Sword and Trowel.*

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 13, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, at 7.30, "Professor Huxley on Noah's Flood."

July 27, Hall of Science.

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. WARRY.—The North London Secular Society was not a Branch of the N. S. S. It ceased to exist very many years ago. We have no means of ascertaining if it had the name of Coles on its members' list. We are far too busy to trouble about such a trivial matter.

W. L.—Thanks for the jokes. Robert Owen was a philanthropist; so was Jeremy Bentham. Both were Freethinkers. Voltaire's liberality was infinite. Mr. Mitchell, who founded the Mitchell Free Library at Glasgow, was a Freethinker. Stephen Girard, who endowed the Girard College in America, was a Freethinker. His will forbade a minister to enter the place, but the orthodox party got hold of the endowment and they defy the provisions of his will. Lick, who endowed the great Lick Observatory, was also a Freethinker.

J. BURRELL.—Glad to hear the Westminster Branch will join the Federation Excursion.

W. H. STEVENS.—Can you tell us of any hall in Bristol less costly than the St. James's? The city is to be visited by Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder, for the purpose of starting a good Branch, but information is needed as to halls.

C. BATLEY.—The Portsmouth burial joke has already been dealt with in "Acid Drops." Glad to hear you find the *Freethinker* "a boon."

INQUIRER.—There is a Branch at Oldham, but it is merely a nominal one. We hope the new South Lancashire Federation will put fresh life into the whole locality.

J. WEBB.—Your MS. shall be returned with Mr. Foote's opinion, on his return to town.

J. L. S.—Thanks.

L. SPURGEON.—Halstead shall not be neglected. The matter will go before the Organisation Committee.

HIGH JINKS.—Received. Shall be acknowledged in next list. We fancy you would do most good by circulating *outside* the Branches. You are more likely to reach fresh readers.

GROCER'S ASSISTANT.—Sorry to hear your distribution of twenty copies of "Jesus at the Derby" nearly cost you your situation. Mr. Foote will be glad to see you at the Excursion if you introduce yourself. Why not join the Battersea Branch and see what can be done to obtain better premises? We are pleased to have been the cause of your freedom from superstition.

J. SAUNDERS.—Thanks. Mr. Wheeler *has* the book. We have no faith in patent medicines. Generally speaking, we agree with Macbeth, who says "Throw physic to the dogs"—only it is rather rough on the dogs.

G. NAEWIGER.—Subjects shall be sent in good time.

JAMES NEATE.—The bigots who wouldn't let their halls are anxious to convert you. That they want to do it without discussion is only natural.

C. WINNING.—Darwin *did* express sorrow for having used the word Creation. See Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*, pp. 34, 35, where the passage is quoted from the *Life and Letters*. We know nothing of the gentleman who "challenged Mr. Foote." Mr. Foote only debates as a representative, and with representatives.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Hardly up to your usual level.

C. DOEG.—We hope to hear good news from Liverpool by next week.

WELL WISHER.—Thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Adelaide Advertiser—People's Press—Countryman—Toscin—Spiritualist's Magazine—Philadelphian Inquirer—Lucifer—Reading Standard—Protestant Standard—Der Lichtfreund—Birmingham Daily Post—Evening Standard—The White Cross—Twentieth Century.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Professor Huxley has an important article in the *Nineteenth Century* on "The Lights of the Church and the Light of Science." It deals particularly with the Story of the Flood. Mr. Foote will make it the basis of his lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening (July 13).

Mr. Axel Lennstrand, brother of Viktor Lennstrand, favored us with a call on Tuesday. He is a very pleasant gentleman, and we hope to see him again before he leaves England. His brother Viktor has suffered greatly in health from his imprisonment, and if the new trial results in a fresh sentence, it will be advisable to bring him away to England. He is not physically strong, and another imprisonment would probably mean death or insanity. Still, his courage is firm; he would rather break than bend. But Mr. Axel Lennstrand is not disposed to let the brave fellow be killed by the Swedish bigots. He is inclined to exercise an elder brother's authority, and bring Viktor Lennstrand away from Sweden with a high hand, at least for a time, until he has recovered his strength.

Captain Otto Thomson is in good health and spirits. His worst fears are financial. The *Fritankeren* is a great tax on their resources.

Next Sunday (July 20) the London Secular Federation's annual excursion will be made to Epping Forest. A very large party is expected. All who intend to join it should apply to the Secretary of the nearest Branch for tickets, or at the Hall of Science, whence an extra contingent will start at half-past nine. Special weather is ordered for the occasion.

We are glad to hear that Mr. Ernest Parke is released after serving half his vindictive sentence of twelve months' imprisonment. Mr. Parke made a mistake as a journalist—that is all. He struck too boldly at the Cleveland Street scandals. The culprits all went scot free, but the journalist whose exposure was prompted by honorable motives paid a severe penalty for his daring. Mr. Parke is a Secularist.

Last "Lord's Day" the members and friends of the Sunday League visited Apsley House, by special permission of the Duke of Wellington, and inspected its artistic and historical treasures. On two Sundays in August the Duke of Westminster has agreed to open Grosvenor House in the same way.

Mr. Toleman-Garner feels sufficiently well to resume his lecturing work. He will be glad to hear from provincial Branches desiring his services during the winter season.

Last Sunday evening Mr. W. Heaford delivered the first lecture for the Hyde Park Branch at its new station at the end of Hammersmith Bridge, his subject being "Christianity Weighed and found Wanting." There was a large and very attentive audience, but no opposition. There was a good sale of *Freethinkers* and other literature, and a good collection was made towards the future expenses of the station.

Mr. Charles Voysey, who still attaches the Rev. to his name, has been delivering a course of Theistic sermons, which are being published with the Title "Revelation Tested on Moral Grounds." The three numbers we have seen are well worth reading.

The Lancashire Secular Federation was started on Sunday afternoon at Manchester. The constitution adopted was that of the London Federation, with some slight changes. Mr. Charles Pegg was elected president; Mr. E. H. Jones secretary; and Messrs. Smith, Brooks, Bilcliffe, and Hurd vice-presidents. Mr. Jones's address is 47 Pigott Street, Green-

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hays, Manchester. We hope the new Federation will get to work at once, that all the Lancashire Branches will promptly affiliate, and that new Branches will be formed in that great centre of population.

The N. E. Secular Federation's annual picnic takes place on Sunday, August 3. Durham is the destination. There will be a singing contest, and a public meeting in the Square. Addresses are to be delivered by Messrs. Peacock, Thompson, and other local Freethinkers, and also Mr. A. B. Moss. Tickets can be had at Mr. Peter Weston's, 77 Newgate Street, Newcastle.

Mr. A. B. Moss is going to spend his holiday in Freethought missionary work. The N. E. Federation has engaged his services for a week. He still has two weeks open. This is a good opportunity for districts in want of open-air lectures.

The Leicester *Countryman* reproduces some of our "Acid Drops," and gives a good notice of Mr. Wheeler's *Christian Doctrine of Hell*.

Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad, the editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, a Calcutta Freethought monthly sends us a tract he has issued entitled "India Beware." He warns his countrymen against the flattery and occult pretences of the Theosophists. Science needs neither mystery or Mahatmas.

The Westminster Branch N. S. S. held the half-yearly general meeting on Sunday night last, at the "Duke of Ormonde," Princes Street. A favorable balance-sheet and report were read. The following gentleman form the Executive: Mr. Stace, chairman; Mr. E. L. Stace, vice-chairman; Mr. Burrell, secretary; Mr. W. Wheeler, treasurer; Mr. V. Roger, member of the Council; Messrs. Balance and S. Rous, delegates; Messrs. H. Rous and E. L. Stace, auditors. The following form the Committee: Messrs. Bell, Efford, S. and H. Rous, Williams, Roger, Ross, Balance, Martin. During the evening an address on vellum was presented to Mr. W. Wheeler, late chairman. The presentation was made on behalf of the members by Mr. G. S. Ross in a most eloquent speech, commenting on Mr. Wheeler's zeal and abilities during the three years of his chairmanship, and paying a tribute to his unselfish devotion to the cause of Secularism. Messrs. Burrell and Roger also made short addresses. Mr. Wheeler, in his reply, said, although not occupying the position of chairman, he was still with us; and all present hoped that he would long remain so. A hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Woolley for his kindness in placing the room at our disposal closed the meeting.—J. BURRELL.

The *Reading Standard*, a Conservative paper, gives a good report of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Secular Salvation," in reply to Rev. S. McComb.

Both the Editor of the *Freethinker* and his "sub." are taking a little much-needed change at the seaside. They hope the reader will pardon any deficiency there may be in this number.

AN M.P. ON RIDICULE.

"I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur away ez Paris is."

THE sentiment embodied in the above quotation from the "Editor's Creed" in *The Biglow Papers*, and applied to time instead of to space, aptly describes the attitude of Justin H. McCarthy, M.P., in his recently published *French Revolution*. He introduces his subject with fervid promises of impartial treatment which, it must be admitted, he has fairly realised. His judgments on Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and other famous Freethinkers of last century are noteworthy as appearing in a book of the kind. But his stock of impartiality appears to have been entirely exhausted in treating of the stirring times of which he writes, so that he ludicrously mis-states contemporary facts. In justifying Voltaire's use of ridicule and sarcasm he adds: "To do so now would be wholly inexcusable, because it would be wholly unnecessary. Where each man has full and equal freedom to preach, pray, and profess what he pleases, nothing but malignity or vulgarity can prompt anyone to make a public gibe of his neighbor's ceremonials of worship, even although his neighbor's moral practices may appear somewhat inconsistent with true worship of any kind. To satirise the practices or doctrines of the established Church of any civilised country now argues not courage, but sheer impertinence and vulgarity." And this writer witnessed the expulsion of a member of Parliament because of his speculative opinions. I charitably conclude that he did not personally aid in that monstrous injustice; but brothers in strife did help with a fanatical zeal which it cannot be comforting for an Irish Freethinker to look back on. He knew that a child had been torn from its mother because she was an Atheist. He knew that men had suffered imprisonment for blasphemy a year or two ago in the country in which he wrote; and he might have known that while his words were passing through the press a man in Sweden was suffering for the mere statement of opinions differing from the Established Church.

How jocose and comfortable one can be when toleration has reached the level of his own capacity for and audacity of thought, and with what an indignant sternness of reproof can he chide those who dare go further. But is it not carrying the mummery too far to tell a man, in gaol for promulgating his opinions, that he has full freedom to preach, pray and profess what he pleases. It is a sorry spectacle. The riots of 80' are a thing of the past; Catholic emancipation is complete; then in the words of the song "What could we wish for more!"

JONAH.

TWO CAREERS.

I.

So much one thought about the life beyond,
He did not drain the waters of the pond;

And when death laid his children 'neath the sod
He called it the "mysterious will of God."

He would not strive for worldly gain, not he—
His wealth, he said, was stored in God's To Be.

He kept his mortal body poorly dressed,
And talked about the garments of the blessed;

And when to his last sleep he laid him down,
His only mourner begged her widow's gown.

II.

One was not so sure there was a life to come,
So made a Heaven of his earthly home.

He strove for wealth, and with an open hand
He comforted the needy in his land.

He wore new garments often, and the old
Helped many a brother to keep out the cold.

He said this life was such a little span,
Man ought to make the most of it for man;

And when he died, the fortune that he left
Gave succor to the needy and bereft.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in "Leslie's Monthly."*

A TRUE THOUGH ANCIENT WHALE STORY.

JONAH'S is not the only instance of a man's taking up a lodging in a whale's belly. The same thing happened to the grave and accurate, not to say inspired, Lucian, who has put the matter beyond dispute or doubt by giving a circumstantial account in his *True History*. He was out upon an expedition of discovery, in a ship that carried over fifty men. They had sailed a considerable distance westward of the pillars of Hercules when they met a number of whales much larger than any they had seen before. This did not surprise Lucian, who was a philosopher, aware that new discovered objects, like ancient events, are always the more extraordinary as you have the farther to go for them. One of the animals took a gulp and swallowed them, ship, sails, tackling, and all. The pilot, a skillful fellow, steered so dextrously through the cavity left in the upper jaw by a rotten tooth that they cleared the breakers on each side and came to a safe anchor in the belly of the whale. It was a great chamber, very broad, long, and high also. In the midst there was a number of masts of ships, anchors, and men's bones, and cargo of all sorts. Also there was some land with small rising hills. This they took to be composed of mud the beast swallowed when he went down to the bottom of the sea. Here they

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stayed no paltry three days and nights, but nine months, a whole term of gestation. They planted vines and ate the fruit; met two countrymen, the survivors of a large company that had undergone a like catastrophe some twenty-eight years before, and after vain battle and fortune escaped by the same channel they came in at, by setting fire for several days to one of the largest forests their host had in his belly; whereupon he died of heartburn; and they had to prop open his jaws with the strongest beams they could find in order to make their escape. The accurate and, we believe, inspired chronicler was at the pains of measuring the length of the beast and found it exactly sixteen hundred stadia, or something like one hundred and eighty-eight miles seven furlongs. The further voyages of Lucian to the sea of milk, the island made of cheese, the hole of the blessed, the abode of the wicked, and the land of dreams, all as true as gospel and a great deal more interesting, may be read in the excellent version by Mr. A. J. Church.

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH-BED.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(*Continued from page* 322.)

The Freethinker looks at death just as it is, so far as we know anything about it—the end of life. He does not hope nor expect to live after death. He admits that he may, just as there may be a planet in which water runs up hill. But all the facts known to science—including with no disrespect, as not yet generally accepted, alleged "spirit" phenomena—prove as well as anything can be proved that he will not. He, therefore, maps out his life with absolutely no reference to alleged heavens or hells or any kind of spirit world. He lives just as he would if he absolutely knew that death ends all. He goes through this world seeking his own welfare and knowing from the open book of history and his own experience that he can promote his own welfare only by promoting the welfare of every other man, woman and child in the world; knowing that he cannot be as happy as he might while any one else is miserable. He knows that death is as natural as birth. He knows that as we were unconscious of our birth we will be unconscious of our death, and that in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred death is preceded by days or hours of unconsciousness. He knows that if death puts a final end to him as a person, as science seems to prove, it cannot be an evil. He suffered nothing before he was. He will suffer nothing if he ceases to be. He will not even know that he is dead. When the Freethinker is in his sober senses he knows that he can suffer nothing but the consequences in his own character of his own acts if he wakes from death as from a sleep, and that annihilation cannot be an evil, simply because it is just being nothing at all—the fading of a rose, the blowing out of a candle, the pouring of a pint of water into the sea, the puffing of smoke into a hurricane.

Why should not such a man or woman meet death with composure? Do not common soldiers with very little intelligence rush into the cannon's mouth? Do not vulgar murderers walk to the gallows and die without a tremor? Do not rich Christians, who have mixed the blood of their employés and the heart fibre of the poor with their stolen meat and drink, die like saints? Do not pitiable creatures jump from bridges and go over Niagara Falls in barrels? Do not burglars take their lives in their hands and risk exchanging them for the chance to steal the value of a few paltry dollars? Do not love-sick girls and weak-willed men take poison or blow their brains out? And is death, so easy to all of these, a thing which a thinking man or woman living worthily from day to day must needs fear because he does not happen to believe in certain fables and will not hope for immortality against the evidence of his own senses and the conclusions of his own reason?

What folly is this to suppose that in order to properly prepare for death we must reject the testimony of history, deny the evidence of our senses, despise the conclusions of our highest reason, and blindly swallow all sorts of cock and bull stories. If I am intelligent and courageous in my thinking I am, forsooth, unfit to die, but if I believe the impossibilities of a book, written by nobody knows whom, I am ready to face the tomb. If I live an honest and upright life, dealing fairly and kindly with my neighbors, I will die with shrieks of horror, but if I swindle my neighbors and beat my children and despise the poor, as many Christians do, if I murder my wife and then repent, the angels will come for me. This is absurd. Do not be deceived or frightened by such nonsense. Sit down and think the thing out for yourself.

If you honestly and rationally believe in God and immortality I have nothing to say. I am glad if such beliefs help you to live well and to think happily of death. But if you find no God and no hope of immortality among the facts about you or within you, do not allow any one to frighten you by rattling skeletons at you. The problems of life and death cannot be settled by fear. No conclusions arrived at by scaring reason with a ghost will in the long run hold.

Death is a fact to be studied and accepted for what it really is, just as we study the composition and movements of a comet. You cannot reach a satisfactory conclusion about it if you tremble.

All this is not meant for braggadocia. I have already admitted that death is no trifling matter. But I would like to make it plain to you that death is no worse for a Freethinker than for a Christian. If it seems so it is only because we all have inherited weak nerves from countless generations of frightened and superstitious ancestors. We have all fallen into the habit of calling death a mystery, and we are afraid of mysteries. We tremble at what we do not understand. But I think you will discover that if you bravely accept the facts about death as they are invariably presented to us you will cease to regard it as a mystery, and then it will be less and less a thing to fear. We may never learn to look upon death without fear, but it is quite possible to regard it with no *superstitious* fear, and that is the point in question. We fear a surgical operation, but we fear it for what it is. Religion has nothing to do with the case. We fear the lightning, but we no longer believe it to be a flash from the eye or the fiery breath of an angry God. What needs now is that we should learn to get over our *superstitious* fear of death, learn that religion has no more to do with preparing us for death than it has to do with any other simple and universal fact of human experience.

If you want to know how I think you should prepare for death I will tell you, and if any priest or minister knows a better way I have yet to hear it. Honestly and earnestly think out your beliefs; then they will stay by you in storm and in sunshine. Do nothing that you are ashamed of *after* it is done. Live exactly as if this were the only life you will ever have. Live so that the last year of your life, be it this year or next or any other, will be the best. Do not injure your body, for you cannot be happy unless you are physically well. Do not wrong another, for your welfare is inseparably bound up with the welfare of every one else. Accustom yourself to face your own thoughts, and bear your own sorrows and burdens. Keep yourself clean. Earn every penny that you spend. Make people respect and love you, by being worthy of respect and love. Have no skeletons of regret in your closet. Get over all your fear of ghosts. Be sure that when you come to die you will not wish you had lived other than you have. Whatever goblins haunt you in your last hour, do not let there be any spectres of memory. If you live in this way, if you are careful to do only those things that make for your own welfare, you may not, indeed, die with hallelujahs on your tongue, but you may be reasonably sure that your sun will go down irradiating the clouds that shadow the world you leave with a silent, soft and many-colored light.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A FREETHOUGHT MUSEUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I think the idea suggested by "Civis Sum" in last week's *Freethinker* to found a Freethought Museum is an excellent one, and would bear good fruit. It would also act as a great moral lesson, as it should include models of the instruments of torture formerly used as *arguments* against heretics. The thumb-screw, the iron boot, the rack—the collar of torture, the scavenger's daughter, etc., etc., all should be represented. A literary department could also be made very interesting, as there are many who would doubtless contribute some rarities. I should be pleased to contribute a letter witten by the grand old martyr, Richard Carlile, to my father more than fifty years ago. I disentombed it lately from an old desk, where it had been quietly locked up for many years.

W. H. Morrish.

Bright Villa, 141 Cheltenham Road, Bristol.

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DR. MARTINEAU ON CHRISTIANITY.

"CHRISTIANITY as defined or understood in all the Churches which formulate it has been mainly evolved from what is transient and perishable in its sources; from what is unhistorical in its traditions, mythological in its preconceptions, and misapprehended in the oracles of its prophets. From the fable of Eden to the imagination of the last trumpet, the whole story of the Divine order of the world is dislocated and deformed. The blight of birth-sin with its involuntary perdition; the scheme of expiatory redemption with its vicarious salvation; the incarnation with its low postulates of the relation between God and man, and its unworkable doctrine of two natures in one person; the official transmission of grace through material elements in the keeping of a consecrated corporation; the second coming of Christ to summon the dead and part the sheep from the goats at the general judgment—all are the growth of a mythical literature, or Messianic dreams, or Pharisaic theology, or sacramental superstition, or popular apotheosis. And so nearly do these vain imaginations pre-occupy the creeds that not a moral or spiritual element finds entrance there except 'the forgiveness of sins.' To consecrate and diffuse, under the name of 'Christianity,' a theory of the world's economy thus made up of illusions from obsolete stages of civilisation, immense resources, material and moral, are expended, with effect no less deplorable in the province of religion than would be, in that of science, hierarchies and missions for propagating the Ptolemaic astronomy, and inculcating the rules of necromancy and exorcism. The spreading alienation of the intellectual classes of European society from Christendom, and the detention of the rest in their spiritual culture at a level not much above that of the Salvation Army, are social phenomena which ought to bring home a very solemn appeal to the conscience of stationary churches. For their long arrear of debt to the intelligence of mankind they adroitly seek to make amends by elaborate beauty of ritual art. The apology soothes for a time, but it will not last for ever."—*The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 650.

PROFANE JOKES.

Rev. Dr. Prim: "Do you preach extempore, Brother Yallerby, or do you take notes?" Brother Yallerby (from the South): "Well, sah, thar was once a time I took notes, but I'be found it safest, down in my deestrick, to insist on habin' de cash down."

"Maria," said the pious husband, "them Smiths are allowing their children to play in the yard on Sunday. To-morrow I'll set the dog on their chickens. The judgment of heaven must be visited on 'em some way."

Scene—Village Sunday-school. Clergyman questioning a lot of small boys in a farming district. Clergyman: "How did Jacob know that it was Joseph sending for him from Egypt?" Small Boy (excitedly): "He seed the name on the waggons."

St. Peter: "Any credentials?" Newly arrived soul (confidently): "I spent my life getting up stories about Atheists struck dumb, profane men struck by lightning, etc., to be telegraphed by the press associations. Highly moral work, sir." St. Peter (confidentially): "Come in, then. The place across the way claims a larger population than we have, and I can make you useful in the census department."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "For God's Sake." Social evening every Monday. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Religious Guide Posts."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, Mr F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus, and What did he Teach?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Professor Huxley on Noah's Flood."

Hammersmith Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, on July 17, at 8, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Mile End—Assembly Rooms, Beaumont Street, Mile End Road, 7, Mr. Cohen, "Evolution of Man." Admission free.

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 10.30, members' quarterly meeting; 7.30, Mr. J. Woodward, "Electricity."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Norrish, "Saintly David."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, 'The Difficulties of Theism.'

Camberwell — Station Road, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Other Worlds than Ours."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Freethought and the Bible." All members intending to go with the Excursion on the 20th are requested to be present.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. L. Keen, "I and my Father are One."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Hammersmith Bridge, 7, a lecture.

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry." July 16, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "The Morality of the Messiah."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Who are the Infidels?"

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, a debate between Mr. C. J. Hunt and the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, "The Teachings of Christ."

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Morality and the Messiah."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. Hunt, "Miracles."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Ramsey, "Original Sin." Tickets for Excursion can be obtained up to Wednesday the 16th, at the "Duke of Ormonde," 13 Prince's Street.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, members' quarterly meeting.

Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6 30, Mr. Smith, "The Christian Religion."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Haslam, "The Influence of Poetry."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Evolution."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11, business meeting of Sunday Music League; 3, usual fortnightly meeting of members of N. S. S.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Hore, a reading from "Looking Backward."

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. J. Grange, "Does Man Survive Death."

Sheffield Hall of Science. Rockingham Street.—Members and friends go to Wharncliffe Side; meeting near Monolith, Fargate, at 2.30.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Vicar's Croft, 3, Mr. H. W. Riley, "Secularism: a Vindication and a Defence." At 7, on Holbeck Moor, Mr. Fisher, "Is Man a Fallen Angel or a Risen Ape?"

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Stanley Jones, "The Gospel of the Future."

Rochdale—Town Hall Square (weather permitting), Mr. J. Grange, 3, "Ashamed to be a Christian."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—July 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening) Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park; 27, North-East Secular Federation tour. August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning) Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening). Woolwich.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—July 20, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—July 13 (afternoon out-door, and evening in hall), Manchester; 20, Sheffield. August 3, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—August 10 (morning), Midland Arches; 24 (morning), Plaistow. Sept. 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 29.] SUNDAY, JULY 20, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

IS THE BIBLE INSPIRED?

(A Review of "Lux Mundi.")

(CONCLUDED.)

MR. GORE has a purpose in his theory of God's gradual methods and of the special inspiration of every race. His object is to explain the defects and deficiencies of the Hebrew writers. "The Old Testament," he admits, "presented a most unspiritual appearance. Its material sacrifices, its low standard of morals, its worldliness, were constantly being objected to by the Gnostic and Manichaean sects." *Its low standard of morals!* That is what the Freethinker has always been urging. He was damned for his pains, but he persisted nevertheless, and here at last is the Principal of Pusey House admitting the by no means soft impeachment. But Mr. Gore wriggles away from the legitimate consequences of his admission. Instead of confessing that the Hebrew scriptures were the natural product of the Hebrew mind, he gravely argues that their very brutality is a proof of their inspiration. "It is the essence of the Old Testament," he says, "to be imperfect." God was leading up to the New Testament, and if the Old Testament had been perfect how could the New Testament have been an improvement upon it? *Voilà.*

This is very pretty, no doubt, but it will not convert the Sceptic, who is quite prepared to deny the perfection of the New Testament, and to defend the denial in debate, if Mr. Gore or his colleagues are ready to cross swords with him.

Mr. Gore's theory of inspiration is marvellously elastic. Apparently inspiration lies in "the special point of view." The object of the Hebrew writers, who made any number of mistakes, was a religious one. They tried, in the language of Milton, to justify the ways of God to men; and as their eyes, so to speak, were fixed in the right direction, that very fact was their inspiration, though they imagined three-fourths of what they saw. Such a theory simply means that every religious man is inspired. But as the religious men flatly contradict each other, we must judge for ourselves after all, and the "inspiration" is practically useless. What is the use of telling us a man is inspired if we have to pick out his truth from his lies?

The Creation Story is not true, but it is inspired. All the pre-Abrahamic stories are mythical, but their inspiration is "conspicuous." The Song of Solomon is a drama; "Christ speaketh unto his bride, the Church," is all nonsense. Job is also dramatic, so are Jonah and Daniel. Still they are all inspired. Nor does Mr. Gore spare the orthodox view of the Pentateuch. He declares that the Jews, just like other nations, attributed to "first founders what is really the remoter result of their institutions." And applying this rule of criticism to the Mosaic Law, he comes to the following conclusion.

"Now historical criticism assures us that this process has been largely at work in the Pentateuch. By an analysis, for instance, the force of which is very great, it distinguishes distinct stages in the growth of the law of worship: at least an early stage, such as is represented in 'the Book of the Covenant,' a second stage in the Book of Deuteronomy, a last stage in 'the Priestly Code.' What we may suppose to have happened is that Moses himself established a certain germ of ceremonial enactment in connection with the ark and its sacred tent, and with 'the ten words'; and that this developed always as 'the law of Moses,' the result being constantly attributed, probably unconsciously and certainly not from any intention to deceive, to the original founder."

This sort of thing has gone on in every country. Sir Henry Maine gives a curious instance of how the Hindu priests still "discover" novelties in the ancient sacred laws, in order to give necessary or convient changes the sanction of antiquity. No one can doubt that the Jewish priests acted in the same way. The Law of Moses was made up like the Laws of Manu. But where does the "inspiration" come in? Is it not an outrage on common sense to say that the Jewish priests ascribed their own concoctions to Moses "unconsciously"? Surely they must have had miraculous powers of unconsciousness to do this century after century. Unconscious is the wrong word. It was not unconscious, but unconscienable.

Mr. Gore may rely on it that this jugglery will not deceive ordinary people who take broad views of things. Let them be convinced, as they will be, that the Mosaic Law, while pretending to be delivered by Moses, who received it from God, was concocted by the priests very largely for their own interest; let them be convinced of this, and they will regard the Mosaic Law as one of the biggest impostures ever palmed off on a credulous world.

Even with respect to the New Testament the editor of *Lux Mundi* has a word to say to his orthodox brethren. He reminds "the Bible, and nothing but the Bible" people that "Protestantism of an unecclesiastical sort has built upon the Epistle to the Hebrews as much as upon any book of the New Testament." Yet "this book is of unknown authorship," and "if 'Pauline' it is pretty certainly not St. Paul's." The book is a part of the New Testament canon, and it is there by "the judgment of the Church." Precisely so. The evangelicals are resting on a floor of sand. The inspiration of the Bible cannot be maintained without the inspiration of the Church. Mr. Gore presses this home upon the Low Churchmen. But this is the Catholic theory, and, after embracing it, it is hard to see why Mr. Gore does not go over to Rome.

Let us now turn to the Gospels, and see how Mr. Gore applies his theory of inspiration to them. This is what he tells us.

"The Church sees in the Apostles men specially and deliberately qualified to interpret Christ to the world. It understands by their inspiration an endowment which enables men of all ages to take their teaching as representing, and not misrepresenting, his teaching and himself. In St. John's Gospel, for example, we have an account of our Lord which has obviously passed through the medium of a most remarkable personality. We have the outcome of the *meditation*, as well as the *recollection*, of the Apostle."

The italics are ours, and if words have any meaning

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Mr. Gore confesses that the writer of the Fourth Gospel put his own thoughts into the mouth of Jesus. That is, either deliberately, or in a prolonged fit of absence of mind, he forged discourses in the name of the Son of God!

What a pretty confession! Church scholars, however, are obliged to make it; otherwise they cannot explain away the discord of the Four Gospels. Dr. Bruce, as well as Mr. Gore, allows that "the Evangelists may in some instances have modified the form of our Lord's words, for good and worthy reasons." As though finite creatures could have any good reason for altering the words of infinite wisdom!

St. John gives us his "meditations" as well as his "recollections." Just in the same way the Books of Chronicles are a "priestly version" of the history in Samuel and Kings. But this is not deception. Oh dear no! It is "idealisation." Surely good phrases ever were commendable. "Idealisation" is an excellent euphemism for forgery. The greatest master of "idealisation" in our time was the late Mr. Pigott. The Parnell letters were the result of his "meditation," only he fathered his "meditation" upon Mr. Parnell, as St. John fathered his upon Jesus Christ.

Apparently Jesus was "idealising" in the same way himself when he spoke of Jonah being three days and nights in the whale's belly. He knew the story was a piece of dramatic fancy, but he used it all the same as a type of his own resurrection. Similarly, when he said "Remember Lot's wife," he only meant "Remember the story of Lot's wife."

"Once more, our Lord uses the time before the Flood to illustrate the carelessness of men before his own coming. He is using the Flood here as a typical judgment. . . . In referring to the Flood he certainly suggests that he is treating it as typical, for he introduces circumstances—'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage'—which have no counterpart in the original narrative."

Really, Mr. Gore, this is *too* thin. Saying that the people before the Flood ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, is only saying that they lived. And if the "typical judgment" never happened, was not Jesus shouting "Wolf!" very absurdly? As a matter of fact, his cry of "Wolf!" in regard to his own coming was as hollow as his cry of "Wolf!" in regard to the Flood. The Flood never happened and Jesus never came again. But perhaps that was "typical" too.

Mr. Gore's theory of inspiration is simply a device to evade the results of scientific criticism. Telling us that God and men wrote the Bible between them, and that we must trust to the Church—that is, a body of men who preach for a living, as others make boots and shoes—to pick out which from which, is to treat us like a multitude of hereditary fools. And telling us that fraudulent history is "idealisation" is to presume on the lack of conscience which centuries of clerical teaching have produced. After all, we, the people, are not quite such fools and rogues as the clergy imagine. It is as well to remind Mr. Gore and his like that the time has gone by for the Church—that collection of hirelings—to usurp the laymen's right to think for themselves; and that while "idealisation" is a pretty euphemism for fraud, it will no more save the Bible from a verdict and sentence in the court of Reason than a plea of "kleptomania" would save a regular burglar from penal servitude. Just as the old judge told the super-subtle counsel that he "quite understood kleptomania, and was sent there to cure it," so the human judgment will tell Church counsel like Mr. Gore that "idealisation" and "forgery" are *aliases* for the same thing, and that the plea for the inspiration of such an admitted fraud must be dismissed with costs. Yes, *costs*. Reason will get costs out of the Church, by using its property for better purposes.

G. W. FOOTE.

ANOTHER FORGERY.

In my tract on New Testament Forgeries, I have only cited passages which from their omission from various manuscripts and versions, are allowed to be spurious by numerous critics. There is, however, another passage of the utmost importance which I have long been convinced is either an interpolation or a proof that the story ascribed to Matthew only dates from the end of the second century. I allude to the verses about Peter, so often quoted by Roman Catholics, and upon which the claims of their church are largely built.

It must have struck any critical reader as curious that Jesus Christ should deliver to Peter the keys of heaven, and then in almost the same breath say to him "Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence unto me, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." But how few readers of the Bible are critical. Protestants usually have pointed to the second passage as qualifying the first without perceiving that the two are utterly incompatible. If Jesus had no better choice of a foundation for his church than an apostle of this character; one too who denied him as soon as he fell into tribulation, his church must have been built on a sandy foundation indeed.

To show that the story is an interpolation, all that is necessary is to compare the accounts as given in the three first Gospels: Mark viii., 27-30; Luke ix., 18-21; and Matt. xvi., 13-20. It will then be seen that while the other verses are so closely the same that they are obviously derived from a common source, whether it be manuscript or oral traditions, the verses 17, 18, and 19 of Matthew xv. are distinct additions. These verses run—

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose shall be loosed in heaven.

Both the preceding and subsequent verses being substantially alike in Matthew, Mark and Luke, these are manifestly an addition to the first-named. This saying of Christ to Peter—if it had ever been uttered—was altogether too important to be omitted by the other Evangelists. That Mark, who is said to have derived his instruction from Peter, says nothing of it is in itself sufficient to disprove the genuineness of the passage. It was evidently concocted in the interests of Peter's supposed successors, the Bishops of Rome.

It is evident from numerous passages that Paul never acknowledged Peter's claims. Had he known that Christ built his Church upon that rock, how dare he withstand Peter to the face and declare him to be blamed? How could he boast himself to be "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles"? The supremacy of Peter is a fiction incompatible with the claims of Paul.

The word *ecclesia*, moreover, which is translated "Church," was not in use till the latter portion of the second century. It is true it occurs also in Matt. xviii., 17, "if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," but this is only an argument that the second passage is also spurious, for the very idea of Jesus talking of the Church implies an anachronism.

Now it was towards the end of the second century that a violent dispute arose between Christians as to the celebration of Easter, for there was already a dispute as to the date of the resurrection. The Roman Church endeavored to control the question and make it the occasion for the establishment of its

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own power as supreme. The Asiatic Churches rebelled against. these pretensions. The publication of the Gospel thus improved formed an instrument of overcoming them and consolidating the power of Peter's successors. It has indeed always been a famous weapon in the hands of Rome.

It may be said my argument does not so much prove this passage to be a forgery as that Matthew, as we now have it, was compiled after the Roman Church began to be established. And this I believe to be the case. At the same time it is clear that the compiler had earlier documents to draw from. The comparison of parallel passages with Mark and Luke is sufficient to show this. It is also evident from the testimony of Papias, in the middle of the second century that certain sayings of the Lord had been previously ascribed to Matthew, and this must have evidently been a smaller and different work to that which now goes under this name.

J. M. Wheeler.

INGERSOLL AGAINST VIVISECTION.

Vivisection is the inquisition—the hell—of science. All the cruelty which the human—or rather the inhuman—heart is capable of inflicting, is in this one word. Below this there is no depth. This word lies like a coiled serpent at the bottom of the abyss.

We can excuse, in part, the crimes of passion. We take into consideration the fact that man is liable to be caught by the whirlwind, and that from a brain on fire the soul rushes to a crime. But what excuse can ingenuity form for a man who deliberately—with an unaccelerated pulse—with the calmness of Calvin at the murder of Servetus—seeks, with curious and cunning knives, in the living quivering flesh of a dog, for all the throbing nerves of pain? The wretches who commit these infamous crimes pretend that they are working for the good of man; that they are actuated by philanthropy; and that their pity for the sufferings of the human race drives out all pity for the animals they torture to death. But those who are incapable of pitying animals are, as a matter of fact, incapable of pitying men. A physician who would cut a living rabit in pieces—laying bare the nerves, denuding them with knives, pulling them out with forceps—would not hesitate to try experiments with men and women for the gratification of his curiosity.

To settle some theory, he would trifle with the life of any patient in his power. By the same reasoning he will justify the vivisection of animals and patients. He will say that it is better that a few animals should suffer than that one human being should die; and that it is far better that one patient should die, if through the sacrifice of that one, several may be saved.

Brain without heart is far more dangerous than heart without brain.

Have these scientific assassins discovered anything of value? They may have settled some disputes as to the action of some organ, but have they added to the useful knowledge of the race?

It is not necessary for a man to be a specialist in order to have and express his opinion as to the right or wrong of vivisection. It is not necessary to be a scientist or a naturalist to detest cruelty and to love mercy. Above all the discoveries of the thinkers, above all the inventions of the ingenious, above all the victories won on fields of intellectual conflict, rise human sympathy and a sense of justice.

I know that good for the human race can never be accomplished by torture. I also know that all that has been ascertained by vivisection could have been done by the dissection of the dead, or at least animals completely and perfectly under the merciful influence of ether. I know that all the torture has been useless. All the agony inflicted has simply hardened the hearts of the criminals, without enlightening their minds.

It may be that the human race might be physically improved if all the sickly and deformed babes were killed, and if all the paupers, liars, drunkards, thieves. villains, and vivisectionists were murdered. All this might, in a few ages, result in the production of a generation of physically perfect men and women; but what would such beings be worth,—men and women healthy and heartless, muscular and cruel—that is to say, intelligent wild beasts?

Never can I be the friend of one who vivisects his fellow-creatures. I do not wish to touch his hand.

When the angel of pity is driven from the heart; when the fountain of tears is dry,—the soul becomes a serpent crawling in the dust of a desert.

A DIALOGUE.

Believer.

This man of reason, whom you deem so great,
Who put out Hell and bars up Heaven's fair gate,
Who flings all creeds terrestrial to one maw,
Huge as the Aztec battle-god's, called Law,—
Who makes the universe, to suit his wish,
As eyeless as a subterranean fish—
Last night this valiant doubter, in his pride,
Shrieked for Jehovah's pardon ere he died.

Infidel.

With ease the partisan may falsely view
Delirium's rant; yet if indeed 'twere true
That some wild fear did seize him at the last,
What matters? Hardiest oaks are bowed by blast.
The warrior minds of men drink strength for strife
Not from death's opiate, but the elixir, life.
His life being great, who cares if near its close
He druled what imbecilities death chose?

Edgar Fawcett.

THE RECORD OF THE PAPACY.

The *Neue Frei Presse*, of Vienna, thus summarizes the history of the popes: "Since St. Peter (supposing that he ever was in Rome), there have been 297 popes of whom 24 were anti-popes and one female pope. Nineteen popes quitted Rome, and 35 reigned abroad. Eight papal reigns did not exceed each a month's duration, 40 extended over one year, 22 over two years, 54 over five years, 51 over 15 years, 18 over 20 years, and only nine exceeded that duration. Of the 297 popes, 31 were declared usurpers and heretics, and of the remaining 266 legitimate occupants of the Holy See, 64 met with violent deaths, 18 having been poisoned and four strangled. Independently of the Avignon popes, 26 were deposed, expelled from Rome, and banished; 28 others were only maintained in power by foreign aid."

THREE PROFANE JOKES.

Babyhood, for July, has the following:—

Willie, a little red-head of four and a half, is insatiably curious about heaven, but is sadly lacking in reverence. I caught him at the window gazing up with a rapt expression, and asked him what he was thinking about. "Isn't the sky softer than the floor?" Not feeling inclined for a long explanation, I answered "Yes." "Then, when God sits on *his* floor why doesn't he fall through?"

When he was three years old we moved to a place with fruit trees in the garden. There was also a dilapidated step-ladder on the premises, which was surreptitiously burned by the cook. One morning Willie discovered a tree full of pears, the first he had ever seen growing; so, full of excitement, he ran to his father to ask who hung them in the tree. He was told that God had done it. Looking at his father with eyes full of doubt he replied: "How God git up dere when the yadder burned up?"

His little cousin Maggie, about five years old, was one day scratching her father's head, when she ran to her mother with a bit of dandruff between her fingers, exclaiming: "Oh mamma, see what I have found in papa's head!" "What is it, dear?" "I fink its a ittle sand, left over when God made papa."

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ACID DROPS.

General Booth is making a big thing of the Salvation Army. It has (or Booth has—it is the same thing) an annual income of £791,000 and employs 9,050 officers. Every year, however, it grows more respectable, and by-and-bye we dare say a rival organisation will start up to cater for the dull-witted multitude of superstitionists who must have plenty of vulgar excitement. Wesleyanism provided it for them when the Church was too respectable, and when Wesleyanism grew respectable a lower Methodism arose. Then Methodism got wealth and became respectable, and the Salvation Army leapt into the vacancy with its Happy Elizas ond Converted Janes. Presently, as the Army waxes in respectability, something else will pander to the instincts of the pious mob.

By the way, why doesn't Booth try Africa? He won't bag the millions of India, but he ought to score a big success among the negroes. Drums and tambourines would convert them wholesale. But the worst of it is, they have little cash to put in the collection-box, and they would hardly be paying customers even for Salvation soap.

Stanley showed very questionable taste in getting married at Westminster Abbey, and making an exhibition of himself and his bride to a swell crowd. But this is a noisy, advertising age, and African explorers must make hay while the sun shines, before another "lion" attracts public attention. As for the swell crowd itself, according to all reports it was simply bent on sight-seeing. The Abbey was turned into a big show, and the clergy played the *rôle* of performers to Society (with a capital S). Religion, in fact, is just an adjunct to the classes, ministering to their vanity and greed.

Mrs. Williams, of Fairhaven, Vermont, having lost her husband, murdered her two children in order that they might "join their father in heaven." Then she cut her own throat after setting fire to the house. Such is the "consoling power of religion"!

"The day of salvation is at hand," cried Esther Bromley, as she careered along Old Barn Road, Manchester, with a poker in her hand, smashing the doors. She is now in a lunatic asylum. Her complaint is religious mania.

Thomas Berrisford, provision dealer, Leek, has been fined £5 and costs for indecently assaulting Alice Kirkham, a girl of twelve years and five months. According to the girl's mother, Berrisford is a very religious man.

William Salmon—not an Atheist, Mr. Talmage—was found lying on the bank of Battersea Park lake, with his throat cut, quite insensible, and his clothes drenched, showing that he had been in the water and had crawled out. In his pocket was a piece of paper, on which he had written his pious sentiments in cockney rhyme.

> We shall sleep, but not for ever;
> There will be a glorious dawn;
> We shall meet to part, oh, never;
> On the resurrection morn!

The poet, however, did not do the deed of *felo de se* thoroughly. He is doing well in Wandsworth Infirmary, and will have to wait for the resurrection morn.

The *Loyal American*—a paper devoted to fighting ecclesiasticism in the United States—mentions the case of a Romish priest named Hennesy, in Ohio, who blacked the eyes of one woman and then went to the house of another and knocked her senseless. He was arrested and released on a hundred dollars' bail. "This drunken brute," our contemporary remarks, "claims to have the power to change a bit of dough into the real flesh and spirit of Christ by saying a few words in Latin."

The design argument has been beautifully illustrated in Wales. Mrs. Arabella Price, the wife of a workman at Pengaruddu, gave birth to four children. They are all living, but the poor mother is dead. Fancy the ruler of the universe sending four children at one fell swoop into a working man's house, and killing the mother at the same time—probably in order that they might be brought up carefully. For an act of Providence it is very curious, and we feel with Cowper that "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

A correspondent of the *Christian World* sends the following verse as a specimen of how the Christian doctrines of peace are taught to little children:—

> Come form a line, my soldier band,
> In double column take your stand;
> Then round the playground gaily go,
> A reg'ment marching to and fro.
> Now, forward, march along with me,
> And if base traitors we should see,
> We'll point our muskets at their head,
> Then take true aim and shoot them dead.

The *Christian World* says "Tolstoi's latest lunacy is to denounce marriage as unchristian." His "lunacy," as those who read Mr. Foote's recent article "A Religion for Eunuchs" will be aware, consists in his inculcation of the example and teaching of Christ.

The Detroit clergymen must be very nice, according to Swift's definition that a nice man is a man with nasty ideas. They have issued a protest to the directors of the Detroit Art Museum complaining that the nude statues corrupt the morals of youth, and demanding that they should be draped. The directors have complied. Now, we presume, the Appollo Belvidere will be supplied with a pair of trousers, and the Venus de Medici with a skirt and corset.

A writer on the hackneyed subject of "The Holy Land" in *Blackwood* protests against the presence there, "in the midst of scenes so sacred to Christendom, of the unspeakable Turk." It has been a sore point with Christians for nearly eight hundred years that their sacred places were in the hands of the infidel, and many have been the attempts to wrest them back. But providence has hitherto been mainly on the side of the unspeakable Turk, who keeps the peace between the contentious sects of Christians.

Dr. Farrar, writing on the Oberammergau Passion Play, says the representation has been purged from dubious elements, the Devil, for example, no longer appearing on the stage. If the Devil has become dubious to the Bavarian peasants there is a possibility that some day all the other characters of the sacred drama may become as dubious as they are to us.

A sensational story, with the title *A Dead Man's Diary*, has recently been issued. The writer tells how he died, and, without waiting for the Judgment Day, went straight to Hell for two days, which is fully as long as Jesus Christ can have been there—from Friday to Sunday morning. Hell, it seems, is as Shelley says, "much like London." The inhabitants quote Carlyle, Dickens, Rossetti, the *Contemporary Review* and Mr. Andrew Lang. Mr. Wheeler's *Letters from Hell* are a great deal more trustworthy.

Things do progress even in Scotland. Ten years ago they turned Dr. Robertson Smith out of the Free Kirk, not for any doctrinal heresy, but for such critical suggestions as that David did not write all the Psalms. Now Profs. Bruce and Dods find encouragement in denying inspiration and other fundamental doctrines of Presbyterian Christianity.

The Bishop of Amycla, which we presume is what the Holy Catholic Church calls "in infidel parts," has been preaching at the Catholic Chapel, Homerton. According to the report of the *Christian World*, he appears to be a jokist of the first order of Christian merit. His episcopal wit rises to the height of suggesting that the "h" should be dropped in speaking of Modern Thinkers.

Two poker chips in the left trousers pocket of a St. Paul man saved his life the other night by flattening out a bullet from a burglar's revolver. As poker chips are lighter and less bulky than the traditional life-saving Testament they may perhaps supersede that useful volume. And probably more men can be found in the great West with poker chips in their pockets than with Bibles.—*Truthseeker* (N. Y.)

A keeper of a fortune-telling automatic machine has been summoned for contravening the law. These provisions are survivals of the statutes of Henry VIII. and James I.,

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which in accordance with Exodus xxii., 18, made punishable by death all witchcraft and sorcery. What a descent from the divine law—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"—to the prosecution of an automatic machine.

A correspondence on the difference between Sunday and week-day music has been going on in the *Christian World*. It transpires that not only classical music, sonatas, symphonies and the like, is constantly used for organ voluntaries and adapted to hymns and anthems, but operatic and even dance music is slightly rearranged and labelled "sacred." The supposed difference between sacred and secular music breaks down upon investigation.

Another new sect has appeared in the somewhat heretical neighborhood of Holloway. It claims the humble and unpretentious title of "The Church of God," and needs only a small room for the accommodation of the elect.

Some people laugh at the old Scotch woman who thought the number of the elect very few, indeed doubted if it included more than herself and her husband, and who upon further interrogation confessed she was na sae sure o' Sandy. Really the old woman was very logical. The requirements of the Christian scheme are so stringent, and the attitude of the potter upstairs, who makes one vessel to honor and another to dishonor, so problematical, that while vanity induces each believer to class himself among the saved, there can be no such assurance that the nearest and dearest will not be damned.

Dr. Woodlock, Roman Catholic bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, has the genuine Christian spirit. In a confirmation address he said he "would rather see a father and mother offer their child to be burnt than hear that they had been in the habit of sending their children to Protestant schools." Again we say the Catholics are logical. If immortal souls are in danger of everlasting burning by attending Protestent schools, what Christian can esteem their bodies as of any worth in comparison? So thought the Church and the Inquisition, "quite persuaded all the apostles would have done as they did." Protestants who are shocked at the bishop's inhumanity fail to see that their own greater tolerance is the outcome of indifference.

The administration of the sacraments was some sixty years since very loosely conducted, it we may accept a current anecdote. Soon after a rev. gentleman's appointment to a country parish in 1829 he was called on to baptise an infant. When about to take the child into his arms he was astonished to find no water in the font, and on asking for it the clerk remarked in a wronged tone, "Why, lor, sir! the wold meenister d'n't never want na'n'a water; he did do zo"—licking his hand.

Paul Nugent, Materialist, is advertised as a rejoinder to *Robert Elesmere,* who isn't a Materialist. Paul, it seems, gets convinced of the immortality of the soul by "the irresponsibility of the ante-frontal lobes of the brain to electrical stimulation." Once converted, he swallows the Bible gospels and the Church altogether, including its "legitimate orders" and "valid sacraments." Altogether *Paul Nugent, Materialist,* is rather a caution.

The United States Government is rigorously rooting out the divine institution of polygamy. A settlement of Mormons at Denver has been raided, and Bishop McArthur arrested and charged with occupying a house with three of his wives. Abraham, Jacob and Solomon would have had a hot time if they lived now, when men's ways are so different from God's ways.

At the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide the Bishop adopted the modern tactics in dealing with the biblical criticism. "The central object of our faith," said he, "is our Lord and Savior, not the Bible." These gentry should be reminded that they only know of their Lord and Savior through the Bible, and that their L and S. is reported to have said that Moses wrote of him, that Daniel prophesied, and to have endorsed the legends of Lot's wife and Jonah in the whale's belly.

The clergy are quite ready to fling the Bible overboard, or anything else, if they can only retain their livings. Here is the Bishop of Manchester, for instance, speaking at the High School for Girls at Preston, and telling a lot of ladies that it is "an unchristian view" that women should be "kept in subjection." Why this very "unchristian view" is plainly taught in the New Testament, and every time the Bishop marries a couple he makes the bride promise to *obey* the bridegroom, according to the Church Marriage Service. Yet, in the face of these facts—gross as a mountain, open, palpable—this high-salaried hypocrite has the incredible impudence to assert that the subjection of women is "unchristian."

The *School Guardian,* a Church school organ, denounces the godless system of education in France. It admits that the moral teaching of the French Code is "admirable." But what is morality without religion? Mere rubbish. In other words, the parsons are crying "There is nothing like leather."

"Missions in India" is the title of a sensible article in the *Northern Daily Telegraph.* Our contemporary admits that the difficulty of Christianising India is increasing. "The uninstructed masses in India," it says, "still cling to their ancient superstitions; but the educated, and especially those who have come most under the influence of western civilisation, are losing all religious faith."

According to the London *Echo* it is all up with Atheism. Sir Henry Thomson, whom it regards as our greatest scientist, is a Theist. Well, Darwin was not; and to the gaze of posterity we guess Darwin will loom a good deal bigger than Thomson.

After all, however, it is silly to decide great questions in this way. Sir Henry Thomson does not do the thinking for the whole population of Great Britain. Some of us, at any rate, prefer to think for ourselves; and our convictions are not to be shaken by the mere sound of a great man's name when he happens to differ from us. Surely the *Echo* is aware that contradictory views in politics, as well as religion, have had the support of equally eminent men. The argument is suicidal, for the names balance each other.

According to the *Speaker*, Cardinal Newman's "great dread is Atheism, a foe of whom he never speaks save with bated breath." Yes, Rome and Atheism look each other in the face, across the intervening sects that mingle reason and faith in varying proportions.

Professor Stuart has succeeded Mr. T. P. O'Connor in the editorial chair of the *Star.* We wonder if this will make a difference in the attitude of the paper on religious questions. Mr. O'Connor goes out with a plum of £15,000. Democracy pays, though Freethought does not. Those who go to the root of the matter must expect more kicks than halfpence.

The Bishop of Salford (Catholic) chuckles over the fact that "the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary has been put up, with honor, over the principal side entrance to Westminster Abbey, and she has been recently enthroned under the great dome of St. Paul's." He evidently hopes the High Church party will gradually bring the people over to Rome. But we fancy he is mistaken. The faith-at-any-price people may go over, but Englishmen as a body never had any love for Rome, and we do not think they ever will. Cardinal Manning is playing a very astute game, and a very unscrupulous one too, yet there is a limit to his power of bamboozling. Too many Englishmen know from history what Rome was, and they see in the Cardinal's red hat the sign of "the bloody faith."

There is no sound more aggravating to the manager of a theatre than the cracking of nuts. Poor old Harry Ruttley, of the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, was especially down upon the offender in this respect. Upon one occasion, with the crook of his umbrella, he hauled an offender out of the front row of the pit, with the remark: "You dodgasted squirrel! D'you think you're in church?"

The Archbishop of Canterbury is much concerned about the Assyrian Christians, who, it seems, are being beset by two bands of missionaries, the Roman Catholics and the American Presbyterians. The Primate is anxious that the

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Church of England shall have a finger in the pie, and proposes sending out a third band of missionaries to more properly Christianise these Asiatic Christians.

A good deal of interest is also being taken in the Armenian Christians on account of their alleged persecution by the Turks, although there can be little doubt that if they could change places the Turks would suffer quite as much as the Armenian Christians now do. These Christians have the misfortune to be heretics all through a fault in their language. They have but one word to express *nature* and *person*. Hence when the Council of Chalcedon decreed that Christ consisted of two natures, they thought he had two persons, which would, of course, make the blessed Trinity into a blessed Quarternity. It takes some trouble to explain to them the subtleties of the true doctrine of Christ, but well-paid missionaries hope to be able to achieve the task.

According to the New York *Nation*, Mr. Mansfield, the presiding elder of the New England Methodist Conference, is "trying to get the ministers of his denomination to join him in stealing a book on Egypt, belonging to an English publisher, on the excuse that it contains much matter of moment to religious people." Another pious American publisher has appropriated in this fashion the well-known "Oxford Bible," with its 56,000 references, maps, glossary, and illustrative articles that have cost the English publishers a vast sum of money. This firm advertises for Sunday-school teachers to push the sale. "Fancy," says the *Nation*, "the diffusion of religious ideas through the medium of stolen Bibles peddled through the country by religious teachers."

Bishop Browne, of Winchester, having reached the age of eighty, has decided to retire on his moderate pension of £2,000 a year.

Blessed be ye poor! Woe unto you rich! So said Jesus Christ. But Talmage isn't afraid. His income is about £12,000 a year, and his house is one of the most luxuriously furnished in New York. But we guess it isn't big enough to give Jesus Christ a bed if he knocked at the door one night in a carpenter's suit.

The Rev. John Tuckwell, of Westbourne Grove Chapel, issues a four-page monthly. In the July number a whole page is devoted to "Heine's Death Bed." One anecdote is garbled. A friend called on Heine as he lay paralysed on his mattress-grave, and the following conversation took place.

Heine: If I could only walk out on crutches, do you know where I would go?
Friend: No.
Heine: Straight to the church.
Friend: You jest.
Heine: No, no; straight to church.

But the story does not end there, Mr. Tuckwell. Heine maliciously added, "Where else should a man on crutches go?" meaning, of course, that church is a place for cripples —mental cripples, you understand.

The *Christian World*, noticing the presence of the Rev. Newman Hall and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland at the banquet of the bishops at the Mansion House, complains that "of other Nonconformists there was no trace." The Nonconformists evidently do not lament the guzzling, but lament that they cannot share therein.

At a meeting at Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of Lord Salisbury as "our own great leader." The Church has usually pretended not to be of any party, while as a matter of fact its influence has always been strenuously exerted on the side of the Tories. The party of progress should note this utterance. The more clearly it is seen that the party of privilege are united, the more certain it is they will sink as they have swam together.

Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* is to be followed by *The Light of the World*. The title is a joke. Buddhists outnumber Christians, but as Sir Edwin is a Christian himself he calls Buddha the Light of *Asia*, and Christ, who was also an Asiatic, the Light of the *World*. A Buddhist would reverse the order, and could plead a majority in his favor.

Sir Edwin Arnold's poem is of course a New Life of Christ in verse. This age is fertile in such products. Lives of Christ are getting dreadfully common. Yet all we know of Christ is in the four Gospels, and much of that isn't true.

Three years ago the Church Congress got Mr. H. H. Champion to open a discussion on Socialism. Since then Mr. Champion has come to grief. This year Mr. Ben Tillett is to be the great attraction. Mr. Tillett should be careful. He may come to grief too.

The Rev. F. G. Riley, of Braintree, has been preaching against Socialism, and has severely rebuked the blasphemous reformers who actually "deny God in the streets." Parson Riley bids the poor remember that their best, and indeed their only, friend is the Church which preaches the blessed Gospel of Christ. Well, we are glad to hear it, and we hope Parson Riley will practise his Master's teaching. When he has sold all he has and given it to the poor, we shall believe in his sincerity. Until then we shall regard him as a professional hypocrite who cants for a living.

On Sunday afternoon there was a set discussion in Regent's Park between Mr. C. J. Hunt and the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale. The subject for debate was "The Teachings of Christ." Mr. Woffendale spent his time in talking about the existence of God, an entirely different subject; but on being called to order by the chairman, Mr. Rowney, he refused to be ruled by that gentleman; and being backed up, as a matter of course, by his own party, he went on defying both the chairman and the ordinary rules of debate. It seems utterly impossible to get a Christian minister to defend Christianity.

The *South London Leader* devotes a turgid article to the Atheism and Atheists of the Camberwell Secular Hall. The article is something in the style of Missionary Morden. It is dull enough to be his composition.

The Universal Peace Congress was *not* opened with prayer. Dr. Grammer, a clergyman from Baltimore, proposed that every day's proceedings should open with prayer. His resolution was seconded by a Mr. Robert Scott, who said that if the Conference ignored God, he, as a delegate, would ignore the Conference. Great Scott! It was an awful threat. But the Conference plucked up courage, and resolved that those who wanted prayer might assemble a little earlier than the rest. We dare say, however, that this was far from satisfying the prayerites. They want their own pious way, and if they do not get it Peace may go hang.

The Rev. R. Finch, of Pangbourne, thinks the fat grass of the churchyard is too good to waste. He therefore puts in his sheep to feed, and as they devour the flowers upon the graves, the parishioners have been obliged to fence them with wire. But the rector will not tolerate this. He has ordered the removal of the wires, and prohibited the laying of flowers upon the graves without his special permission. Good old Church of England!

OBITUARY.

Mr. James Thompson, for whom an appeal was a few weeks ago made, died on the 11th inst., at his residence, Lowhill, Liverpool, after a long and very painful illness. He was 64 years of age, and to the last maintained the Freethought opinions he held for over a quarter of a century.—C. D.

Died July 5th, aged 61 years, Mr. Thomas Lake, Bradford, and was interred at the Undercliffe Cemetery, on the 8th. Mr. James White reading Austin Holyoake's burial service. Mr. Lake imbibed Freethought views in early life, and was one of the most intelligent sceptics in the town of Bradford. He was a member of the Yorkshire Secular Federation. In the language of Spinoza, "His wisdom was a meditation not of death, but of life."—W. Kay.

The Christian story, as the Gospels narrate it, is a big bubble. You approach it critically and it bursts. Dogmatic Christology built upon it a paper balloon kept afloat by gas. All so-called lives of Christ, or biographies of Jesus are works of fiction, erected by imagination on the shifting foundation of meagre and unreliable records.—*Rabbi J. M. Wise*, "*The Martyrdom of Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 123.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 27, Hall of Science.

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

F. A.—Joseph Barker *did* find Jesus again. He was like Joseph's coat, of many colors; everything by turns and nothing long.

JOHN SANDERSON.—Your letter reached us late, having been posted to Stonecutter Street, instead of Clerkenwell Green. We are very glad to hear that your brother Henry has taken a turn for the better, and shall be still more glad to hear of his recovery. Men of his stamp are precious to the world.

E. WILLIAMS.—Shall appear.

W. M. WALLACE.—Nonsense. There is all the difference in the world between hygiene and faith and oil.

W. J. LEWIS.—Dryden's Dramatic Works are not easy to obtain. The old Jacob Tonson edition is sometimes to be met with at a second-hand bookseller's. It is in six volumes, and fetches from 15s. to £1. The plays are included in Sir Walter Scott's edition of Dryden, but that is a very expensive one. Vizetelly promises an unexpurgated selection of Dryden's plays—five or six of the best—in the "Mermaid Series." Ben Jonson, complete is published by Chatto and Windus, in three vols. at 15s. This is Gifford's edition, re-edited by Cunningham. Glad to hear you enjoy the *Freethinker*.

S. STANDRING.—We never could understand why the Chatham friends left the N. S. S. They would certainly do well to rejoin it. After all, they derive benefit from the N. S. S. Isolation does not necessarily mean independence.

W. G. RENN says the Finsbury Branch will start two brakes to-day (July 20) for Epping Forest from Clerkenwell Green at 9.30. Tickets (2s. 6d.) can be had up to Saturday night at Mr. Renn's, 23 Nelson Street, St. Luke's.

E. ANDERSON.—We are quite aware of the fact. Human sacrifice is almost universal among savages at the funeral of chiefs, and the practice lingers on in semi-civilised states.

P. H. ECHLIN.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with the portrait. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. We believe the *Freethinker* is sold in Brighton, but we have not the address of any newsagent.

R. SHAW.—The statement is absolutely false. Mr. Wise did not go to Camden Hall during Mr. Foote's last visit to Liverpool. He appeared at the Concert Hall in the evening, and opposed Mr. Foote in two speeches of ten and five minutes.

RAMS.—See reply to W. H. Taylor.

T. W. TURNER.—Your letter arrived too late for last week's *Freethinker*.

S. SODDY.—We are obliged.

J. TRAVIS.—Better let it drop.

J. E.—Scarcely food for a paragraph.

T. BOX.—Mr. Foote will lecture three times at Birmingham—morning and evening at Baskerville Hall, afternoon in the Town Hall.

A. K.—We are not surprised at the *Bournemouth Guardian* cutting the name of this paper out of your letter. Still, the conspiracy of silence is like the tactics of the ostrich; it gets played out eventually. That tablet of the Crucifixion, bearing Pilate's sentence, is a bare-faced fraud. Ask Dr. Farrar or any other scholarly Christian.

R. E. HOLDING.—See "Acid Drops."

The Freethinker and all Secular literature can be obtained from Mr. Dickenson, 28 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea, or at the Shed of Truth on meeting nights, and Park Gate Sunday mornings. All profits go to the Branch.

T. SEARLE.—If you mean Ingersoll's oration on Thomas Paine, we do not think it is published separately in England. Thanks for your trying to circulate this journal.

H. JONES.—What will you put in its place? is a silly question if the thing be false, and if it be true the question is needless. Truth is better than falsehood any day. No doubt a Christian feels empty when he loses his superstition, but the study of Truth and the service of Humanity will soon fill the void.

CHARLES C. CATTELL, 29 Snow Hill, Birmingham, offers 200 copies of his *Thoughts for Thinking* at half price—one copy on receipt of nine stamps, to any reader of this paper.

T. C. M.—Macaulay does say that "A prostitute, seated on a chair of state in the chancel of Nôtre Dame, received the adoration of thousands" as the Goddess of Reason. But Macaulay was not infallible, and he was prone to sacrificing to effect. The lady who personated the Goddess of Reason was an actress; there is no other reason that we know of for calling her a prostitute. Carlyle falls into no such blunder. He represents her as a respectable woman.

W. H. TAYLOR.—You would do well to tackle the Bible thoroughly first. Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Record*, and *Supernatural Religion*. When you have mastered these we will recommend others. If you read Darwin and Haeckel, you should also read Spencer's *Sociology*, Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, and Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*.

W. SHIPLEY.—Send us the addresses of the two lads who post our contents-sheets at Chester-le-Street, and we will forward them a photograph each.

R. H.—Varley is pretty well played out. We have no room for him now. When a flea gets in your bed, you deal with it, but if it hops at large in the world you don't crusade against it.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Evening Standard—Northern Daily Telegraph—The Coming Man—Twentieth Century—Freethinkers' Magazine—School Guardian—The People's Press—Manchester Guardian—Leek Times—Stockholms-Tidnigen—Manchester Evening News—Reading Observer.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £74 0s. 7d.

Tenth List.

P. H. Echlin, £1 1s.; High Jinks, 5s.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The *Freethinker* ran out of print again last week. We have no doubt that the distribution of our new issue of Tracts is serving as a good advertisement of the paper. We hope our friends will continue to distribute them widely. It is a very useful as well as cheap form of propaganda.

For the middle of July the Hall of Science audience on Sunday evening was a remarkably good one. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Professor Huxley on Noah's Flood" was much appreciated.

We hope the weather will be fine to-day, though wishing is not a factor in meterology. The London Secular Federation's excursion will be made to Epping Forest. The Branches run their own contingents, but a special one for unattached

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members of the N. S. S., or other members who are too far removed from any Branch starting point, will proceed from the Hall of Science at half-past nine in the morning. Mr. Foote hopes to join this party. The price of the tickets is half-a-crown.

A common tea will be provided at the "King's Oak," and it is hoped that *all* the excursionists will put in an appearance. After the tea there will be a few brief speeches, and the brakes will then drive homewards. No special provision is made for diners, but the landlord will provide some accommodation at a venture.

Mr. Charles Watts, formerly of London, and now of Toronto, is on a visit to England. He lectures at the London Hall of Science to-night (July 20), and there should be a good audience. Many years have passed since the break between Mr. Watts and his colleagues on the N. S. S. During the latter half of the period Mr. Watts has done brave service for Freethought in America. He has lectured and debated indefatigably, he has been largely instrumental in establishing the Canadian Secular Union, and he is conducting a journal called *Secular Thought* very creditably under what appear to be grave difficulties. Considering these facts, it seems only just that Mr. Watts should be welcomed as a trusted representative of Canadian Freethought. Those who disapproved Mr. Watts' course in 1877—and we know they were many—should remember that thirteen years have elapsed since then, and reflect that after all he is fighting for the same cause as they are.

Mr. Bradlaugh's debate with Mr. Hyndman on the Legal Eight Hours question takes place at St. James's Hall on Wednesday, July 23. Those who wish for a reserved seat should apply to Mr. Forder at Stonecutter Street. There is sure to be a crush.

Viktor Lennstrand's new trial took place on Tuesday, July 8, at Stockholm. The same day we received a brief telegram from Captain Thomson—"*Lennstrand the fifth time freed by jury.*" This is indeed good news, not only for Lennstrand's own sake, but also for the sake of the cause. *Swedish juries will not convict.* A conviction can only be obtained in the King's Court, where public sentiment is not represented by juries, and where venal or bigoted judges are only too anxious to please the Crown. During the whole of Lennstrand's persecution the King of Sweden—with, it is said, his wife—has played an ignominious part. He makes a great pretence of "culture," but he seems ready enough to suppress advanced ideas. After all, however, kings, courts and legions are powerless against the march of thought.

We do not know the London correspondent of the New York *Truthseeker*, or even his name. He signs himself "J. D." In the latest number to hand he refers to the N. S. S., and says it is "evidently gaining in strength and numbers." "The active management of Mr. Foote," he adds, "has borne good fruit so far, and there is no reason why the Society should not go on and prosper, and make itself a power in the land."

Two important works are just issued from our office. One is a reprint of the first two chapters, with their voluminous notes, from Jeremy Bentham's "Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation." It deals with the ethics of Utility, and we have called it *Utilitarianism*. The other reprint is a larger one—*The Church of England Catechism Examined*. This is a remorseless attack on the Church Catechism, showing how it tends to corrupt morality and turn children into fools or rogues. Bentham's friend, Sir Samuel Romilly, predicted a prosecution, but it never came. Perhaps the authorities feared to fly at such high game. Some passages would still be regarded as blasphemous by an ordinary jury. So much for the work itself. By way of Preface a brief biography of Bentham is supplied by Mr. Wheeler, who has unearthed in the British Museum some striking proofs of Bentham's utter scepticism.

In reply to several inquirers we beg to state once more that the new edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* is *new* in the fullest sense of the word. Number I., for instance, has been entirely rewritten and very much amplified; indeed the eight pages of the old edition have been extended to sixteen. The type used is the same as that of Bible Heroes, so as to make the two works uniform. Two fresh numbers will be ready on August 1—*Eve and the Apple* and *Cain and Abel*. These will be eight pages each, price one penny. The only other double number will be *Noah's Flood*.

The last four of our Tracts (Nos. 17 to 20) are now ready, and orders can be executed for any quantity, singly or assorted. Before long we shall issue others, our object being to provide for every variety of taste.

A cabman called at our publishing office last Saturday. "Here you are," he said, holding out a shilling, "Professor —— has just given me this over my fare; I'll take six *Freethinkers* and a hundred Tracts to distribute to-morrow."

Mr. Forder has just sent out ten pounds' worth of our publications to Kimberley (South Africa), where a member of the N. S. S. has opened an agency for the sale of Freethought literature.

Mr. Gott, a member of the N. S. S. at Bradford, has set an excellent example that might be imitated by other friends. He has purchased from Mr. Forder, at trade price, two pounds' worth of our publications, and has handed them over to a local bookseller, to whom he gives all the profit. Encore.

Manlio Garibaldi, the youngest son of the Italian hero, is betrothed to the daughter of the distinguished Freethinking anthropologist and senator, Paolo Mantegazza.

A precedent for dealing with Church property has arisen in the United States, where Senator Edmunds has secured the passage of his bill devoting the property of the Mormon Church to education in Utah. If this, as is probable, is ratified by Congress and not vetoed by the President, it will not only strip the Church, but use its money for purposes it opposes.

How the whirligig of Time brings its revenges! Nearly a century ago Shelley was expelled from Oxford. Now the great Shelley Concordance, compiled by Mr. F. S. Ellis, is being printed at the University Press. It will be issued on the hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth, August 4, 1892.

The West Ham Branch held its quarterly meeting last Sunday morning. The Committee's report showed a continued advance. Eight new members have been made during the quarter, bringing the total on the books to one hundred and three. One pound ten shillings has been paid off the debt owing to the treasurer, and the balance-sheet shows an invested capital of over £20. The president, treasurer, secretary and many of the committee were re-elected. We are contributing two brakes to the Federation excursion, and a number of our members will reach King's Oak by train.—E. Anderson, Hon. Sec.

The half-yearly general meeting of the Portsmouth Branch of the N. S. S., was held on Thursday July 10th. The balance-sheet showing a favorable balance was read and adopted. The following new officers were elected:—President, Mr. G. J. Hore; Treasurer, Mr. Stapely; Secretary, Mr. Janaway. The former is also M.C., and his address is 41 Mayo Street, Buckland. The Secretary's address is 16 St. Paul's Road, Southsea. The members present desired to thank the delegates at the Conference for conferring an honor upon the Branch, by electing Mr. Brumage "the father of the Branch," as a vice-president. The idea of a Southern Federation was brought forward. The greatest difficulty in carrying out this idea, which has been so successful in London and the North, is that the Southern Branches are so few and far between. The nearest branch—Southampton—being 21 miles distant. After a very lengthy discussion, it was decided to appoint a committee to consider the matter.—W. Janaway, Sec.

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

Design or the adaptation of means to an end, supposes a limited power. Why do we adapt means to ends? Because by them only can the ends be attained. In other words, we are restricted to the employment of these means, otherwise we cannot have the end.—*Jeremy Bentham.*

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HYMN TO SATAN.

FRANK SEWALL'S interesting article on the Italian poet, Carducci, in the current number of *Harper's Magazine*, contains a spirited translation of the "Hymn to Satan" which excited such a rage in clerical and conservative circles. We reproduce the poem in this English dress for our readers. Satan must be taken to personify the principles opposed to Christian faith and asceticism—the belief in reason and human happiness.

To thee my verses,
Unbridled and daring,
Shall mount, O Satan,
King of the banquet.

Away with thy sprinkling,
O Priest, and thy droning,
For never shall Satan,
O Priest, stand behind thee.

See how the rust is
Gnawing the mystical
Sword of St. Michael;
And how the faithful

Wind-plucked archangel
Falls into emptiness!
Frozen the thunder in
Hand of Jehovah.

Like to pale meteors, or
Planets exhausted,
Out of the firmament
Rain down the angels.

Here in the matter
Which never sleeps,
King of phenomena,
King of all forms,

Thou, Satan, livest!
Thine is the empire
Felt in the dark eyes'
Tremulous flashing,

Whether their languishing
Glances resist, or,
Glittering and tearful, they
Call and invite.

How shine the clusters
With happy blood,
So that the furious
Joy may not perish!

So that the languishing
Love be restored,
And sorrow be banished
And love be increased!

Thy breath, O Satan,
My verses inspires
When from my bosom
The gods I defy

Of Kings pontifical,
Of Kings inhuman:
Thine is the lightning that
Sets minds to shaking.

For thee Arimane,
Adonis, Astarte;
For thee lived the marbles,
The pictures, the parchments,

When the fair Venus
Anaidomene
Blessed the Ionian
Heavens serene.

For thee were roaring the
Forests of Lebanon,
Of the fair Cyprian
Lover reborn;

For thee rose the chorus,
For thee raved the dances,
For thee the pure shining
Loves of the virgins,

Under the sweet-odored
Palms of Idume,
Where break in white foam
The Cyprian waves.

What if the barbarous
Nazarene fury,
Fed by the base rites
Of secret feastings,

Lights sacred torches
To burn down the temples,
Scattering abroad
The scrolls hieroglyphic?

In thee find refuge
The humble-roofed plebs,
Who have not forgotten
The gods of their household.

Thence comes the power,
Fervid and loving, that,
Filling the quick-throbbing
Bosom of woman,

Turns to the succor
Of nature enfeebled,
A sorceress pallid,
With endless care laden.

Thou to the trance-holden
Eye of the alchemist,
Thou to the view of the
Bigoted mago,

Showest the lightning-flash
Of the new time
Shining behind the dark
Bars of the cloister.

Seeking to fly from thee
Here in the world-life
Hides him the gloomy monk
In Theban deserts.

O soul that wanderest
Far from the straight way,
Satan is merciful.
See Héloïsa.

In vain you wear yourself
Thin in rough gown; I
Still murmur the verses
Of Maro and Flaccus

Amid the Davidic
Psalming and wailing;
And—Delphic figures
Close to thy side—

Rosy, amid the dark
Cowls of the friars,
Enters Licorida,
Enters Glicera.

Then other images
Of days more fair
Come to dwell with thee
In thy secret cell.

Lo! from the pages of
Livy, the Tribunes
All ardent, the Consuls,
The crowds tumultuous,

Awake; and the fantastic
Pride of Italian
Drives thee, O monk,
Up to the Capitol;

And you, whom the flaming
Pyre never melted,
Conjuring voices,
Wiclif and Huss,

Send to the broad breeze
The cry of the watchman:
"The age renews itself;
Full is the time!"

Already tremble
The mitres and crowns.
Forth from the cloister
Moves the rebellion.

Under his stole, see,
Fighting and preaching,
Brother Girolamo
Savonarola.

Off goes the tunic
Of Martin Luther;
Off go the fetters
That bound human thought.

It flashes and lightens,
Girdled with flame.
Matter, exalt thyself!
Satan has won!

A fair and terrible
Monster unchained
Courses the oceans,
Courses the earth;

Flashing and smoking,
Like the volcanoes, he
Climbs over mountains,
Ravages plains,

Skims the abysses;
Then he is lost
In unknown caverns
And ways profound.

Till lo! unconquered,
From shore to shore,
Like to the whirlwind,
He sends forth his cry.

Like to the whirlwind
Spreading its wings . . .
He passes, O people,
Satan the great!

Hail to thee, Satan!
Hail, the Rebellion!
Hail, of the reason the
Great Vindicator!

Sacred to thee shall rise
Incense and vows!
Thou hast the god
Of the priests disenthroned!

MR. BRADLAUGH NEARLY CAUGHT.

Some of Mr. Bradlaugh's shoemaking constituents at Northampton were immensely chagrined a few days ago when it leaked out that the Freethought idol had been coquetting with the Church, and that he had actually contributed handsomely—for a man in his position—to a Church of England organisation. It came about in this way. The "National" band of Rushden, a thriving little town in Mr. Channing's division, wrote to the junior member for Northampton asking him for a subscription to their funds. Rushden, with its 6,000 inhabitants, boasts of three bands, one of which has just won the champion prize for the county. Locally, the "National" band is known as the "Church Band," because of its close connection with the parish church. Mr. Bradlaugh, whose aspirations are "National," and not "Churchly," wrote, in response to the application, that he held six shares in the Rushden Hotel and Coffee Tavern Company, which he was disposed to give them when the preliminary arrangements for their transfer could be made.

Of course, it soon became known that Bradlaugh, the "un-Christian member for Northampton," had actually promised aid to a Church of England band. The other Rushden bands (there are two) were dismayed, and his most ardent supporters began to wonder whether "Bishop Bradlaugh" was an impossibility after all. A friend—evidently not of the Church Band, but of Mr. Bradlaugh—wrote to the hon. gentleman a few particulars about the Rushden bands, and delicately hinted that at last Mr. Bradlaugh had either made a mistake or had been caught napping. Mr. Bradlaugh very quickly replied:—"You are quite accurate in your letter. I imagined that the band was the Temperance Band, and did not dream that the Church party had the impudence to apply to me. I therefore send you the transfer of my shares in blank, to be filled up either to yourself or to any one you may appoint for the Temperance Band."—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

FINAL ARRANGEMENTS *RE* EXCURSION.

BRAKES leave Hall of Science at 9.30. Tickets will be on sale at the Hall from 8 to 10 on Friday evening, after which none will be sold.

The various contingents will meet at the "Greyhound," Lea Bridge Road, at 10.30, and proceed to "King's Oak" Hotel, High Beech.

Tea will be served in the large saloon at five o'clock sharp. Charge, ninepence per head, to members of our party only.

Friends desiring to travel by train may book to Loughton from Fenchurch Street, by trains leaving at 9.58; or from Liverpool Street at 9.53 and 10.40 a.m. May also book to Chingford by trains leaving Liverpool Street at 9.12, 9.40, 10.10, 10.32 and at intervals of about half an hour. Conveyances may always be had from Chingford Station to the "King's Oak" Hotel. EDMD. POWNCEBY, Secretary.

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A CHINESE CHRIST.

Sir A. Lyall, in his interesting account of official Polytheism in China, tells how the Chinese government, while dispassionately patronising numerous beliefs on the sole condition of retaining supreme authority over all of them, vigorously puts down modern claims to supernaturalism. The following is from the *Pekin Gazette* :—"A memoral from the governor of Kneichow reports the capture in that province of the chief of a seditious gang, and his execution. He was by trade a carpenter, who picked up in a ruined temple a mutilated book of incantations, and set up as a healer of diseases by the recitation of charms. He placed in his room a bowl of pure water, before which he engaged in worship, morning and evening, and further took to himself twelve disciples, who used to join in daily worship. Having imbued these disciples, with a number of theories and told them false stories which they took to be true, he ordered each to take to themselves twelve other disciples, that these might again augment their numbers, and raise a large following. Eventually it was decided to organise a rising, but before the movement could be well matured it came to the notice of the authorities."

The unfortunate carpenter was executed, leaving it doubtful whether the story of the intended rising was not invented as an excuse for getting rid of an enthusiast. History does not entirely repeat itself, or we may imagine enthusiastic followers giving out a story of the carpenter's resurrection and under general expectation of the end of the world, extending their influence until officially recognised by the Empire. For the Chinese government thoroughly endorse the definition of Hobbes that "Feare of power invisible feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publiquely allowed, is Religion; not allowed, Superstition."

ANOTHER REASON!

At a Sunday School the clergyman attempted to illustrate his point by using the figure of water supply to a dwelling. "For instance," quoth he, "I want to introduce water into my house. I turn it on. The pipes and faucets and every convenience are in good order, but I get no water. Can any of you tell me why I do not get any water?" He expected the children to say that it was because he had not made a connection with the main in the street. The boys looked perplexed. They could not see why the water should refuse to run in his premises after such faultless plumbing. "Can no one tell me what I have neglected?" reiterated the good man, looking over the flock of wondering faces bowed down by the weight of the problem. "I know," squeaked a little five-year-old: "you don't pay up!"

A LONG-WINDED PSALM.

A country minister, on entering the pulpit one Sunday morning remembered that he had left his sermon on his study table. He gave out the 119th Psalm, and went away for the purpose of getting it. Being an inveterate smoker, he could not resist the temptation of having a few whiffs of the pipe which was lying at hand, and under its soothing influence he fell sound asleep. He was awakened some time after by the beadle bursting into the room and shaking him roughly by the arm, exclaiming at the same time, "Come awa', sir, come awa'; they've warsled on to the 170th verse, and they're a squakin' like mice."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Mamma, can I wear my silk dress in heaven?" "No child; dresses will not be worn there." "Well, ma, how will the Lord know I belonged to the best society?"

One of the North American Christianised Indians had a great partiality for the Blessed Sacrament, and took every opportunity of partaking. Being spoken to on the subject he said, "Yes, I love my Jesus, but"—with a leer—"rum is better."

Mother: "John, you went to church as usual to-day?" Son: "Yes, mother." Mother: "What was the text?" Son: "Well, er—you see I didn't get there in time to hear the text." Mother: "What was the gist of the sermon?" Son: "I can't tell. You see, mother, I came out just before he got to the gist."

Oldboy: "I am heartily glad to find you so much better." Dumley: "Yes, I have been a very sick man, but I am all right now, thanks to Dr. Pilsbury." Oldboy: "You should rather say 'thanks to Providence,' for it was Providence that wrought your cure." Dumley: "Well you just wait and see who sends in the bill."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Branch N. S. S.—At 8 a.m., brakes start from Park Gates for High Beech; tickets 2s. 6d. Social evening every Monday at 8. Thursday, at 8 sharp, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Religion and Morality."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. Charles Watts, "Unbelief: a Plea for Mental Liberty."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Gospel of Freethought."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Heaford, "Truth, Justice, and Liberty, in Relation to Christianity."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring will lecture.

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Man."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ."

Hammersmith Bridge, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Secularism."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "An Hour with Moses." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. G Standring, "God and Immortality." Monday, at 7.30, debate between the Rev. Mr. Brennan and Mr. Small, "The Rewards and Punishments of the Bible."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Romans xii., 1, 2."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Plain Truth about the Bible."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "An Hour with Jesus."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, a lecture.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, Annual Excursion, to High Beech, brakes start from pier at 9.

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Miracles of the Old Testament: are they True?"

COUNTRY.

Chester-le-Street—Business meeting at Mr. Gray's, Old Pilton, at 6.30, to make arrangements for annual pic-nic to Durham on August 3.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, an important business meeting which all members are requested to attend.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11.30, meeting of members and supporters to consider new hall scheme; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "An Enemy hath done this."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans will lecture.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7.30, a meeting to arrange for annual outing.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, a meeting.

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, a lecture.

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "Origin of Species"; 7, "Evolution and Creation"; tea at 5 o'clock.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Vicar's Croft, 3, Mr. J. Grange, "Does Man Survive Death?" On Hunslet Moor, at 7, Mr. H. W. Riley, "Secularism more Progressive than Christianity."

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Ernest Evans will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—July 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park; 27, North-East Secular Federation tour. August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—July 20, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—July 20, Sheffield. August 3, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 10 (morning), Camberwell; 24 (morning), Plaistow. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell; 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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CRUMBLING CREEDS.

IT was well remarked by Mr. Bradlaugh, in his last theological debate, that no one ever sees a religion die. Nevertheless religions do die. Their decease is a long process, and it has no exact period. Little by little they disappear, little by little the new gathers round the relics of the old. But the time comes when the system has perished, and for ever. There is no resurrection for dead creeds.

The truth of Mr. Bradlaugh's aphorism, however, has its limits. Literally its truth is absolute. No man, except the great general, sees the whole of a single battle; and who can see, in the span of a life-time, the whole of a battle which rages through generations, and perhaps through centuries? Yet history, and imagination working upon its revelations, come to our aid, and enable us to see "in the mind's eye" what is invisible to the organ of sense. Thus the long death of a religion may be witnessed, every phase of its dissolution followed, and the point discerned when its epitaph might be written.

The student of history knows that the Christian religion has been breaking up ever since the Revival of Learning. Just as Christianity arose in the twilight of Pagan civilisation, and flourished in the succeeding night, so it began to wane in the young light of a new day. Centuries have since rolled by, and Christianity is still here; and, sustained by this knowledge, the Christian may wreathe his lip with scorn. But Paganism survived for centuries the knell of its doom. Generation followed generation, even after the day of Constantine, yet Paganism lingered where it was not forcibly suppressed, and even after the conversion of the Northern nations it lurked under the magic and witchcraft of the Middle Ages. We might go back even earlier than the first spread of Christianity, and see that Paganism was dying before the star of Bethlehem appeared. Rival superstitions crept into the Roman world from the East, and philosophy took the place of religion in the minds of the educated classes. Yet the Pagan temples continued to lift their columns in proud beauty, the priests were still numerous and powerful, and everything went on as though the old system were as secure as the everlasting hills. Ages after Cato wondered how two Roman augurs could look each other in the face without laughing, sacrifices were performed, the victims' entrails were inspected, the oracles gave forth their dubious prophecies, and wealth was poured into the hands of swarms of priests. Indeed, it may be said that Paganism was never wealthier than just before its downfall, and that it left a splendid spoil to its lucky successor.

One need not be surprised, therefore, at the present condition of Christianity. It is enormously rich, and its power is apparently tremendous; but the sphere of its influence is, in reality, ever contracting. The Pope is still at Rome, but the State holds him in pawn in the Vatican, and though he cries for aid, no one will come to his assistance. St. Peter's thunders are impotent against the cannon and rifles of King Amadeo. The sword of the flesh is stronger than the sword of the spirit. In Germany there is a parade of Christianity, but only the court and the peasantry are in the fold of faith. Educated men and workmen are nearly all outside. In France the spectacle is grievous to the friends of religion. Even in Spain, although the Church is as insolent as ever, she is being gradually crippled, and scepticism is spreading like wild-fire in the universities and the great towns. In England the State Church is strong and wealthy, but it feels its life is threatened. The Catholic Church is only gaining as the Establishment loses. The Nonconformist bodies have crowds of ministers and large incomes, but they are always sounding notes of alarm. They hear the approach of the strong man who is to take their possessions. All admit that the masses of the people are "lapsed." Desperate efforts to retrieve them are attended with no success. But this is not all, nor the worst. When the *mind* of the age sets away from Christianity, the only hope for the old creeds is to grasp power once more, and crush out the heresy with blood. But the day for thorough-going persecution is past. Old laws against Freethought may be retained, but they are seldom employed actively, and no new ones will be enacted. Yes, it is the *mind* of man the creeds have now to face—the Spirit of the Age, whose presence is obvious in a thousand directions. You cannot read a sermon, or scan a religious paper, without seeing that the Churches are all aware of the terrible foe who is winding about them like an invisible serpent.

Only the Salvation Army is serene. It trades upon strong inherited instincts of superstition in the depths of brutal ignorance. Every other body is disturbed. Even the Catholic Church, at least in England, is pursuing the only method of temporary salvation. That method is *adjustment*. Under the stern law of Natural Selection, which governs all—animals, men, gods, and creeds—everything must adjust itself to live. A species may not vary for milleniums, and a creed may change very little for centuries. But when the environment alters, the species, or the creed, must adjust itself or die.

Catholic writers like Professor Mivart are practising this method of adjustment with great diligence. They have an immense advantage over Protestants in possessing an infallible Church which *interprets* the infallibility of the Bible, and is able to give it any turn to suit the exigencies of the moment. Professor Mivart is ready to find Darwinism in the Bible. He is also ready to find that all the absolute Word of God in it might be written in a waistcoat pocket-book. This clever trick will not succeed with strong-minded people, who know that infallible Churches are as absurd as infallible Books. Nor will it succeed with those who are familiar with ecclesiastical history, and who know that the infallible Church has often blundered, often contradicted itself, often been torn with internicine strife, and has sometimes put in the papal chair, as God's vicegerent

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on earth, monsters of lust, avarice and cruelty. But the majority of men are not strong-minded, and have little acquaintance with history. They are without that knowledge of the past which Mr. Morley says "saves us from imposture and surprise." It will not be astonishing, therefore, if many of them, who are too ignorant, weak, and timid to think for themselves, should accept the Catholic adjustment to the conditions of modern thought, letting the Church decide for them how the Bible is to be read and understood, reposing their faithful heads on the bosom of Mother Church, and heeding her dogmatic voice as the perennial oracle of God. G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be continued.*)

CHRIST AND MUTILATION.

CHRISTIAN readers have probably been horrified at reading in the papers the extract from the recently issued report of the Lunacy Commissioners, disclosing a painful case of religious mania in Bethlehem Hospital. The extract is as follows:

"A lady patient, who, before admission, had cut off her right hand and had tried to pluck out her right eye under religious delusion, finally succeeded in removing that eye. Her only hand had been placed in a canvas locked glove, and she was in bed and constantly visited, but with her teeth she so tore the glove as to free the hand, and with the fingers of that hand she gouged out the eye. The patient is still insane, though the immediate effect of the injury was to produce a feeling of calm and happiness, from her belief that she had obeyed the Biblical command."

Here is a case of deplorable madness arising from accepting the doctrines of Jesus Christ in their natural and literal meaning. Jesus said "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire" (Matt. xviii., 8-9. See also Matt. v., 29-30, and Mark ix., 43-48). We know Christians now say these injunctions are metaphorical, but in our view there is no insanity in construing them literally, but only in supposing them to be divine and carrying them out. Insanity lies in the first place with any teacher using words so liable to be taken literally. For the literal interpretation coincides with the general character of the teaching of Jesus concerning hell-fire.* If the plucking out of the eye is metaphorical, then everlasting fire and eternal life are also metaphorical, that is literally unrealities. Christians, refined by civilisation, perceive the barbarity of the injunction to mutilate their bodies, and therefore rather than call in question the wisdom of their idol, assume that he spoke in metaphorical language, without seeing that this undermines the literal truth of the most important dogmas of their church. If there is, as Christians assert, the fearful alternative of eternal misery, the actual loss of an eye or a hand is of trifling consequence, nay if their loss saves from eternal fire it is a veritable mercy. Christians suppose that by hands, feet, and eyes Jesus simply meant the lust of those members. It would follow that when he spoke of entering into life "with one eye" he meant with one lust. But Christians do not believe that we can enter heaven with any lust at all neither do they hold that it is our lusts instead of our bodies and souls that are burnt and tormented in hell-fire.

Jesus, it will be remembered, also approved of those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew xix., 12). The learned and devout Origen was no literal-minded man. On the contrary, he allegorised most of the Old Testament stories. Yet he held that the injunctions of Jesus on this point were positive, and made himself an eunuch. Gibbon tells us "Before the fame of Origen had excited envy and persecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than censured." Logically so, for when desire was imputed as a crime and marriage as a defect, celibacy was regarded as the nearest approach to divine perfection. The general attitude of early Christianity towards the body was to regard it simply as the vehicle of sin. To despise and subdue it became a duty.

In considering the question as to whether these passages were intended to be taken literally we cannot forget that in ancient times the practice of mutilation was very common. As a punishment in England the nailing of ears to the pillory in such a manner that by the motion of the body they would be torn off, we believe was only abolished in 1837, although it had long ceased to be employed. In Oriental countries where polygamy prevails, the making of eunuchs to supply the position of harem attendants is common. In especial the Jews by their practice of circumcision were embued with the idea of bodily mutilation as an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. In India ascetics have from the earliest times spent much ingenuity in devising tortures intended to subdue the body to the control of the Spirit, and it is recorded of Buddha that seeing one of these men seated on knives, he said it was in vain to seek freedom from the bonds of lust that way, it must be rooted out from the heart. To our mind this saying was saner and wiser than the ones we have cited from Jesus.

The Russian sect of the Skoptski accept these teachings literally.* Men are made eunuchs and women have their breasts cauterised for the glory of God. Like the poor insane woman whose case is recorded in the report of the Lunacy Commissioners they find their warrant in holy scripture. If the plain and literal signification of God's word was not his actual meaning, surely it was possible for him to have expressed that meaning exactly and without the possibility of a mistake. J. M. WHEELER.

* See my pamphlet, *The Christian Doctrine of Hell.*

* See *Freethinker*, Sept. 22, 1889.

CATHOLIC PRIVILEGES IN AMERICA.

We do not know—no one knows, because the statistics are concealed—the enormous amounts of money the states give to the churches. In this city alone it is about two millions annually. In all the states the amount must be fabulous. The exemptions are still more costly to the people—something like 30,000,000 worth of exempt church property. So burdensome has this financial union become in Maryland that the last legislature passed a bill submitting a proposed amendment to the clause of the state constitution which exempts church property. The amendment provides for the taxation of all property. In Baltimore alone over fifty million dollars' worth is now exempt and the evil is so great that even some of the Methodists are clamoring to do away with this union of church and state, and are asking for impartial taxation, and seem willing to pay their taxes, because the Roman Catholics own two-thirds of the exempt property.—*Truth-seeker* (N. Y.)

Minister's Wife: "I think these church dissensions are awful, my dear, and so unnecessary." Minister: "They are not pleasant, but Deacon Jones has gone too far. If my influence, as pastor, isn't great enough to bring about his expulsion, I shall resign." Wife: "I would, indeed. What is your text for to-day?" Minister: "'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.'"

A few years ago, a pious Methodist arose in an experience meeting and gave a review of his life. When he came to the declaration, "I thank God that I owe no man anything," a quiet man in a remote corner jumped up and said: "I have a little account against you, brother, that you must have forgotten." "Ah Brother C.," said the speaker, unctuously, "I have been bankrupt twice since then."

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LOOKING BACKWARD. 1870-1890.

As every school-boy knows, people were not so liberal in respect to religious belief twenty years ago as they are to-day. The masses in England were steeped in ignorance for Mr. Foster's Education Act had not yet become law, although in this year that now admittedly beneficent measure was introduced, and passed; two or three years elapsed, however, before the compulsory clauses of the act operated with sufficient force as to be felt in its effects throughout the whole community.

One evening after an unusually hard day's work I felt so drowsy that I threw myself upon the couch, and having wriggled about until I got into an uneasy posture I dreamt a dream. I dreamt that, like Rip Van Winkle, I slept for twenty years; that I went to sleep as a youth of fifteen and woke up a man of thirty-five. When I woke, I was shown by a friend over certain parts of London that I had known when a youth, and was struck dumb with astonishment. In the place of a wretched dilapidated wooden bridge at Blackfriars, I saw a magnificent stone and iron structure worthy of an advanced age of civilisation. "Holborn Hill" had disappeared—to the advantage of the poor 'bus and cab horses that travelled in that direction—and in its place stood a splendid viaduct. The appearance of Fleet Street had undergone numerous changes. Temple Bar had vanished, and near the spot where the historic gates had stood was erected a fine statue of the Queen, which, however was somewhat marred by an unsightly figure of a Griffin. The Law Courts at Westminster had been pulled down, and a colossal building erected in the Strand to take its place.

In the evening I was taken on the roof of a friend's house and shown a number of model dwellings, which. I was informed had been specially erected to meet the requirements of the working classes. The following day being Sunday, my friend took me to a church in the neighbourhood and I listened to what seemed to me to be a very remarkable sermon. On our way home I ventured to ask my friend a few questions. "When I was a youth," I said, "the clergy used to talk a great deal about the Devil and 'Hell fire' and tell their congregations that damnation would be the fate of the majority of mankind if they did not accept God's revelation as given in the 'Holy Scriptures.'"

"Yes," my friend replied calmly, with a smile of satisfaction, "in respect to the teaching of the clergy a great change has taken place during the past twenty years. To day the Devil's name is never so much as mentioned in polite society let alone in the pulpit, and as for 'Hell fire,' that was sold at an alarming sacrifice to an ignorant and fanatical set of cranks, who started what they call a Salvation Army, and who to this day make 'day and night hideous' by extraordinary vocal and instrumental efforts that fill the hearts of the ignorant with delight, but make the judicious grieve."

"But the whole character of the sermon seems to be changed" I said, anxious to gain further information.

"No doubt that is so," replied my friend, "though the change seems to me to have come about very slowly."

"I should like you to explain the process by which some of these changes have come about. You see, having slept for twenty years they come upon me with the force of a revelation, and utterly amaze and confound my understanding."

"I daresay you are surprised at the changes that have come about in regard to religion, but you would be equally surprised if I were to tell you of the great political and social progress that has been made during the same period."

"Indeed," I replied. "But first be good enough to tell me something concerning the religious transitions to which you just referred. Have the clergy given up belief in the Bible as an 'inspired record'? When I was a boy most of them accepted the dictum of the Bishop of Ripon, who said 'The Bible is pure unadulterated truth—truth without the admixture of error.'"

"Ah, but the Bible has been revised since then, and thousands of alterations made, and most of the clergy will now admit that it still contains numerous errors? But strange to say they still cling to the doctrine of Inspiration although they give it a new interpretation."

"What is this new interpretation?"

"Well," replied my friend, "to be candid I must say that it requires a good deal of skill to describe it."

"Or a great deal of subtlety to grasp it," I suggested.

"Exactly. As I understand it, the clergy maintain that the writings of the Bible are inspired in the same sense as any other great work—for instance in the same sense as the writings of Shakespeare."

"I never heard of anybody being threatened with damnation for disbelieving in Shakespeare," I urged rather warmly.

"Nor do the more educated among the clergy threaten anybody with damnation as they did twenty years ago, but if they have occasion to speak of the subject at all, they say that the unbeliever will *probably be condemned*, but what form the condemnation will take they leave to the imagination of their hearers."

"It is a source of great satisfaction to me to learn that hell fire has cooled down to such an extent among the orthodox. Twenty years ago it was the one great doctrine of all the sects, and was shouted from the housetops. What other important change has taken place?"

"Well, the more educated among the clergy now take the ground that the Bible was never intended to teach science; that Darwin was a better authority on the descent of man than Moses; that there is a good deal of the mythical and the quasi-historical scattered through the pages of the Jewish scriptures; and farther, that the morality of the Bible was of a low order—in fact, that there is an evolution of ideas on all these subjects distinctly traceable in the scriptures."

"But how do these ideas fit in with the teachings of the New Testament. If the clergy abandon the story of the Fall what *raison d'etre* do they give for the Atonement? Twenty years ago the orthodox used to see that if you did away with the first Adam, the second Adam would be unnecessary."

"The clergy are not so logical to-day, but they are very plausible for all that."

"They believe in moving with the times, and what they lack in logic they make up for in emotion. They preach Christ as the Savior of mankind, and are always very careful to present to their hearers the supernatural as well as the human aspect of the subject."

"Do they get large congregations to hear this new doctrine?"

"The High Church party get very good congregations, not for the sermons, but more perhaps on account of the good music and singing they get in their churches."

"Tell me how the Low Church party manage."

"Oh! their congregations have fallen off considerably; the dissenters have gained immensely by this."

"And the Infidels—See, there was a man name Bradlaugh who had a few followers, what has become of him?"

"Bradlaugh! You'll scarcely believe it; he's in Parliament making great headway."

"And his followers."

"They've increased immensely, and not only his followers but Freethinkers generally have made great strides during the past twenty years."

"And who's at the head of them now?"

"A young man named Foote; he's their President and is the Editor of a paper called the *Freethinker*—"

Whack! whack! halloa what was that.? Oh nothing; I had merely rolled off the couch on to the floor and had awakened; to find that though I had been dreaming my dream was in substance founded on fact.

ARTHUR B MOSS.

THE CHURCH AND LABOR.

The Canterbury Diocesan Conference has been discussing "The Church's Duty in regard to Labor Disputes." The first speaker was a big capitalist, Mr. G. A. Spottiswoode, who denounced Trade Unions. The discussion was wound up by the Archbishop, whose "labor" is rewarded with a salary of £15,000 a year, enough to support two hundred families even at Trade Union rate of wages. The intermediate speeches were hardly worth a mention. One clergyman said a word for the just demands of working men, and was called a Socialist. We commend this debate to the attention of those who foolishly consider the Church the "friend of the poor."

THE PROPOSED SECULAR HALL FOR LIVERPOOL.

On Sunday morning a meeting of friends of the movement was held at Camden Hall, at which several projects were discussed, and it was resolved that the Committee should continue their investigations. So far the promises of support have been most encouraging, but we are anxious to ascertain what further support will be accorded to a well-considered scheme.
—C. DOEG.

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LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION'S EXCURSION.

SUNDAY, July 20th, was a red-letter day to many London Secularists. Although the previous unsettled state of the weather and remembrances of last year's drenching may have deterred some from venturing to Epping Forest, the second annual gathering was even larger than the first. Providence was in its best humor, and the glorious weather made the ride and ramble through the forest most enjoyable. After amusing and recreating themselves in their own fashion, the excursionists assembled at King's Oak, and after tea were addressed by Mr. Standring, Miss Vance and Mr. Foote, who presided. At about 7.30 all returned in good spirits, anxious only that the third annual excursion shall be still better than the second. In all there were about twenty brakes, besides smaller vehicles, and many travelled by rail. The party must have amounted to nearly five hundred.

ACID DROPS.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson stuck up for religion at the Peace Congress. This was very good of him. But what he gave with one hand he took away with the other. For he presently told the Congress that after eighteen hundred years of Christianity twenty-eight millions of armed men, including reserves, were kept in Europe to kill one another. What a beautiful fruit of religion! Is it not a rational inference that, after another eighteen hundred years of Christianity (but it won't last so long) there will be fifty-six millions of armed men kept to kill one another?

Here is the pretty sequel to Lord Salisbury's base truckling to the Papacy in allowing Papa Pecci to decide the marriage laws of Malta. The leading newspapers of the island, having made "un-Christianlike attacks" on the Pope and the Bishop of Malta, have been formally excommunicated, and Catholics are forbidden, until the removal of the ban, to sell, read, or purchase them. This is very decided boycotting; but Malta is not Ireland, the Pope is not an Irish farmer, and of course it will be tolerated. But why make so much fuss about boycotting in one part of the British empire when it is positively sanctioned in another?

This little incident throws some light on the pretences of the wily Manning. His cue is to make out, here in England, where Catholicism is in a minority, that it will never, never persecute, or do anything wrong or ungentlemanly. But this is all humbug. Let Manning's Church get the upper hand, and the insolence of Rome would soon show itself in unmistakable colors.

Mr. Stead is a passionate Christian, but he is only a half Christian after all. He shrinks from Tolstoi's new views on marriage, but, like the rest of Tolstoi's critics, he lacks either the courage or the honesty to consider the New Testament texts cited by the great Russian moralist. Of course it is easy to say, "Tolstoi is mistaken," but the only way to answer him is to show that he has misquoted or misinterpreted the language of Jesus. Anything short of that is cowardice or hypocrisy.

By the way, the passage which Protestants usually quote against Catholics declaring that "Marriage *is* honorable in all" (Heb. xiii., 4) appears to be a perversion of the meaning of the writer. Dean Alford translates it, "Let your marriage be held in honor in all things, and let your bed be undefiled." It will be seen that this version rather supports Count Tolstoi's view, while the other stands in blank opposition to it.

The ascetic character of early Christianity is much more clearly seen in the Roman Catholic versions of the New Testament. For instance, the injunction to "Repent" is in the Douay translated "Do penance," the Greek word *metanoeite*, according to the use of the scriptures and the early fathers, meaning not only repentance for past sins, but their punishment by fasting and other penitential exercises.

By the way, as Tolstoi is the father of nine or ten children, the youngest of whom is still a baby, he must deeply regret having so late discovered the impropriety of sexual intercourse. He has apparently found out the (Christian) truth in his old age, in sickness, when his passions are nearly dead, and the question (for him at least) lacks actuality. Nor have his views on property been reduced to practice. The Countess prevented his fooling his means away on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. He wanted to give all his goods to the poor, but the Countess declared she was no longer capable of earning her own living, that poverty, combined with nine children, would cause her death, and that he himself is not qualified to earn his living by manual labor. She had a hard struggle, but she triumphed, and all Tolstoi's worldly affairs are now in her hands.

The priestly party in Rome are setting up a new monument to Pope Innocent III. This is the Pope who authorised the bloody exterminating crusade against the Albigenses. Probably, however, his chief claim to remembrance by the Ultramontane party is his assertion that the pope is king of kings, and stands in the place of God.

On the 25th ult. the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, New Rochelle, N.Y., was struck by lightning. The city's fire service made valiant efforts to save the untaxed building, but divine Providence was too strong for them.

The Christians of Jonköping, Sweden, lately held a prayer-meeting in which they besought their God to help Mayor Palmgrun in the lawsuit brought against him by Henry V. Berghell, for unlawful piety, as exhibited in his preventing the latter from giving a series of lectures in said city. Of course their God will help them.

The use of confession has for some time been on the increase among High Church females, and is boldly advocated in the Ritualistic journals. This device for entangling the weak in the meshes of priestcraft, on the confession of Bishop Wilberforce, "tends fearfully to pollute the purity of family life." Yet the clergy always pretend that morals are in danger from the spread of Secularism.

The *British Weekly* is publishing "Leaves from the Diary of an Ex-Ritualist," by one who has seen how near the movement leads to Romanism.

One of our articles recently dealt with Christianity as a "religion for eunuchs." After reading the *Christian Age* for last week we feel tempted to treat of the popular faith as a religion for cowards. The *C. A.* tells us "scepticism is better than indifference. . . . for sensual contentment and spiritual sloth are the offspring of the very idolatry of Mammon; while the sceptical activity may be only the feigned bravery of the coward who whistles through the graveyard to keep his courage up. . .That all such may come to see Jesus as he is should be our prayer." Selah.

The *Christian Age* opens its arms to receive the cowards in the ranks of Freethought. It is welcome to them. Christianity, with its convenient doctrine of forgiveness of sins, is a fitting haven for cowards. They are surely out of their element in militant Secularism.

But we wonder how many graveyard whistlers the *C. A.* could find in the Freethought school. The man who dares to think for himself against the tide of popular faith, who faces social ostracism, and often pecuniary loss, by the avowal of his beliefs, is not the man to fly to the coward's castle over which floats the flag of "Sauve qui peut."

A correspondent of the *Christian World* gives a striking account of the Christian charity displayed at the bogus tomb of Christ:—"Among the crowds who gather in the porch of the Holy Church and worship under its dome there are twenty rivals and not two brothers. A pilgrim from one country believes the pilgrim from another country to be a heretic and a scoundrel; the monk of one mount scowls on the monk of another mount as a man who is hurrying to his bed of everlasting fire. What a Catholic peasant of Connemara thinks of a Presbyterian tradesman in Derry is something fraternal compared with the bitterness with which a Romish priest speaks of a Greek ecclesiastic

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or an Armenian pastor of a Copt. With each it is a shrug and a curse. Every friar in Jerusalem believes that a Protestant is damned beyond hope of mercy, entirely beyond the pale of salvation. It is in this fierce spirit that Christians judge each other at the tomb of Christ. Greek meets Nestorian, Latin encounters Copt, on a spot which each professes to revere, asserting that his fellow believer is a stranger and intruder into the holy house, whose presence in the shrine is an abomination in the sight of God. Hence their only salutation is a scrowl of hate, and their worship a scuffle which but for the presence of a Turkish guard would end in bloodshed and murder."

How the old Bible chronology is played out! Here is the *Christian World*, for instance, reviewing a recent volume edited by Prof. Sayce, and referring to some Assyrian tablets by which "the authentic history of the world has been pushed back already to a date little short of the year ascribed by the orthodox Biblical chronologists to the creation."

The *Christian World* quotes David Hume's sentence that the State should "bribe the indolence" of the spiritual guides by giving them liberal salaries. Our contemporary thinks this an argument against a State Church. Hume did not. He simply wanted to keep the "spiritual guides" out of mischief. The same thought was in Gibbon's mind when he said that, to a philosophic eye, the virtues of the clergy were more dangerous than their vices.

There is "profound grief" in Methodist New Connexion circles. It appears that last year's labors in the home circuits have been "so small," and the Annual Committee has issued a circular calling on the churches to "set apart the third Sunday in July as a day of special prayer and consecration." But what on earth is the Lord to do? He cannot give all the churches a big increase. At present he is looking after the Catholic Church on the one side, and the Salvation Army on the other.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, Ward Beecher's successor, says that if a young man comes to him saying he has lost his faith, he asks the doubter what he has been reading, and finds it is Herbert Spencer in philosophy, Matthew Arnold in literature, and Byron in poetry. Having diagnosed the malady, Dr. Abbott proceeds to apply the cure. Does he answer the arguments that have overturned the young man's faith? Oh no. He is far too canny for that. He knows it cannot be done. His method is to divert the young man's mind, by setting him to read Browning and Tennyson, and the biographies of Bushnell and Robertson. All this, of course, is very fine—in its way. But there is one thing Dr. Abbott forgets, and that is, to tell us how many young men he has cured by this evasive treatment.

The Rev. John McNeill, the "Scotch Spurgeon," after being for fifteen months the pastor of Regent Square Church, seems likely to quit it for fresh woods and pastures new. For the third time he has had "a call" from Westminster Chapel, and this time he thinks there is something in it. It may be, he tells his elders and deacons, an indication of God's leading him to a larger sphere; and the matter is to be settled after Mr. McNeill's holiday. Thus do the men of God hear the voice of God in the whisper of their own ambition. When the jargon of piety is seen through, their motives are as those of ordinary people—sometimes *very* ordinary people.

Father Barry's address at the Catholic Truth Conference on "The Church and the Masses," is printed in full in the *Weekly Register*. Father Barry sees that the mass of Englishmen are not Christian on Sundays and still less on week days. He, however, thinks the laboring class is not anti-Christian, though "there is a small and energetic propaganda of Atheism." "Of late years," he continues, "I observe a marked tendency to Secularism, by which I understand the treatment of social questions exclusively in their temporal aspects, without reference to divine law or to another life."

Dr. Barry admits that this Secularism is growing, and will grow. In this we have the honor to agree with him. We think it will grow to the extent of displacing his Church, and though we also agree with him in saying "the moment is critical and the issue undecided," we have every confidence that Secularism will triumph as the survival of the fittest.

The *Times*, in a leader on the Salvation Army, describes the movement as "revivalism made spectacular and furnished with a disciplinary organisation." It notices the proneness of English pietists to stirring revivalism, but does not see that this is but a survival of savage expression of religion.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet* persuades the faithful not to go and see the Passion Play, which it says "does harm." Its chief offence seems to be that the *rôle* of J C., as performed by Meyer, "appears like a plea for Unitarianism." We should think that, however performed, it would be difficult to reconcile the action of a man with that of a deity.

Some ministers say
In a mild, begging way
They've no use for notes when they speak,
But don't you forget
There was never one yet
Who didn't want bank notes each week.

Judas Iscariot has long since been whitewashed as a fervent and believing apostle, who only gave his master up to the authorities in order that he might more effectively display his divine nature and convert the rulers from the unbelief with which they regarded his mission. Prebendary Harry Jones thinks that the turn of Barabbas for the whitewash brush has arrived. He contends that Barabbas was a large-spirited and popular patriot, and that it was quite natural that the Jews should clamor for his release. The fact that it is said Barabbas was a robber need not trouble Prebendary Jones, for the patriotic party of the Sicarri were all called robbers. In this aspect it seems no wonder that the Jews should have preferred the release of a patriot to that of a dreamy visionary.

The Census Bill provides that Sunday, April 5, 1891, shall be the Census day. That is the day every householder must fill up the forms which have previously been left, with an account of the persons residing in the house on that day. The collectors will call for the returns on the day following. There will be no religious census.

The papers have been laughing at the German Jews for prosecuting one of their Rabbis for smoking a cigar on Saturday, unaware that, in accordance with the law of Moses, a man was put to death for picking up sticks upon that day.

Professor Freeman, in the *Speaker*, says we have no reason to believe that the prophets of Baal were not perfectly sincere. We should think not, indeed. They cut themselves with knives, which is a great deal more suffering than most of the Christian clergy are prepared to undergo for Jesus. When a man "makes incision" and draws his own blood, it seems very strange to suspect his sincerity.

Dr. Goe, Bishop of Melbourne, tells his clergy not to recognise the New Divorce Law. They must not re-marry divorced persons, and if such persons re-marry elsewhere they are to be treated as in a state of sin and repelled from the communion. We are delighted to hear it. We always welcome every sign of hostility between the Church and the secular laws of the State, especially when the laws are approved by an overwhelming majority of sensible men and women.

The London *Echo* thinks Bishop Goe is acting within his rights because the Church is not established in Victoria. We believe, however, that the churches are licensed for the celebration of marriage, and if they are in conflict with the law of the State it seems reasonable to make them submit or take away their privileges.

The Review of Reviews gives some curious extracts from "a very remarkable article" by the Rev. Charles Starbuck in the *Andover Review*. One of the extracts is "very remarkable" indeed, and it shows the writer to be a very remarkable liar. After pointing out that Mr Gladstone, the Christian statesman, may be followed by Mr. Morley, the

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Freethought statesman, Mr. Starbuck begins to conjecture what will happen afterwards. He expects to find in Mr. Morley's successor "some more refined Bradlaugh of the next century, who will be ready to carry out the recommendation of the present Bradlaugh, to prohibit religion, and punish parents who shall teach it to their children." Our readers do not need to be told that Mr. Bradlaugh never said anything of the kind; he has always said the very opposite. We only quote Mr. Starbuck's words to show the depth of infamy to which clergymen will descend without a shudder.

When a Freethinker receives periodical invitations by post to subscribe to local gospel-shops, he naturally wonders at the indiscrimate methods of Christian cadging. One of our readers send us a begging circular from the managers of St. Paul's Church, Upper Norwood, from which it appears that there is a pressing need of "ventilation." That is a very common necessity. Christianity altogether needs a great deal of ventilation, and we are doing our share of the work without asking Christians for a halfpenny. But "ventilation" is not the only thing wanted at St. Paul's, Upper Norwood. The Church is "seriously affected by dry rot." Of course it is. Every Christian church is more or less affected in that way; and on the whole it is about the driest rot on record.

We don't intend to give the managers of St. Paul's, Upper Norwood, any cash to cure their dry rot; but we shall be happy to supply the congregation with a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* gratis. This is the cheapest method of curing dry rot.

Mr. G. A. Sala relates that in 1875, in Belgium, at a village fair, he bought a little bundle of straw, which he was informed was part of the identical truss on which Pope Pius IX. lay in the dungeon to which he had been consigned by the wicked usurper who called himself the King of Italy. Like many other relics it was a complete fraud. The straw, of course, came from the neighborhood, and Pius IX. was never in prison. But just as much might be said of the thousands of relics that are still peddled in Europe by underlings of the Catholic Church.

T. W. Porter, grocer and sub-postmaster of Southery, was sentenced at the Norfolk assizes to ten years' penal servitude for embezzling Post-office deposits and falsifying the accounts. He was a leading member of the local Wesleyan Methodist body.

George Duckett, colporteur and conductor of religious meetings at the North Town Mission Rooms, Maidenhead, is remanded for trial on a charge of attempting to commit an unnatural offence on a youth named Ravel. When arrested by the police, Duckett was in bed with a boy named Morris.

The Rev. Andrew Gardiner, of the Glebe Presbyterian Church, Sydney, who filled the office of Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, having committed adultery with one of the members of his congregation, has been forced to leave for America. He has left his wife and family to the care of the Lord.

A Mr. Hope, of Edinburgh, has recently left a large sum of money for the purpose of preventing Scotland from being deluged by Popery. The Rev. Jacob Trimmer, of Dunfermline, and the Rev. Robert Thomson, of Glasgow, are determined to earn the money. Last Sunday they started their crusade in the Queen's Park, Holyrood, Edinburgh, and the proceedings resulted in a free fight between Protestants and Catholics. Sticks were used freely, and a large staff of police had to charge the crowd with drawn bâtons.

The Rev. A. Collier, 102 High Road, Chiswick, works on the principle that fools and their money are soon parted. He advertises an "Easy Biblical Competition," with prizes from five pounds to ten shillings, for those counting most correctly the letter "S" in Hebrews. As the entrance fee is one shilling, it is easy—in fact, a good deal easier than the competition—to see that a few thousand competitors will yield a big profit to the enterprising Collier. For this reason, perhaps, he promises to divide the proceeds between a West-end church and a Temperance Missionary Fund. Some people would like him to produce the receipt and the audit of his accounts.

Sabbatarianism flourishes in Lancaster. The authorities have stopped a Sunday concert of sacred music that was to have been given by the Midget Minstrels in the Athenæum. Mr. Montague Roby, who was the head and front of the offending, issued an explanation of why the concert could not come off, and ended by saying, "I am, however, led to understand that the public-houses will be open as usual."

Joe Cook says there are now a million inhabitants in New York, and only 75 000 Protestant Christians. We suspect he has exaggerated the number of Protestants, and are quite sure he has exaggerated the number of Christians.

In a recent missionary sermon Dr. Cyrus Hamlin said we can no longer say the harvest is great and the laborers few. "The harvest is great and the laborers are many. But the gifts are few." And, we add, the converts.

Some one has calculated that in Protestant hymn-books Jesus Christ is praised thirteen times as often as God the Father and forty-seven times as often as God the Holy Ghost. The Father may be supposed to take pride in the praises of his Son, but if the Holy Ghost is at all a sensitive person he may take umbrage at his position of decided inferiority.

Madame Blavatsky, and with her the headquarters of the Theosophical Army in Europe, of which she is now sole President, vice Colonel Olcott, unanimously deposed, has removed to 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, N.W., where a sort of Theosophical chapel has been erected.

We see that Booth has issued a new official notice to the Salvation Army officers ordering bands not to go past churches and chapels during their services. If this cannot be avoided the Sergeant-Major must blow a whistle before coming to the church or chapel, when playing and singing must stop. When will Booth learn that people in their houses, and horses in the roads, require consideration as well as churches and chapels?

The missionary Huc relates that a Chinese once asked him why he baptised women. "That their souls may be saved." "But have women souls?" was the next question, and although the missionary gave a decided affirmative, the question is said to have been disputed at the Council of Macon. Little is found in the Bible in favor of the proposition and the passage in Revelation, declaring that "there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour," is cited as being in blank opposition.

Say Christian and you say Bigot. Dr. Parker approves the attitude of those who left the Peace Congress because it would not open its sittings with Christian prayer. He has withdrawn his name from all connection with the Peace Society. We must admit, however, that Dr. Parker is a consistent bigot. As a Christian he will have no political or social dealings with "infidels." In his opinion the Christians should have separate societies for every object. He agrees with Paul, who said "hold no fellowship with unbelievers." Of course he is several centuries behind Shylock, who drew the line at a higher point of difference. Quoth the Jew to Bassanio, "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Even Shylock might have sat in a Peace Congress with a Christian—if the Christian would let him.

OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death of Mrs. Forder, wife of Mr. Robert Forder, Secretary of the National Secular Society. The deceased lady had long been ailing, but she seemed better before her death, which occurred with startling suddenness while she was travelling by train from Hastings to London. Her remains were interred at Finchley Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Foote performing the last sad rites at the graveside. Mr. Forder's bereavement will elicit the sympathy of a wide circle of friends. Mrs. Forder herself was well known at the Hall of Science, where she was an ardent worker for Freethought in the days of her health and strength.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 27, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 7.30, "Faith and God: another Reply to *Lux Mundi*."

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

T. RILEY (Halifax) suggests that Mr. Foote's article on "Is the Bible Inspired?" should be reprinted as a penny pamphlet. What do others say? If reprinted, the article would be somewhat amplified.

G. WILDMAN.—Glad to hear your good report of Mr. Rowney's defence of the cause in Regent's Park.

C. W. KENNAWAY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. COMAN.—The "pious lie" referred to in the *Norfolk News* has already been dealt with in our columns. Mr. Foote's unanswerable exposure is obtainable in pamphlet form, price one penny. We agree with you that some Freethought work should be done at Norwich. Is there no one in the city who will undertake to establish an active Branch of the N. S. S.?

J. BURRELL.—We have given a general report of the Federation Excursion. Thanks to the Westminster Branch for distributing such a quantity of literature on the road.

JAMES MCKAY.—Unfortunately the best books are very expensive. You should obtain if you can, Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*, and *Supernatural Religion*. Other such works, as well as books on human evolution, could follow. We will advise when you apply again.

T. FRENCH.—The tract you send us by W. R. Bradlaugh is worthy of the man. It betrays both ignorance and dishonesty. He does not know that "the noble Altamont" is a fictitious character in a romance of Dr. Young's. He quotes a passage from Cheetham about Thomas Paine, but does not tell the reader that Paine prosecuted Cheetham for libel, and got a verdict and damages. He quotes from a malignant French priest about Voltaire, and does not tell his readers that the Abbé Barruel knew absolutely nothing at first hand as to the circumstances of Voltaire's death, or that his lies are simply monstrous in the face of the well-known and abundant testimony of eye-witnesses. See our *Infidel Death-Beds*.

C. H. KELF.—Thanks for your interesting letter. You have had your look into the face of death, and you now know by experience that honest convictions stand by one in the hour of need.

T. CRISFIELD begs to inform P. H. Echlin, and all it may concern, that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Brighton at Thatcher's in Oxford Street. It is also sold in a shop at Blatchington Road, Hove.—T. Crisfield is hereby thanked for his efforts to promote our circulation. Brighton is a hard ground for Freethought seed. It is too full of idle wealth and its parasites.

E. S. DAY.—We understand the certificate has been sent.

A. H. GUEST.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A WOMAN OF BATTERSEA.—One has to be patient, and not to expect too much at once. There was nothing positively objectionable in the entertainment you refer to. The members are all working people, and as they cannot pay for talent at present, they provide the amusement themselves.

R. P. STAPLES.—The Bible Handbooks by Angus or Mitchell give the orthodox statements. The principal early New Testament MSS., with the exception of the since-discovered Sinaitic MS, are mentioned in Taylor's *Diegesis*. Tischendorff's Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament may in part supply you with what you want.

S. SODDY.—Thanks for the cuttings.

W. MORTIMER.—Thanks for the 5s. for the *Freethinker* Circulation Fund. The Swedish Prisoner Fund is closed. How shall we apply the other 5s.?

W. HOLLAND.—Sorry we are unable to furnish the address. Thanks for the cuttings.

A. B. MOSS.—Sorry to hear you are still unwell. Your absence was explained to the excursionists on Sunday.

W. WARRY.—Zulus are not negroes, and South Africa is not Central Africa. How far Booth's officers may be speaking the truth in claiming seven Zulu converts here, four there etc., we do not know, but we do know that Christian England has broken and massacred the Zulu nation with every conceivable circumstance of infamy. We are absolutely sick of the humbug of your creed.

J. R. W.—Your sending in a copy of our exposure to Price Hughes before his address in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester may explain his ill temper during the meeting. Of course he gave you no reply. Could you expect him to? That is not his game.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Newcastle Chronicle—Independent Pulpit—Coming Man—Edinburgh Evening News—Adelaide Advertiser—War Cry—North Middlesex Chronicle—East Anglican Times.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be ~~able~~ to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £75 6s. 7d.

Eleventh List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Dr. W. Mortimer	0	10	0	G. Naewiger	0	1	0
N. B. Billamy	0	2	6	A Friend (per Mr. Foote)	0	10	0
H. J. Robinson	0	2	6	Nottingham Friend	0	5	0
S. Thompson	0	2	6				

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (July 27). His subject will be "Faith and God: another reply to *Lux Mundi*." He will deal with the first three Essays in that important volume.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital reception at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. Unfortunately, the English summer had stolen his voice. He had to exert himself painfully to get through his lecture. Mrs. Watts preceded him with two scenes from the "School for Scandal," rendered, of course, in a bright, sparkling manner. The chair was occupied by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who travelled up from Brighton for the purpose.

Mr. Watts looks little older than he did ten years ago, and is as jolly as ever. American life seems to agree with him. He lectures regularly on Sundays at Toronto, with occasional visits during the week to distant places. The hall he has discoursed in for four years is now too small. A larger one is getting ready, and Mr. Watts will open it on the first Sunday in September. There are a few wealthy supporters of the movement in Toronto.

Free admission is the general rule in America. When Mr. Watts goes on tour now and then, the local Freethinkers pay all the expenses, often on a handsome scale. Audiences are very large, and the cause is making rapid progress.

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Mr. Watts's paper, *Secular Thought*, has an increasing circulation which it certainly deserves. Owing to the great distances in America, the bulk of the copies are mailed. Only in Toronto itself are the newsagents supplied. The price of *Secular Thought* is twopence-halfpenny.

During Mr. Watts's brief stay in England he does not propose to lecture again except at Birmingham, which he will visit at the special request of an old friend, Mr. Daniel Baker. Mr. Watts is very well pleased with his Sunday night's reception, and he will tell the Canadian Freethinkers that their English brethren gave him on their behalf, as well as for auld lang syne, a thoroughly cordial greeting.

W. Grantham, corresponding secretary of the Australasian Secular Association, Sydney, New South Wales, writes to us:—"The Sydney friends, although deploring Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation, congratulate you on your appointment. All here think no better appointment could have been made, and hope you may long live to fill the position."

The *Adelaide Advertiser* for June 6 has a long letter from Judge Boucaut in reply to the Bishop of Peterborough. Judge Boucaut was the magistrate who prevented a barrister from attacking a witness as unworthy of credit because he did not believe every word of the Bible to be inspired saying "the Bishop of Peterborough does not." The Bishop, who has expressed his opinion that states cannot be guided by the Sermon on the Mount instead of turning the other cheek has, says Judge Boucaut, "tried to smite on both cheeks one who never smote him at all." Judge Boucaut repels the charge of libel as "wholly untrue, originating only in episcopal arrogance."

A monument to Richard Jefferies, the Freethinker, is to be erected in Salisbury Cathedral.

From San Fernando, Trinidad, we have received a little pamphlet on "The Clericals and the Education Question" by Emilie Maresse Paul. It shows that the clergy there as elsewhere are resisting secular education as godless, and use every influence to retain dominion over the infant. They know that this once lost will never be regained. We are glad to see that in the West Indies there are those who combat in favor of a purely secular education.

Clara Neymann, the German American Freethought lecturess, is now at Berlin, being on a visit to Europe.

The Battersea Branch holds its monthly Concert this Sunday evening (July 27). Friends willing to assist please communicate at once with Mr. Dickinson, 28 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea; or the Secretary will be glad to see them at the Secular Hall early on Sunday evening.

Mr. C. H. Kelf, of the Newcastle Branch, has passed safely through a perilous adventure, the details of which are reported in the *Daily Chronicle*. On Sunday afternoon he engaged a small sculler boat at Tynemouth, and rowed out with a friend named Thompson. By and bye a gale of wind arose and they were driven twenty miles from the shore, where they were picked up at daybreak by a passing schooner. During the night they strove to keep the boat's head to the waves, for a good broadside would have swamped her. Eventually they became exhausted and had to resign themselves to their fate, but by that time the wind had abated. Mr. Kelf informs us that he felt no qualms. He wished to live, but he was prepared to die. Even amidst the danger there arose the detestable idea that he might be misrepresented; so he took a card out of his case, and wrote with a coyping ink pencil, "Good bye to all friends. I die an Atheist."

The July number of the *Independent Pulpit* gives articles by T. V. Munson, S. J. Matthew, Wm. Edmunds, "Pericles," J. L. Shaw (the editor), and others. The publication is as interesting and useful as ever.

Mr. A. J. Field, the new secretary of the Finsbury Park Branch, contributes a well-written letter to the *North Middlesex Chronicle*, protesting against the brutal and cowardly conduct of "respectable" Christian roughs, who ill-treat Secular lecturers in the Park on Sunday afternoons. When they dare not overturn the platform and kick the lecturer, they pelt him with stones or disgusting interruptions. Mr. Field is to be thanked for his letter. It is too much to hope it will shame the well-dressed rowdies.

Four weeks ago we announced that special weather was ordered for the London Secular Federation excursion. *It came.* The weather changed, after about six weeks' muddle, on the Saturday afternoon. Some people, who think they are very wise, will say it was a mere coincidence, a lucky guess. We know better. It was a distinct prophecy. Every man who is open to be convinced will see that the editor of the *Freethinker* is also among the prophets, and that the London Secular Federation is under the care of a beneficent providence.

Edmonton sent three brakes to Epping Forest. It was a splendid show for so young a Branch. Camberwell, the largest Branch, was not proportionately represented. The largest contingent came from Milton Hall, under the superintendence of ever-active Miss Vance.

It appears that the suppression of the Humboldt Freethought Society at Leipsic, was occasioned by a discourse by Frau Henrich-Wilhelmi, a lady of culture whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the Paris Congress last year. Frau Wilhelmi has been used to the free atmosphere of the United States, and will not be likely to desist from her efforts at mental emancipation by these high-handed acts of intolerance.

The Mortality of the Soul by David Hume has just been issued from our office. It is a reprint from the original edition, published at Edinburgh thirteen years after Hume's death. This essay is not included in the ordinary editions of Hume. Professor Huxley, a very good judge, calls it "a remarkable essay" and "a model of clear and vigorous statement." Its argument is that the Soul, even if it be immaterial, is mortal like the body whose vicissitudes it shares. An introduction is contributed by Mr. Foote.

AN HONEST MAN'S DILEMMA.

By Clara Dixon Davidson.

The Rev. Josiah Scrimm was engaged in a theological discussion with his Agnostic neighbor, 'Squire Hobbs. They were very good friends and were exceedingly comfortable, lounging on easy chairs in the reverend's luxurious, but somewhat disorderly den, each in his turn puffing lazily at his cigar while he listened to the replies of his opponent.

"I am willing to admit," Scrimm was saying, "that there isn't much difference between us on this question of hell. Few of us really believe in any such horror now, you know. Why, you would be surprised at the admissions we make to each other sometimes, we preachers,—but all in strict confidence, of course; all behind closed doors."

"It seems, then, that the difference between us is more in degree of morality than in doctrine." Here Rev. Scrimm lifted his head quickly and forgot his cigar, but the suavity of his friend's face and manner and the smoothness of his tones softened the effect of his words. "Neither of us believe in hell. I tell what I think to the few who care to know; you proclaim things you do not really believe to the many whether they care to know or not. You give to a lie the prestige of your supposed learning, the weight of your personality,—and such a monstrous lie it is! You are a good neighbor and a faithful friend; but how can you lend yourself to such indefensible —"

"No, not that; I can defend my course easily. There are plenty of people who need to be frightened about 'the wrath to come' as often as once a year to prevent them from terrorising gentler citizens."

"Ah, but those gentler citizens! If you ever in your life really believed the doctrine you now preach you must understand that the most ingenious cruelties that could be invented by the lower classes, supposing them to be as malignant as you represent them, could not compare with the mental agonies suffered by the morally sensitive through their acceptance of the hell-theory."

At this moment a servant appeared, saying:

"A man has come a-wanting to see you, sir."

"Who is he?"

"That I cannot tell; but such a cast-down look he has, sir, as if he'd been a-thieving and come for comfort, maybe a-wanting you and God to pardon him; he's urgent to come in."

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The Rev. Scrimm's face showed some annoyance, but he said:

"I will see him; show him in here."

"Perhaps I had better go," said 'Squire Hobbs, as the visitor entered.

"Not on my account," said he of the downcast look. "My name is Benjamin Latham. I have nothing to conceal and, as I am not a bashful man, one listener more or less will not affect my nerves. I desire nothing else, just now, so much as wise counsel. You may be able to aid if you will have the patience to hear me. When —"

At this point Benjamin Latham paused to cough, tobacco smoke acting as an irritant to the surface of his respiratory organs. 'Squire Hobbs and Rev. Scrimms puffed away at their cigars in expectant silence. If he who stood before them—he had declined to be seated—had been of the other sex they would have cast away their Havanas and opened a window to rid the room of its foul odor, but they were less courteous to a man, forgetful that the trachea and bronchi of men and women have a deplorable tendency to grow alike.

"At the age of twenty-one years," said Benjamin Latham, when he was able to proceed, "I had twelve thousand dollars. My friends insisted that I should place it at interest and live on the income, which would have been quite sufficient to supply my simple wants. But I had conscientious scruples against receiving money for the use of money; I said that money could not perform labor and had no real power of increasing itself, and that when I had used as much as I then had I ought not rightfully to have any of it left; that one cannot 'eat his cake and have it,' and neither could I, rightfully, use my money and have it. They said I had a fantastic twist in my moral nature; that it was legal to take interest and therefore right, though they could not explain why it was right to take ten per cent. in one state and a deadly sin to take eight in another, in which the legal rate happened to be fixed at six.

"As I was obdurate on that point my advisers insisted that I should go into business. This I decided to do, but after two years spent in quest of some operations in which I could pay fair wages to my assistants, put honest goods on the market, and yet successfully compete with others engaged in the same line of bussiness, I abandoned the thought as hopeless.

"Then I bought a farm. I said, 'Surely the closer I get to Nature's heart the more honestly I can live.' I paid my hands what they really earned, as nearly as we could determine the amounts. I cared for my stock humanely, I gave honest weights and measures when I sold grains or fruits, and I lost money every year. I found that the cost of production was greater than the price of the product, taking one year with another. But I knew not what else to do, so I kept on farming until a few months ago, when I gave up everything to satisfy mortgages.

"As I worked about fourteen hours a day on the farm, and was often exposed to inclement weather, my health is too far impaired for the hardships of a day-laborer. I have tried earnestly to find suitable employment at which I could earn an honest and comfortable livelihood, but, so far, have failed. I have a wealthy relative who offers me large sums of money with which to speculate in lands or grain. I have an opportunity to travel for a firm in the interest of which I should be expected to lie volubly; but no honorable means of self-support has presented itself to me. In this strait, my mind has turned to suicide as the only avenue of escape from living dishonestly. But I listened to a sermon from your lips in which you distinctly said that suicide is the unpardonable sin, and that all unforgiven sinners will burn forever in hell; so, sir, I came to ask whether, in your opinion, my soul's salvation would be safer as a land speculator, in which business I might ask pardon every night for the sins committed during the day, or as a suicide."

Rev. Scrimm examined the face of Benjamin Latham attentively. Was it all a piece of irony, or was the man really in such mental stress as he appeared? There could be no doubt about his earnestness, the Rev. Scrimm decided. His hands interlaced and clenched each other until the nails marked the flesh, and his sombre eyes had held a look of horror as he mentioned the place of torment for lost souls.

"Tell me," said Benjamin Latham, and there was a note of pleading in his voice; "why do you say that suicide is the unpardonable sin? I cannot find it in my Bible."

"'Thou shalt not kill' you can find that?"

"Yes."

"If a man kill himself it is the last act of his life; there is no time afterwards to ask for pardon."

"I see, I see. But God is a brutal tyrant. I never dared say so before, but I will say it now. He made everything as it is; I suppose it all suits him or he would have it different. He made our environments such that we must either live in fear of hell or die in danger of it. He made the impossibility to live honestly, and yet if we do not so live we are threatened with his wrath. He is cruel and unjust, and impossible to please."

"So here's some of the fruits of your hypocrisy, preaching a doctrine which you confess you do not believe," said Squire Hobbs, turning to Rev. Scrimm with energetic wrath.

"Not believe—a preacher not believe in hell;" mused Benjamin Latham, as he pulled his hat over his forehead and turned to go.

"Wait, let us —" began 'Squire Hobbs.

"I do not care to confer with men who do not believe there is a hell. I know there is. It begins in this life. I live in it. How could suicide add to its horrors?" The visitor left the house.

"What a strange jumble of sense and nonsense it was," 'Squire Hobbs said.

"*All* nonsense, every bit of it," emphatically asserted Rev. Scrimm. "I think the fellow is insane."

"Oh yes, of course; we all are more or less. But I think this person might well say with the dog that is to be muzzled by legal mandates: 'Most men are far more mad than we.'"

The next morning the mangled remains of Benjamin Latham were taken from a railway track—crushed.

A HAPPY BAPTIST FAMILY.

A strange scene was witnessed yesterday in the Strict Baptist Chapel of Chelmondiston, six miles from Ipswich. For some time past the minister (Rev. J. Cordle) has been at variance with some of the leading members of his congregation. The dispute began with the singing at a Sunday-school meeting of some of Moody and Sankey's hymns, which were in the pastor's opinion heretical. The result was that 10 or 12 of the old members were practically shut out from church fellowship. Two of these members, who were formerly deacons, gave notice of a church meeting for yesterday morning, and were present with a considerable following of friends. Directly the service was concluded the pastor read a statement that he had taken legal advice, and that all persons guilty of riotous behavior, would be dealt with according to law. The senior deacon asked whether the service was concluded. The pastor, who evidently considered he was legally safe so long as the service was in progress, replied that it was not. By way of bridging over the interval, between twelve and two (the latter being the hour for afternoon service), he called down the school children, and got them to sing a number of hymns on the promise that they should hereafter be rewarded with a treat of tea and cake. In about three-quarters of an hour the children were dismissed, and the minister started a prayer meeting. Whilst this was proceeding the deacons and their friends sent out for bags of biscuits and buns to make up for the dinner they were sacrificing. When the prayer meeting was over, the minister said they would spend a few quiet moments and then he would give them an address. This announcement aroused intense indignation among the hungry dissentients, more especially as the minister spent his few quiet moments in munching biscuits. One of the deacons called out "Shame" with great emphasis, and an old lady quoted the text, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord," adding, "And I believe he will."

The minister took for his text the words, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine," and preached at the old members for three quarters of an hour. He was frequently interrupted, and on each occasion he took an ostentatious note of the words used. At two o'clock the dissentients went home to dine, leaving a funeral service to proceed quietly; but they returned in force when it was over, and a scene of disorder followed. A resolution was passed calling upon Mr. Cordle to resign, because of the low condition of the church, and the brethren after making many appeals to each other's Christian generosity, fell out all round, some calling their brethren slinks, liars and rogues. In the midst of the hubbub the minister went after the village policeman, who refused to interfere, and the squabble continued for nearly an hour, the disputants adjourning from the chapel to the vestry, and thence to the burial ground. The villagers and school children gathered round, and were much amused at the proceedings. In the end Mr. Cordle locked up the building, and threatened to take legal proceedings against the offenders. —*Star*.

Eve, Adam, and Satan, we venture to state,
Got up the Original Sin-dicate.

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THE DEATH OF THE DEVIL.

(FREELY ENGLISHED FROM DE BERANGER.)

For the miracle that I'll retrace
  Quickly as a sketcher paints,
Glory be to the Saint I grace,
  Patron of all our little Saints.
By a trick which really would seem most
  Infernal if ever Saints misled,
He has made the Devil give up the ghost:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Satan found him going to dine:
  Drink or own yourself second-best:
Done!—but he poured in the Devil's wine
  A powerful poison potently blest.
Satan drinks, comes the colic quick;
  He swears, he writhes, he dashes his head;
At last he bursts like a heretic:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

He is dead! the monks all cry,
  None will purchase another *agnus*:
He is dead! the canons sigh,
  Who will pay now for an *oremus!*
The conclave shook in mortal fear,
  Power and strong-box, adieu! they said,
We have lost our Father dear:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Love won't serve us as Fear of old,
  Whose gifts have overfilled our hands;
Intolerance is almost cold,
  Who will kindle again its hands!
If Man escapes us, slips our rope,
  Truth will begin to lift her head,
God will be greater than the Pope:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Ignatius runs to them while they cry;
  Give me, give me his place and power;
No one was frightened of him, but I—
  I will make even the monarchs cower:
Robberies, massacres, plagues, or wars
  Everywhere, O I'll flourish, he said;
God may have what I fling out of doors:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Ah! brave homme! cried all the court,
  We bless thee in thy malice and hate;
And at once his order, Rome's support,
  Saw its robe flutter Heaven's gate.
From the angels tears of pity fell;
  Poor Man will have cause to rue, they said,
Saint Ignatius inherits Hell:
  The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

(The late) JAMES THOMSON (B.V.)

Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter: "Aunt Dinah, why don't you tell that yer heathen reprobate, your husband, to put his money in the collection plate, and lay up his treasures in heaven." Aunt Dinah: "What for. What de use ob laying up treasures dere, where he neber see um agin? Tell me dat, eh nigger."

Jones (sentimental): "I heard Madam——sing last night." Smith (prosaic): "Did you like it? Was it good?" Jones (rapturously): "Charming! Divine! It carried me to the gates of heaven." Smith: "Pity you didn't take advantage of the opportunity, old man! You may depend that you'll never have such another chance."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, select concert. Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, on Wednesday, at 9, a members' meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Prophecy."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30. Mr. G. W. Foote, "Faith and God: another Reply to *Lux Mundi*."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Rev. S. D. Headlam, "Christian Socialism."

Wood Green—At "The Star," 7, J. M. Robertson, Summer Conference of the North Middlesex Secular Federation."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God: Where and What."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, a lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Fall and Redemption."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "The Gods of Russia."

Hammersmith Bridge, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Revelation and Modern Science."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Why has Christianity Failed?" Wednesday, at 8, Mr. J. Rowney, "An Hour with God's Favorites."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic, Part II."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christianity and Progress."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Man's Place in Nature."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "What is a Christian?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Simes, "Justification of Secularism."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, a lecture.

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Some Ancient Views of God."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. J. Fagan, "Miracles."

COUNTRY.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. Ward's, Hightown, 4.30, tea and musical evening.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. G. Franks, "Signs of the Times."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society"; 7, Mr. C. Doeg, "The Unity of Nature."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans, "The Origin of the Earth."

Newcastle—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Mr. A. B. Moss, 11, "Voltaire and Paine"; 3, "The Bible and Evolution"; 7, "Saviors of Mankind." Monthly financial meeting of members in Society's Rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, at 8, after Mr. Moss's evening lecture.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street; annual excursion to Charnwood Forest; brakes leave the hall at 8, a.m.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Lush, "Herbert Spencer on Education"

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A Compulsory Eight Hours' Labor Bill: Useless and Impracticable."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Excursion of members and friends to Strines Inn, etc.; meet at Monolith, Fargate, at 1.30; go via Hollow Meadows and return via Bradfield.

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Socialism and the Middle Class"; 3, "Hypnotism: the Facts and the Explanation"; 7, "Christianity and Women."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Vicar's Croft, 3, Mr. R. Atkinson, "Is Christianity Reasonable?" On Woodhouse Moor, at 7, Mr. H. Smith, "Is there a Hell? and if so, What Class of People are most likely to get there?"

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Ernest Evans, "Darwin v. Moses."

Newcastle—On Town Moor, 7, grand concert. Monday, at 7, in Bigg Market, Mr. Chas. H. Kelf, "Secularism: the Religion of Every-day Life."

Rochdale Town Hall Square, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "Some Modern Unbelievers in Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — North-Eastern Secular Federation tour:—Sat., July 26, Ox Hill; Sun., 27 (three lectures in hall), Newcastle; Mon., 28 (open air), Newcastle; Tues., 29, South Shields; Wed., 30 (open air), Sunderland; Thur, 31, Bedlington; Fri., Aug. 1, Blyth; Sat., 2, Chester-le-Street; Sun., 3, Durham.

August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning). Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 3, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 3 (morning), Camberwell; 10 (morning), Midland Arches; 17 (morning), Bethnal Green; 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell; 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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CRUMBLING CREEDS.

(CONCLUDED.)

WITHIN the Church of England the process of disintegration goes on rapidly. What a change since the day of *Essays and Reviews* and Colenso's *Pentateuch!* The heresy which then was appaling is now mild; the shocking novelties have become old-fashioned commonplaces. Such things are no longer, as Lord Shaftesbury said, the "vilest productions ever vomited from the jaws of hell." Under the most orthodox exterior, men like Archdeacon Farrar, Canon Driver, and Canon Cheyne, conceal a scepticism that would have frightened the writers of *Essays and Reviews*. They have turned the Bible into something worse than a wax nose; they have made it a kaleidoscope, and no one knows how it will look in the next turn of clerical criticism. The time-honored chronology of the Bible books is demolished. "God spake unto Moses" is put aside as a delusion. The fact is accepted that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, nor David the Psalms, nor Solomon the Proverbs; that Ecclesiastes is a late product of Jewish Epicureanism; that Jonah is a romance, and the prophecies of Daniel an instance of being wise after the event. The science of the Bible is no longer defended by responsible divines. Such a task is left to a hobby-horsical writer like Mr. Gladstone. Nor is Bible morality defended as of yore. The Old Testament is at a discount; even the editor of *Lux Mundi* speaks of its "low standard of morals." Canon Farrar's *Solomon* contains a passage on the filthy and disgusting state of the Temple courts, reeking with the blood and stench of sacrifices, which would be strong reading in a Freethought journal.

In order to explain these glaring defects of the Old Testament the theory is started that God accommodated himself to the ignorance and barbarism of the Jews. In the vernacular phrase he was "leading them on." But such a theory is temporising. It suffices for the moment. When it is weighed and tested it will be dismissed with contempt. Men will not go on believing that Omnipotent Wisdom could do no better. They will see that a righteous God, where he could do no good, would never countenance evil.

The whole theory of Inspiration is changing. We are now told that God did not speak straight through the lips of his prophets. He influenced but did not control them. Hence their message was mixed. *Lux Mundi* goes to the length of saying that the great, representative writers of all nations were inspired. Thus the clergy are approaching the view, which is embodied in popular language, that inspiration and genius are the same thing. Originally they were precisely so. A man's *genius* was his attendant spirit. But the spirit is gone, and his genius now means his superior faculty. Similarly, a man's inspiration has come to mean the exaltation of his own natural powers, his being "possessed" by a great idea.

Already the battle, which is practically over with educated persons as to the Old Testament, is beginning to rage around the New Testament. Very much has been done by continental scholars, but more remains to do. The critical methods, applied with such effect to the Hebrew part of the Bible, will be applied as thoroughly to the Greek part. Every line, every word, will be put under the critical microscope. Professor Huxley challenged the clergy to say whether they really believe that Jesus told devils to come out of men and go into pigs. His challenge was ev ded. Yet we now see Canon Liddon and the editor of *Lux Mundi* at loggerheads as to whether Jesus meant exactly what he said in his references to Noah's Flood, Lot's wife, and Jonah's whale. So disquieting is the controversy that the Bishop of Lichfield wishes it could be carried on in Latin. Another Bishop, his lordship of Carlisle, admits, though in roundabout language, that Jesus could be mistaken. Thus all the old positions of Freethought are being gradually taken up by the clergy. Of course they deny that we have won anything. But we are satisfied if they are. They have come to us. We have not gone to them.

The good old comfortable doctrine of Hell is also disappearing. Archdeacon Farrar denounces it as vehemently as we do. The Rev. Edward White goes farther. He contends that man has no immortal soul at all. Mr. Spurgeon is the Abdiel of faith. He will neither cool Hell down nor shorten its duration. But the younger generation of Baptist preachers draw away from the old moorings. Thus we have the Down Grade controversy — about Hell and Damnation. Will God cook his own children? "Yes," says Mr. Spurgeon. "No," cry the men of the new generation, who see that humanity has outgrown theology.

Professor Newman remarks that the doctrine of Hell is chiefly drawn from the language of Jesus. Let the doctrine go, therefore, and the credit of the Teacher will be impaired. Why, it will be asked, did he use language that led people to believe such an infamy?

The mere decay in the belief in hell is a fatal blow to Christianity; we mean to the Christianity of the New Testament, of the Creeds, and of history. When a religion trades, as Christianity has always done, on supernatural hopes and fears; when it works with promises of eternal bliss and everlasting torment; it must lose more than half its power in losing its doctrine of future punishment. Appeals to fear have always been the strongest element in Christianity. When these are no longer possible, it will lose its power of coercion. Nor is this all. Heaven and Hell logically hang together. It is impossible to lose the one and permanently retain the other. For a while, no doubt, the more repulsive doctrine having disappeared first, the more attractive will still remain. But it cannot last. Its intellectual absurdity must be too obvious. Heaven and Hell are two sides of the same idea, and if one half of the idea perishes the other cannot long survive.

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Miracles are also going. Dr. Lightfoot's reply to *Supernatural Religion* shows how hopeless he felt the task of defending even the miracles of the New Testament. He spent his time on minute details of scholarship instead of discussing the central question, whether the Gospels are adequate evidence of the wonders they relate. Dr. Abbott has given up miracles altogether. Dr. Plumptre seems to be in the same position. It is evident that the best-informed clergy are heeding Mr. Matthew Arnold's warning that "the Bible miracles are doomed," and taking his advice to put the value and authority of the Bible upon a fresh basis.

The crumbling of Christianity is progressing even in Scotland. Dr. Robertson Smith was turned out of his Church, and given an opportunity of doing justice to his ability and accomplishments. But Dr. Dods and Dr. Bruce are allowed to keep their places. The white-washing of their reputations has provoked a fierce outburst of fanaticism in the Highlands, but the Lowlanders are satisfied that the old order is changing, and that the Creeds which embodied infallible truth must be brought into conformity with the altered views of an age of exact science, critical scholarship, and popular enlightenment.

Across the Atlantic there is a general loosening. Presbyterianism itself—the vilest creed that ever crawled from the brain of superstition—is submitting to revision. The old infallible truth is being changed into a new infallible truth. In response to the clamors of outraged humanity, infants are withdrawn from Hell. Only adults are to go there in future, and even their case is somewhat doubtful.

This debating of fundamentals, this universal movement of revision, are crumblings of Christianity. It no longer says to the waves of scepticism, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." It draws back its seat as the tide advances, and swears it was sitting there all along. But its movements are being watched. What is more, the tide is ever advancing. Having once receded, religion must go on giving way, until it yields to the enemy. And it is yielding fast. Darwin's corpse is in Westminster Abbey. Three centuries ago the Church would have burnt him at the stake. His burial is an act of capitulation. When the Church cries, "Atheists admitted," it does not speak the language of love. Where it once cursed it is obliged to flatter. It bows to the science it cannot kill. Its tolerance is born of fear.

G. W. FOOTE.

A BIBLE SCEPTIC.

THE book of Ecclesiastes or "the preacher," has given rise to a variety of opinions among theologians. Attributed by tradition to Solomon B.C. 1013-973 critics have assigned it to much later dates, Grätz bringing it down to the days of Herod. Dean Plumptre, who considers from the clear traces of both Stoic and Epicurean philosophy that it was written somewhere between B.C. 240 (the death of Zeno) and B.C. 181 (that of Ptolemy Epiphanes), says "Absolutely the first external evidence which we have of its existence is found in a Talmudic report of a discussion between the two schools of Hillel and of Shammai as to its admission into the Canon of the sacred books." The latter argued against it on the ground that its statements contradicted each other, and they found in them sentiments that tended to infidelity. They were, says Plumptre, at last led to acquiesce in its admission by the fact that at least it began and ended with words that were in harmony with the Law. There is no evidence that they ever suspected the integrity of any portion of the book, which has been called in question by modern scholars. These have conjectured that the last chapter of the book has been added by another hand as a corrective to the impiety of the first portion. The contradictions are palpable. In the bulk of the work the writer distinctly states that the lot of man is that of the beasts, and questions who can tell a man what shall be after him. In the addendum he is told that the spirit shall return unto God who gave it and that God shall bring every work into judgment. It cannot but strike any one as strange that the writer should dwell at length on his reasons for scepticism and then at last briefly come to the opposite conclusion which he had previously done so much to confute.

Dean Plumptre who admits of the very last verses, xii., 8-24, that they "are in the nature of an apologue, added, it is almost certain, by another writer," contends nevertheless that the work exhibits a gradual advance towards a firmer faith. We think this very questionable. If a gradual advance is made it is in scepticism. Thus in viii., 14, it says "there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked," implying this occurs only in the case of some. But in ix., 2, the declaration is more emphatic. "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." And on the view that Koheleth ends at chapter xi., 10, the whole conclusion is in favor of enjoyment in youth. Not only is the spirit of the book of Ecclesiastes sceptical and pessimistic, but reasons are given for scepticism which are not answered in the apologue. At the outset the preacher says "One generation passeth away and other generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." A sentiment by the way in direct opposition to 2 Peter iii., 10, which says that "the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." He finds all is vanity. "For what hath man of all his labor and of the vexation of his heart wherein he hath labored under the sun." Vanity of vanities all is vanity.

19. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all *is* vanity.

20. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goweth downward to the earth?

22. Wherefore I perceive that *there is* nothing better, than that a man should rejoice, in his own works; for that *is* his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

The twenty-first verse is more correctly rendered in the Douay version "Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward?" It is not an affirmation but a sceptical inquiry implying a sceptical answer. The position of the author is to the full as dubious as that of the Roman Epicurean poet Lucretius who says:

> We know not what the nature of the soul,
> Or born or entering into men at birth,
> Or whether with our frame it perisheth.
> Or treads the gloom and regions vast of death.

It is noteworthy that there is not a single passage in the Bible in which natural immortality is so explicitly asserted as it is denied by the preacher. Yet, if a materialist were to assert his conclusions in similar language to that of the Bible, no terms would be too offensive to be hurled against him by Christians.

The writer of Ecclesiastes appears to have been not only a sceptic but a pessimist. He considers all the oppressions that are done under the sun, and concludes that death is better than life.

The words of James Thomson, the great modern poet of pessimism,

> The world rolls round for ever like a mill,
> It grinds out death and life and good and ill,
> It has no purpose, heart, or mind, or will,

are really little more than a condensation of the teaching of Ecclesiastes, "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth" says the preacher, and the remark is surely no compliment to the alleged creator of life. And what denial of divine providence

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can be more explicit than the statement "All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good so is the sinner: and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath." "The dead," he asserts, "know not anything, neither have they any more reward." "There is no work nor device nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

His conclusion is not so much that of the Secularist as that of the sybarite, that the enjoyment of life is the wisest course that man can pursue. It is no Atheist but the inspired writer who says emphatically that "man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink and to be merry." It is curious that this sentiment should so generally be attributed to Secularists, and that with every expression of abhorrence, when in reality it is found in the Bible itself. It is true the same sentiment is said to have been inscribed on the tomb of the Assyrian monarch Sardanapalus, upon which the Pagan Aristotle, who was a Secularist so far as rejecting any theological foundation for morality, observed "What better inscription could you have for the tomb, not of a king but of an ox?" It is Paul and no Atheist who says "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."

It is contended by some orthodox theologians that Ecclesiastes is of the nature of a dialogue and that the sceptical statements are only made in order to be refuted. Of this there is no evidence, for there is no refutation of the statements, even in the added last chapter which winds up with the orthodox conclusion, "Fear God and keep his commandments." Even therefore if it is granted that this was the writer's intention, he has succeeded no better than those writers on Christian evidences, who by stating freethought objections and replying to them feebly have done as much to promote scepticism as Freethinkers themselves.

J. M. Wheeler.

FREETHOUGHT AND SALVATIONISM.

On Saturday, July 19, the *Pall Mall Gazette* gave prominence to the following communication on the Salvation Army. We have every reason to believe that the writer was Mr. George Standring.

A FREETHINKER'S VIEW OF THE SALVATION ARMY.

By a Vice-President of the National Secular Society.

The jubilee of General Booth's great movement affords a fitting opportunity to place on record the fact—perhaps hitherto unsuspected by the public—that a least one phase of the Salvation Army's work is regarded with sympathy and admiration by many Freethinkers. The view which I will endeavor briefly to express will be scouted as rank heresy by some bigoted Secularists, for a certain leaven of bigotry is not lacking even amongst the adherents of Freethought; but I am convinced that a large section of that body are perfectly willing to recognise the fact that some good thing may come out of Nazareth, and to wish *good*-speed to whatever of good it may produce.

It should, however, be noted that this admission in no wise relates to the theological aspect of the question. To me, as to many others, the "Salvation" element is but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, standing upon precisely the same moral and intellectual plane as the uncouth devotions of Mumbo Jumbo with his stone idol decked out in Monmouth Street frippery. We retain our own pious opinion upon the theology of the Salvation Army; it is the socialising, humanising (in a word, the *secular*) work of the organisation which engages our attention and compels our sympathy.

During the seventeen years of my work as an active Freethinker the conviction has sorrowfully and reluctantly been impressed upon me that to the most unfortunate, and, alas! degraded of our fellow-creatures Secularism has no message, or, rather no message that can be "understanded of the common people." Our principles are a series of more or less philosophical propositions which are grotesquely inefficient in the face of the terribly brutalised ignorance which surrounds us. To what purpose would a Freethought propagandist exhort a drunken wife-beater by preaching to him the fact that "Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge"? How would one of our fallen sisters be impressed by the sententious statement that Secularism "regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide?" It would indeed be seed cast upon stony ground. But we have the evidence of our senses to convince us that the Salvation Army has at least a message which *can* influence those to whom the phrase of philosophy would be mere gibberish. "It is the first step which costs," and it is just this first step upwards from the abyss of ignorance and degradation that the Army has made possible where Secularism would have utterly failed.

Some months ago I had occasion to attend a "holiness meeting" at the Grecian Theatre, City Road, and during that morning service I found abundant food for reflection. The Salvation Army, I could clearly see had succeeded where the Church of England and other religious bodies had signally failed—it had got hold of the *people*. There I found in strong force the working-man, whom I had sought in vain at more "respectable" conventicles. And there, too, I saw—most pathetic and significant feature of all—an aged male pauper from the workhouse opposite, clad in the rough brown coat and odorous corduroys which form the sad badge of all his tribe. He slowly entered the room and took his seat, none looking askance at him. Here, then, the brotherhood of men—even of paupers—was frankly recognised: and, though to me Christ and Christianity meant very little, this simple incident meant very much.

Speaking, then, as a Freethinker, for myself—and I am sure that I do not stand alone in this—I say heartily good-speed to the work of social improvement in which the Salvation Army is engaged. It is surely well that our brethren should be lifted from the moral quagmire in which many thousands of them are sinking to lower depths of poverty, crime and debasement; it is surely well that our fallen sisters should be tenderly and lovingly taken by the hand and led upwards from the path of sin and shame. If our shibboleth of Secularism be ineffectual, and if the shibboleth of faith succeed, then let it be so; I care not *how*, so that it be done.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, taking the chair at Mr. Watts's lecture in the Hall of Science, passed a caustic criticism on this tribute to "the Army"; and as soon as it was brought to his notice, Mr. Foote addressed a reply to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. We print it, as we print Mr. Standring's communication, *in extenso*.

THE SALVATION ARMY AND THE SECULARISTS.

As President of the National Secular Society, I may be allowed a few words on the remarkable letter "by a Vice-President" of that body which appeared in your Saturday's issue. His anonymity is (to me) of course transparent. I wish he had given his name, instead of a kind of semi-official headline. I also wish he had taken some more satisfactory method than casual conversations of ascertaining the view of the Salvation Army entertained by Freethinkers before speaking for so "many" of them. I further wish he had avoided the crude bigotry of supposing that only "bigoted Secularists" could dissent from his view of the matter. Lastly, I wish he had not committed the blunder of looking to the formulas of Secularism for words of inspiration. The formulas of churches and systems of philosophy are necessarily occupied with pregnant statements and definitions. Words of inspiration are to be found elsewhere, in exposition and application. They abound in the essays and addresses of an Ingersoll, as well as in the epistles of St. Paul; and I believe they would go home to a Salvation Army meeting if by any chance they could be heard in the intervals of drum and tambourine. So far as the Salvation Army, or any religious (or other) body, does the least secular good, it is a mere truism to say that Secularists approve it. But, after all, *method* counts for a good deal in this world; and to catch at a chance good work, to the exclusion of the broad tendency of a whole plan, is to commit a logical sin against which Mr. Herbert Spencer so eloquently inveighs. Here is a drunkard reclaimed; here is a "fallen woman"—in the dialect of Puritan piety—rescued. Good—in its way. But the broader question remains: What, in the long run, is the practical effect of hysterical methods on the *morale* of society? Does prostitution diminish? Are there fewer drunkards? What

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is the answer of statistics? What was the disclosure of Mr. Goschen's last Budget? Purifying a few gallons of a muddy stream looks excellent work; but what if the sources of impurity are left untouched?

On the other hand, there can be no doubt as to the intense vulgarity of Salvationism. It appeals to the senses on atavistic principles, and its one motive seems the motive of asceticism. The intellect is simply ignored. Rationality, beyond that of a docile savage, is utterly discounted. I have a certain sympathy with my friend's momentary fit of generous hallucination; but I think he will find that very few Freethinkers are prepared to expect much good from any system, whether of Nazareth or elsewhere, in which reason does not play a conspicuous part, and I would remind him that it is a fallacy to imagine that irrational persons have more or better emotion than their intellectual superiors.

I do not speak officially. I have no authority to do so; nor has my friend. But I think it right that the public should not be misled by his rather sweeping assertions. For my part, I know many Freethinkers who look upon the Salvation Army as a vulgar copy of the Order of Jesus. There is the same autocracy, the same drill, the same pretence of salvation; only, instead of the learning there is a plentiful ignorance, and instead of the dignity a perfectly grotesque pandering to the lowest instincts of sensationalism. And those who see the Salvation Army in this light are not to be shaken by the casual good it may do. The world is governed, after all, not by reformation societies, but by ideas; and a great historian like Gibbon recognises this truth when he says that, to a philosophical eye, the virtues of the clergy are more dangerous than their vices.

As was to be expected, Mr. Standring's praise of the Salvation Army, and his quite uncalled-for sneers at his own party, have been greedily seized on by the Christian press. The *Methodist Times* sees in it "indications of the growing power of Christianity in the most unexpected quarters," and "one of the many indications that the days of Secularism are nearly over." All this is very natural, and we have no right to complain. Mr. Standring gave the Christians an opportunity, and they have a right to use it. Still, Secularism is not going to the dogs because a single Secularist trumpets his admiration of the Salvation Army. As a matter of fact, we are making more members than ever.

A CHEERFUL GIVER.

Caller—Beg pardon for intruding, sir, but knowing your reputation for benevolence, I have taken the liberty of stopping to ask you to subscribe to the fund to buy a bell for our church. We hope to collect enough to purchase one of the largest and handsomest bells now manufactured.

Benevolent Individual—Where is your church located?

Caller—Corner Restful and Peace Street.

Benevolent Individual—I will subscribe gladly. A man I hate lives near there.

Although Unitarians became exempt from fear of prosecution by the Act 53, George III., which received royal assent on July 21, 1813, it was not till the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Bills on July 19, 1844, that property bequeathed to them for religious purposes was secure. In our case it seems likely that we may obtain relief from the disability which prevents our halls being endowed even before the removal of the Blasphemy Laws, and this will be an immense advantage. ——

It is interesting in these days to encounter a genuine believer in inspiration, and we have recently come across a big but anonymous work by a writer who urges that because Matt. xxvii., 9-10, deliberately ascribes to Jeremiah a passage not found in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah, therefore the passage in Zechariah must have been written by Jeremiah.

The American Bible Society reports that during the last eight years a quarter of a million families have been found in the States without a copy of the Bible, and that three hundred thousand refused it as a gift. We presume the majority of these were Catholics

ACID DROPS.

Victoria Park was the scene of disorder on Sunday afternoon. It was all on account of the black man. After a lecture by Mr. Hunt, the chairman of the Freethought platform, Mr. Eagles, invited opposition. A Christian, Mr. Elphlein, stepped forward; and at that moment, as if by arrangement, Celestine Edwards, the black preacher, came across from his own platform, bringing his audience with him. Mr. Elphlein had the impudence to announce that he was going to hand his notes over to Edwards, but Mr. Eagles very properly declined to let Edwards reply to a lecture he had not heard a word of. Thereupon the meek Christians, who love their enemies, and turn the right cheek when smitten on the left, attacked the Freethinkers and overthrew their platform, which was with difficulty saved from destruction.

Several children were thrown down in the *mêlée*, and the scene was altogether disgraceful. Freethinkers should rally round the Secular platform this afternoon (Aug. 3) and check the rowdyism of these disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Celestine Edwards has been paraded at Church Congresses as a powerful enemy of infidelity in East London. But if the "power" is to take a muscular direction we fancy the parson's pet may find out his mistake. Freethinkers are an orderly set of people, but they do not believe in "resist not evil," and they were never disposed to put up tamely with insult and oppression. ——

Christianity is always meaning something fresh. According to Mrs. Emma P. Ewing, a lady lecturer at Chantangua, it includes good cookery. "Good cookery," she exclaimed, "is indispensable to the highest type of Christian life." Bishop Vincent, who was on the platform, cried, "I say Amen to that." Well, if good cooking is a part of Christianity; it is about the best thing in it. We shall subscribe to that department anyhow. But how about mirth and laughter? They are excellent aids to digestion. Evidently, if we want to find the best Christians, we must leave the churches and go to the theatres. Mr. Toole would beat the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of the World* is to be published first in America. It is reported that "it invests Mary Magdalene with a charming romance." A French critic said there was a smell of patchouli through Rénan's *Vie de Jesus*, but apparently Sir Edwin Arnold outdoes the Parisian.

The dissatisfaction of the Armenian Christians with their own patriarch has culminated in a religious riot at the Constantinople cathedral. The Turkish troops were brought in to quell the disturbance among Christians and bloodshed ensued, four Turks and three Armenians being killed. It is said the Armenians have appealed to the Russian Czar against Turkish persecution.

Mr. Burns, in his paper the *Medium*, speaking of the Spiritualist meeting at Epping Forest, which took place at the same time as the excursion of the L. S. F., says an influence was present "which was truly infernal." Mr. Burns does not allude either to the Secularists or the German clubs, but to the professional "mejums," who, he says, are the fungi and bane of the movement, which, judged by its Epping Forest outing, certainly makes no progress, be the reason what it may.

A work on *The Historic Relation of the Gospels*, by the Rev. J. J. Halcombe, contends that John's gospel is the earliest. If this is so it is certain the others must belong to the latter half of the second century, as there is no evidence of the existence of the gospel according to John before 160 A.D. But Mr. Halcombe is a faddist who has discovered a misplacement of the chapters of Luke.

The *Rock* begs for books, etc., to be sent to the poor clergy. We do not know much of these poor sufferers, described by the *Rock* as without means of satisfying their intellectual wants; but if any of them will send us their addresses we will gladly supply them with a little literature.

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The Lord's Day Observance Society have sent a remonstrance to the Queen upon her permitting the band to play at Windsor on Sunday. Her Majesty has politely acknowledged the protest, but made no alteration.

A petition lies at West Brighton Station for the signature of those desiring a train to run from Brighton to Worthing at one p m. on Sunday, for the convenience of those who come from the latter place to obtain their gospel ministrations at the more populous watering place.

In Victoria they have the Religious census, and Roman Catholics are carefully admonished that they must not omit the word *Roman* if they desire to be properly classified.

Miss Weston, the "sailor's friend," writes and prints a Monthly Letter to the Royal Navy and Marines, and the authorities assist her in circulating it. Her August letter is chiefly devoted to the *Freethinker*, which we hope she will continue to advertise. Miss Weston replies to Jack's doubts about Bible science by telling him that "day" in the Creation story means "period," although she forgets to say what it means in the Fourth Commandment; and that electricity or something could make light without the sun, although she forgets to say how it could make "morning and evening" or raise a fruit crop. On the whole we cannot compliment Miss Weston on her scientific accomplishments, and we fancy Jack is hardly such a fool as she takes him to be.

There is something very pawky about the Bishop of Carlisle. His lordship has had his say on the *Lux Mundi* controversy, and he settles the difference between Mr. Gore and Canon Liddon by remarking that Jesus had two natures, the human and the divine. "We have no right to argue," the Bishop says, "that in virtue of his divine nature he must have known the truth, and that he could not have said anything which was opposed to the truth." Surely this is ingenious, though jesuitical. Henceforth we may expect to hear Christians say, "Oh, that is all wrong; Jesus was mistaken; he was speaking then as a man, and, like other men, he fell into error." We may even look forward to a work by a Bishop, entitled, "The Mistakes of Jesus a Proof of the Incarnation."

On Monday the 325 souls of Dummer parish, in the diocese of Winchester, together with the fine rectory and a living estimated at £420 a year, were sold by auction. The situation is a desirable one, and the bidding was spirited, but only run up to £1,130, the present occupier being only forty-nine years of age.

Dr. Parker, in withdrawing from the Peace Society, has not inflicted a heavy loss. He has not appeared on the Society's platform for years, nor subecribed sixpence to its funds. At least the *Echo* says so.

A so-called wizard named Marut has been sentenced to four months' imprisonment at Galicia for "snatching" bodies at the Jewish cemetery to burn at the houses of typhus patients. Marut admitted the charge, but pleaded that he had prevented Andreas Paterka taking the disease, whilst Paterka's wife and child died, after refusing to drink water containing the ashes of Jews' bones.

On Sunday afternoon a priest was arrested in Arras Cathedral during divine service. He is charged with offences against public morality, which is, of course, a euphemism for the crime to which priests are more prone than laymen. It was with difficulty that the gendarmes prevented his being lynched by the infuriated crowd.

John Tomlinson is a well-known Manchester street character, with a religious bee in his bonnet. John has been run in on a charge of attempting to obtain charitable contributions with intent to defraud. He collected a fund with the object of putting down the Sunday drink traffic. In answer to the magistrate, he said he had spent twenty-one days in fasting and prayer, and thought he had a call from God. He was bound over in his own recognisances to be of good behavior, so it is to be hoped God will not lead him into further trouble.

More Christian bigotry. This time in Bavaria. We gather from the Munich correspondent of the *Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt* that Frau Hedwig Henrich-Wilhelmi, the German American Freethought lecturess, has been arrested for blasphemy at Munich. She had lectured there previously in March without molestation. We hope soon to hear of her release.

The Catholic *Tablet* rejoices over the disintegration of German Protestantism, which it finds is running in the direction of a reformed Christianity which cannot be discriminated from Deism, while Catholicism holds together, and, in the very country of Luther, has become a great political power by its capacity of adhesion.

Father Barry, writing in the *Tablet*, says: "We cannot blink the fact that, in spite of our churches and our preaching, the number of Catholics does not increase perceptibly, or perhaps not at all; that the young men are escaping from us, and that thousands on thousands of Catholic families have sunk into the residuum out of which, humanly speaking, there is no redemption." Father Barry advocates a propaganda of natural religion, and a sort of Christian Socialism. Meanwhile Father Best writes *Why no Good Catholic can be a Socialist.*

The Archbishop of Canterbury is in no hurry to offend either the Ritualists or the Evangelicals by giving his decision in the case of the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln. It is now announced that judgment will not be given until after the Long Vacation. Meantime secessions of Ritualists continue, the latest converts to Rome being the Rev. R. P. Camm and the Rev. J. E. C. Fownes, both of Oxford.

Behramji Malabari is one of the Hindu crusaders against the Indian custom of child-marriage, which, like most reprehensible customs, is maintained and sanctioned by religious prejudice. The *Daily News* says, "One of the worst forms of child-marriage is known as 'marrying girls to the gods,' which practically means slavery of body and soul to priests, great numbers of whom live upon the immorality of their girl wives."

In the celebrated Maharajah case, tried at Bombay in 1862, it transpired that not only were Maharajahs considered as incarnations of the god Krishna, but women deemed it the highest honor to have intercourse with these gods on earth, and to dedicate their daughters to their service. The Maharajahs, who were charged with this, did not deny it, but only asserted that their practices were in accordance with true religion and the inspired texts.

From the fact that the same word in Hebrew signifies "holy" and also "harlot," it has been argued that sacred prostitution at one time existed among the Jews, as it certainly did among the Babylonians and other Semitic nations. It has been noticed, too, that while Deut. xxiii., 17, prohibits any *kadeshah* among the daughters of Israel, it by no means interdicts those of other nations. There have not been wanting those who think the doom of Christian "brides of Christ" no better than that of Indian nautch girls or bayaderes.

Josephus, in the very next section to that which Christians have interpolated in order to make him testify of Jesus, tells how a beautiful woman was seduced in a temple under pretence of being visited by the god Anubis, and the story warns us that many of the so-called sons of God would be more properly designated sons of the priest.

The *Jewish Chronicle* notices Jewish superstitions against taking a census as illustrated in the case of David, whose people are said to have been punished because he numbered them, the instigation to do so being ascribed by Chronicles to Satan, while Samuel attributes it to Jehovah. It says, "Happily such superstitions are rapidly dying out, even among our Russian co-religionists." The most superstitious Jews of the present time are hardly so credulous as the writers of the Bible.

At a recent examination of girls in Cheshire for the rite of confirmation, in answer to the question "What is the outward and visible sign and form in baptism?" the reply of a smiling maid of thirteen was "The baby, sir."

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Children get muddled, and no wonder, over historical characters. We see by the *Pall Mall Gazette* that, after the reading of Bell's poem, "Mary Queen of Scots," the girls in the Fifth Standard were asked who the lady was, and one of them answered "The Virgin Mary." Anyhow there was as much virginity in the one case as in the other.

In a leading article the *Christian Commonwealth* prints a malignant lie about the London Secularists. It says that they went down to Epping Forest, in company with Socialists and Spiritualists, took a lot of beer in barrels, pitched their camp at Starling's Hill, indulged in an orgie, and wound up with "a drunken scuffle. As the matter of fact, the Secularists went to High Beech, and by themselves; they took no beer barrels; they conducted themselves with perfect propriety; and they drove home in their own brakes before dark. No doubt our pious contemporary is thinking of another set of persons, only it puts the Secularists among them to show its Christian charity. It is neither Secularists nor Socialists who go to Epping Forest with beer barrels on Sundays, but certain German clubs.

We noticed recently how the Armenians became heretics through having only one and the same word to express Christ's *nature* and his *person*. The Mohawk Indians are also found to be heretical through a fault of their language. They have no definite articles, and use possessive or relative pronouns instead. So in place of saying "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," these converts say "Glory be to *my* Father, and to *his* Son, and to *their* Holy Ghost." This is a clear confounding of the persons, if not a dividing of the substance of the ever-blessed Trinity, and according to the Athanasian Creed a vast amount of money and pains has been expended on these poor Mohawks to no purpose, for "without doubt they shall perish everlastingly."

Palestine was described by God as a land of Promise flowing with milk and honey. If this was a correct description, it must have altered wonderfully; for a recent pilgrim describes it as a sterile and desolate to a degree and the towns as filthy into the bargain.

It is computed that Palestine is only worth about 200,000 yearly to the Turks and ought to be purchaseable from them for four millions. Why don't Rothschild buy it? Perhaps because some people would next ask why the Jews don't settle there.

At last, and owing to the personal intervention of Lord Plunket, Archbishop of Dublin, an inquiry has been set on foot as to the management of the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, whose gross expenditure and little result has been shown up in the pages of the *Westminster Review* as well as in this journal. The inquiry has been most reluctantly forced on the Society, and it is to be hoped it will be followed by a scrutiny into the management of other missionary bodies. In the recent Wesleyan case the proceedings have been little more than a farce since both the missionaries and Dr. Lunn, who assailed them, are exonerated from all blame.

Miss Milner, a "staunch Church-woman," opened a Nonconformist bazaar at York. She explained her position by saying that in these days all "should work against Atheism, or, as some now called it, Agnosticism." Yes, the Christians should join forces to settle Atheists, and then—go on with their own quarrel.

The Scottish Church is in peril of becoming Ritualistic. At least so think the Rev. Jacob Primmer and the Rev. Robert Thomson. The General Assembly has authorised the publication of "Prayers for Social and Family Worship," with a view of substituting well-written prayers for extemporaneous rot. Whereupon Dr. Primmer calls them "poor fools," who show their "utter incompetency to be ministers of the Gospel." But even the Scotch Presbyterians laugh at Jacob.

Messrs. Primmer and Thomson are to be assisted in their anti-Catholic crusade, that is in spending the legacy of Mr. Hope, by a converted Roman Catholic named Duncan Charles McVarnish, who speaks in Gaelic, and undertakes to prevent Catholicism from spreading in the Highlands.

A Building Scheme Prayer Union is a funny idea, but it commends itself to the intelligence of Rochester Baptist Church. A printed card, with a blank for signatures, pledges the members to pray "every day" for a blessing on the new edifice which is being raised. Prayer is to be offered for cash—of course. That is indispensable. Also for "the workmen to be preserved from accident." This implies that the Lord can stop accidents if he pleases. Well, if he can, and doesn't, he is a curious being. We might also inquire why the workmen engaged on this particular gospel-shop should be more highly favored than their fellow workmen engaged on other buildings.

Considering the well-known views of Mr. John Morley, it is astonishing to find the Young Men's Christian Association at Newcastle asking him to favor them with a lecture. If he complies with the invitation, we suggest that he should address them on Christianity and Common Sense.

A big cyclone last week visited Lawrence, a thriving Massachusetts town, killing six persons and injuring fifty, and destroying over one hundred buildings, which it is said were crushed like egg-shells. A church was also partially destroyed by the visitation, and the value of the property destroyed is estimated at a hundred thousand dollars.

The Rev. S. D. Headlam recently lectured at the West Ham Secular Hall on Christian Socialism. During his discourse, which was about anything but the Socialism of the New Testament, Mr. Headlam said that a Sunday-school teacher is capable of refuting the average Freethought lecturer, and that the men on our platform could not pass the simplest examination in Biblical knowledge. Now we have always thought Mr. Headlam a good sort of a man, though he will drag in his "Lord and Master Jesus Christ" at political meetings, but as a thinker, and especially a Christian thinker, we have never been able to take him seriously. We know of one Secular lecturer who would be happy to show Mr. Headlam what Christian Socialism is, and to do it on a public platform. The audience would then be able to judge whether the Bible knowledge is all on the Christian side.

The Russian Government is very regardful of the salvation of the Deicides. An order has been issued prohibiting foreign missionaries from carrying on religious propaganda among the Jews in Poland in detriment to the exclusive right of propaganda possessed by the Orthodox Greek Church. A Jew might as well be damned for Judaism as for Lutheranism. If he wants to be saved, let him accept at once the only true and infallible religion.

Since the opening of the Zoological Gardens in San Francisco, hundreds of people go there every Sunday, and after watching the antics of the bears care not for church.

The *Edinburgh Evening News* is fair-minded enough to give an extract from Mr. Foote's rejoinder to Mr. Standring. But it says that Mr. Foote does not go to the root of the problem, which is "how to impart to Secularism the inspirational power of the Salvation Army." This "inspirational power" lies in the Army's "appeal to the supernatural hopes and fears," and certainly Secularism will never compete with it in that direction. But, after, all does not the Mahdi beat Booth hollow in this "inspirational power"? His followers have no doubts or hesitations; heaven or hell is the lot of those who obey or disobey him; and they rush fearlessly on rifles and Gatling guns under the "inspirational power" of this faith. Booth's followers encounter nothing worse than bad smells, unless it be an occasional dispute with the police.

The *Evening News* is mistaken in supposing that "Secularism offers nothing to humanity beyond the yawning grave, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest"—which, by the way, is Scriptural language. Secularism offers men something on this side of "the yawning grave"—happiness, usefulness, and dignity. Its message is lost on the vulgar superstitionist. Granted, but the message of the vulgar superstitionist is lost on the Secularist. Is it the fault of a Marcus Aurelius, an Epictetus, or a Spinoza, that the ignorant and stupid devotees of a besotting superstition are unable to appreciate a word of his wisdom?

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 3, Camberwell Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, at 7.30, "Heresy at Oxford: a Review of *Lux Mundi*."

August 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

T. E. PERKINS.—See "Acid Drops." We hope the Victoria Park platform will be well supported.

SERGT. WESTERMAN.—Mr. Forder has received your letter, and notes that the *Freethinker* can be sent to soldiers for a halfpenny. Tracts and pamphlets are sent for the extra postage. We are glad to hear of your success in the West Indies, and send greeting to you and your colleagues.

J. K. SYKES.—Glad to hear the "Freethinker Tracts" are doing good in Southend. Keep pegging away.

L. SPURGEON.—Letters to the local press are very useful. The plates of the Comic Bible Sketches were destroyed or broken in the fire on our premises five years ago. We cannot afford to reproduce them We thank you for circulating our Tracts.

THRIST.—Thanks for the quotation from Ueberweg.

G. DAVIS.—There are many improvements needed, and we hope to carry some of them out. But a Society can only be reformed from inside. Why do you not join and help in the work?

L. H.—The suggestion shall be considered. We have not heard yet from anyone at Norwich. Mr. Cooper used to be a pillar of the cause in that city, but he seems to do little at present.

H. ROWDEN.—Certainly you should get some knowledge of Political Economy before reading special books on the Labor Question. There is a cheap edition of Mill's work at 5s.

W. M. K.—Some of the lines are halting, especially the third, fifth, and seventh.

T. GREEN.—The only possible dispute is over the word "deposed." Do you mean that the change is made on Col. Olcott's suggestion?

S. STANDRING.—Always glad to hear from you. You are doing a capital work.

QUIZ.—It is perfect fiction. There is not the slightest proof that St. Paul was ever in Britain. We have not seen the correspondence in the Newcastle *Chronicle*.

J. S. ROGERS.—We have printed it in full.

T. RILEY.—We shall be glad to see the Barker pamphlet you refer to. Mr. Foote's *Is the Bible Inspired?* is reprinted as a penny pamphlet. He has added quite thirty per cent. of fresh matter.

C. DOEG.—Your private note to hand. Send us further information in due course.

JAMES FIRTH.—The letter was just what Mr. Stead wanted, and he has sent it all over the country. It would be idle to expect the same circulation for Mr. Foote's rejoinder. We are sorry that Mr. Stead's summary is flouted in your faces at Rochdale, but we fear it will continue to be so used

W. HYDE.—That story about Ward Beecher and Colonel Ingersoll was publicly denied by both parties. But, as Ingersoll says, there's nothing in this world so hard to kill as a good, sound, healthy religious lie. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

A. B. Moss.—Received. Shall appear next week. We wish you success in the North.

T. THURLOW.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

C. W. STUART.—The *Bow Bells* figures are incorrect. The Christians are put a few millions too high, the Buddhists more than a hundred millions too low. Sintoism is the ancient religion of Japan. While preserving a belief in evil spirits it nevertheless inculcates a high morality and easily allies itself to Buddhism. See the lectures of C. Ffoundes and Miss Bird in *Religious Systems of the World*.

T. BOX.—Printer's errors will occur in the best regulated houses. We thank you for pointing out the one in question. It is, however, as you perceive, by no means a substantial mistake, but only a misprint of the number of the chapter. *Is the Bible Inspired?* is now on sale. The address of the secretary at Birmingham is, Baskerville Hall, the Crescent.

A. MCALLISTER.—Of course "send" should have been "sends."

F. MARGETSON.—We fear it would only be appreciated by those who witnessed the encounter.

CLAUDIAN.—Jowett's translation of Plato is incomparably the best, but it is very expensive. Grote's *History of Greece* is the only English one we should recommend, though Thirlwall's is not without merit. Whether it is worth your while to learn Latin or Greek is a question you must decide for yourself. Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary* would assist you in reading Homer.

EGYPT.—Draper alludes to something of the kind in his *Conflict Between Religion and Science*.

W. COWELL.—We are not surprised that you are astonished at Bentham's "blasphemy" in the *Church Catechism Examined*. The great Jeremy was unquestionably a thorough enemy of religion, and he could not quite control his intellectual scorn of Christianity. We shall be satisfied with a very small profit on such reprints, a mere return for our time and labor.

G. B.—(1) Your statement was an exaggeration. St. Paul was the only man of much note in the primitive Church, but writers like Origen and Tertullian, before the Council of Nice, were certainly able men. (2) Better send our literature to laymen than to parsons, who have strong material reasons against a change of opinion; though, of course, there is a bare chance that some of them may denounce and so advertise us. But the old birds are too wily for that.

W. H. TAYLOR.—Thanks for the note about Paine. We are not an authority on pocket dictionaries, never having used them. Cassell's French and Latin dictionaries are good at the price.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—La Verité Philosophique—Fair Play—Twentieth Century—East Anglican Daily Times—Glasgow Herald—West Sussex Gazette—Ashore and Afloat—Daily Graphic—Liberty—Edinburgh Evening News—St. Michael's Union Herald—Manchester Examiner.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £77 0s. 1d.

Twelfth List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
E. C.	0	2	6	J. Melling	0	1	0
B. L. Coleman	0	5	0	D. Woodhouse	0	17	0
F. F. Coleman	0	5	0	T. Smith	0	1	0
J. H. E. (2nd don.)	0	10	0	Mrs. Pascoe	0	1	0

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's articles on "Is the Bible Inspired?" have been reprinted as a penny pamphlet. Several pages of new matter have been added, and it is a wonderfully cheap pennyworth. There are sixteen pages of small type. Freethinkers might take copies for distribution among their friends and acquaintances.

Eve and the Apple and *Cain and Abel*, two fresh numbers of "Bible Romances," are now ready. The latter has been revised and added to, and the former almost entirely re-written.

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Mr. Bradlaugh looked somewhat better on the evening of his debate with Mr. Hyndman, but he seemed far from his old self, and he confessed that the effort told upon him more than he expected. This pathetic remark, we regret to say, was jeered at by some of Mr. Hyndman's supporters; indeed, their behaviour all through was shameful. So great was the disorder that Mr. Bradlaugh was three or four times obliged to sit down. Mr. Buxton was an amiable chairman, but the meeting required a master. One fellow, almost a youth, was allowed to reply to Mr. Bradlaugh again and again while he was speaking. The chairman should have had the culprit expelled; and, on one or two occasions, he should have demanded order on a threat of closing the debate.

We hardly know how the debate will read, but our impression was that neither debater did adequate justice to his own side. Perhaps Mr. Bradlaugh was too heavily handicapped by the brutal interruptions, and the consequent generation of personal feeling. Besides, there is no love lost between Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Hyndman, and such a subject requires dispassionate treatment.

Mr. Bradlaugh's health, in our opinion, is endangered by his absorption in public work. A man of his temperament cannot take things easy. His only remedy is to get away from work altogether for a three or six months' holiday. This is pretty plain speaking, but Freethinkers are naturally anxious about Mr. Bradlaugh's health.

Col. Ingersoll has been interviewed on the subject of great impromptu speeches. He says he doesn't believe in the impromptu great speech. All great speeches are the result of much hard labor in preparing for them.

A statue of Voltaire was unveiled on Sunday by M. Le Royer, President of the French Senate, in the market-place of Ferney. The City of Geneva (John Calvin's city!) sent a deputation headed by M. Richard, Councillor of State, and M. Didier, Vice-President of the Executive Council. M. Le Royer, in his address, spoke of Voltaire as the greatest master of the French tongue, the brightest and most keenly perceptive mind of the eighteenth century, and in a sense the father of the Republic.

The North Middlesex Secular Federation held its Summer Conference on Sunday evening at Wood Green. Mr. J. M. Robertson, president, took the chair. The secretary reported a considerable amount of work. It was resolved to organise a Sunday excursion. The grant from the London Federation had secured several lectures for weak Branches. A vote of thanks to this journal was passed for the insertion of notices.

A new Branch with ten members to start it has been formed at Birkenhead. The secretary is Mr. T. W. Turner, 7 Kendel Street, who will be pleased to hear from Freethinkers on the Cheshire side of the Mersey.

The Freethinkers of Wakefield, Normanton and district, desirious of forming a branch of the N.S.S. are requested to write to or call on Mr. F. W. Smith, Barr's Place, Clarion Street, Wakefield.

A special members' meeting of the Three Towns' Branch will be held this evening (Aug. 3) at 7, at 100 Union Street, Plymouth, for the purpose of going through the accounts and preparing for fresh work.

We have received the first Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the North Eastern Secular Federation. It is a cheerful document, reflecting the greatest credit on the leaders of the organisation. They say with perfect truth, "We have shown that the Federation means business."

The Report admits that the work could not have been done as it has been "without the aid of the N.S.S. Executive." Pecuniary and other assistance has been freely rendered. We hope this will meet the eye of those who have not yet subscribed to the Central Fund.

The North-Eastern Federation's Excursion takes place to day (Aug. 3). The Newcastle contingent leaves Newgate Street at 9; the South Shields contingent starts from the Market Place at 8.40. They join the Ox Hill and other contingents at Chester-le-Street. Durham market-place is to be reached at 12. Then come visits to the Old Durham Pleasure Gardens and to Pelaw Wood. At 3 there is to be a knife-and-fork tea at the Temperance Hotel, North Road, Durham. Later on an open-air meeting takes place in Market Square, Mr. A. B. Moss being among the speakers. All that is now required is fine weather.

On July 23rd Mr. Edward Truelove, the veteran Freethought and Radical publisher, celebrated his golden wedding. A number of friends met to do honor to one who has so staunchly upheld his principles for so many years. On Oct. 9 Mr. Truelove will celebrate his 81st birthday.

A correspondent informs us that one newsagent at Nelson, a small town in Lancashire, sells sixty copies of the *Freethinker* weekly.

The report of the Convention held in Washington to organise the Women's National Liberal Union has been issued in pamphlet form, and can be obtained from Mrs. Gage, Fayetteville, New York. The W.N.L.U. not only goes in for woman suffrage, but boldly attacks the Church as the worst enemy, not only of woman's freedom, but of freedom in general.

A Masonic writer in *La Verité Philosophique* argues in favor of the admission of women to the order of Freemasons. This will be no more in opposition to the traditions of the order than dispensing with belief in the Grand Architect of the Universe. The continental Freemasons appear to be well in the van of progress, but our own are so far in the rear that they must be classed with the most conservative in the country.

The *Athenæum* gives Sir William Dawson, the Christian scientist, a severe drubbing. Reviewing his latest volume, published by the Religious Tract Society, it says there is "one passage which shows Sir William either to be entirely ignorant of one of the most elementary facts of physiology, or—which we cannot believe—to have made a statement which he knows to be untrue." It adds that a person so ignorant of fundamental facts has "really no authority to speak on the problems of evolution," and "if he has been manipulating his facts to suit his argument he is unfit to deal with the deeper questions which are implied by his use of the word 'revelation.'"

IS AGNOSTICISM PRESUMPTUOUS?

"An Agnostic is a man who says he knows nothing, and thinks he knows everything." I quote from an American church newspaper.

Epigram is a delightful weapon in the hands of the controversialist. The neat turn of phrase has something very comforting about it — to the epigrammatist; and if its effect on the epigrammatee (excuse the coinage) is irritating rather than comforting—well, so much the better. In the sting—or, to be more correct, in the infliction of the sting—lies the greater part of the sweetness. An epigram has various advantages. It possesses the proverbial soul of wit. It is smart, biting, polished. After giving birth to one, there steals over you a feeling of quite maternal happiness, as you nurse and fondle the newborn offspring of your own fertile brain.

But epigram has also its disadvantages. Most of our gold is tainted with alloy; and so this particular form of satirical opinionativeness is not entirely good. It is apt to be one-sided and superficial. Strange, indeed, were it otherwise. An attempt to sum up the numerous pros and cons. of a thorny controversy in half-a-dozen words it as likely to conduce to flippant superficiality as to weighty condensation. And when this narrow compass has also to contain a good-sized lump of uncharity, the valuable matter left stands a fair chance of being reduced to a minimum quality.

The epigram which I have chosen as my text (to borrow an expression familiar to the readers and writers of the paper whence this curious definition is taken) is certainly not free from the disadvantages mentioned. Without exaggeration one might say that it is aptly illustrative of them, and that, as a model of what a judicial pronouncement on an intellectual problem should *not* be, it is invaluable.

That this is not too strong a judgment will, I think, be sufficiently apparent to any candid mind on a little con-

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sideration of the subject; and that is what I propose to give to this ecclesiastical witticism in the next few paragraphs.

It is not my province now to travel over the whole field of theological controversy. It is intended to confine these remarks to one special point, a point so constantly and painfully evident in discussions on this subject, namely, the personal charges hurled at the devoted heads of Freethinkers. But these again are so many that to range over them all would take up much more space than is provided by the limits of a short paper. Therefore, I will deal with but one of them, the charge insinuated in the above excerpt—the charge of presumption.

"No case; abuse plaintiff's attorney." A well-worn phrase, but it wears well still. The advocates who defend dogmatic theology do most certainly abuse with spirited energy those who champion the opposite side. I do not say that therefore they have no case; yet—well, appearances are against them. To this stricture there should, I know, be mentioned honorable exceptions, but they are unfortunately so rare that their voices are lost in the general clamor of vituperation.

Presumption is a charge which goes down very well with lots of good people. "What," they are told (and readily believe), "can exceed the presumption of men who dare to doubt the glorious truths impressed on them in pulpit and Bible—these poor, know-nothing worms, who burrow in the earth's mire, these petty little insects, who crawl over the surface of a sin-stained world, and by God's grace are allowed to bask for a while in his sun's rays!"

Here we are, born in a Christian country, the means of grace all around us, noble examples of piety (of a sort) set up for our emulation in high places, church bells calling us every Sunday (and pretty frequently in the week too, for that matter) to worship, the truths of Scripture instilled into our minds from earliest childhood, the respect of our neighbors held out to us if we are good Churchmen; everything, in fact, leading us along the ecclesiastical path; and yet some of us, like unruly horses—or shall we say donkeys?—jib and back, and persist in taking the opposite direction. It does seem rather like presumption, on a superficial view any way. But I would ask you to go a little below the surface, to divest your minds of the clothes of prejudice, and take a plunge into the waters of truth, and then see if you do not come up to the top again with a more charitable conception of the position of the Freethinkers.

Let me clear the ground by first stating shortly what the position of the Agnostic is. As our ecclesiastical friend says, "the Agnostic is a man who says he knows nothing." Nothing, that is, outside the radius of limited human faculties, which sounds very like a truism. We know, to adopt the formula of the Kantian philosophy, that "we are." By the aid of the lamp of Science we can trace our history back a long though fragmentary way, and tell to some extent what we are and how we came here. But we soon reach the boundary. We come to a dead stop, a gloom of impenetrable darkness, a wall on whose thickness we can make no impression, directly we ask the question, What is life? what is the motive power at work behind the visible operations of Nature? There, at that point, unlike the theologian, we stop. It is here that he leaves us. The Christian admits the unutterable wonderfulness of the Universe, with its countless array of immense worlds revolving ceaselessly through space, and the minute worlds within worlds which the microscope affords us glimpses of. He stands in the awful presence of all this beauty and life and strength, grand beyond expression in its immensity, grand also in its tiny details, this perfect animated machinery—and he dares to explain it all by a concoction from the legends of some tribes of barbarian Orientals, whose wise men expounded nature and philosophy in days when the light of knowledge was so dim that the flatness of the earth and the sun's revolution around it were regarded as axiomatic facts, and when diseases were thought to be the work of a divine spirit instead of the result of a dirty body. These puerile conceptions, compounded with many will-o'-the-wisps of fancy and pseudo-philosophic imaginings of a later civilisation, are accepted as scientific certainties; nay more, for when they clash with the findings of Science, Science is treated as far as possible with a contemptuous indifference that would be amusing were it not also so sad.

ERNEST E. WILLIAMS.

(To be concluded.)

"My son" said a parson of severe aspect, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder, "I believe Satan has got hold of you" "I believe so too," was the reply.

HUXLEY ON A PARTIAL DELUGE.

LET us, provisionally, accept the theory of a partial deluge, and try to form a clear mental picture of the occurrence. Let us suppose that, for forty days and forty nights, such a vast quantity of water was poured upon the ground that the whole surface of Mesopotamia was covered by water to a depth certainly greater, probably much greater, than fifteen cubits, or twenty feet (Gen. vii. 20). The inundation prevails upon the earth for one hundred and fifty days; and then the flood gradually decreases, until, on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark, which had previously floated on its surface, grounds upon the 'mountains of Ararat' (Gen. viii. 34). Then, as Diestel has acutely pointed out (*Sintflut*, p. 13), we are to imagine the further subsidence of the flood to take place so gradually that it was not until nearly two months and a-half after this time (that is to say, on the first day of the tenth month) that the 'tops of the mountains' became visible. Hence it follows that, if the ark drew even as much as twenty feet of water, the level of the inundation fell very slowly—at a rate of only a few inches a day—until the top of the mountain on which it rested became visible. This is an amount of movement which, if it took place in the sea, would be overlooked by ordinary people on the shore. But the Mesopotamian plain slopes gently, from an elevation of 500 or 600 feet at its northern end, to the sea, at its southern end, with hardly so much as a notable ridge to break its uniform flatness, for 300 to 400 miles. These being the conditions of the case, the following inquiry naturally presents itself: not, be it observed, as a recondite problem, generated by modern speculation, but as a plain suggestion flowing out of that very ordinary and archaic piece of knowledge that water cannot be piled up in a heap like sand; or that it seeks the lowest level. When, after 150 days, 'the fountains also of the deep and windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained' (Gen. viii. 2), what prevented the mass of water, several, possibly very many, fathoms deep, which covered, say, the present site of Bagdad, from sweeping seaward in a furious torrent; and, in a very few hours, leaving, not only the 'tops of the mountains,' but the whole plain, save any minor depressions, bare? How could its subsidence, by any possibility, be an affair of weeks and months?

And if this difficulty is not enough, let any one try to imagine how a mass of water several, perhaps very many, fathoms deep, could be accumulated on a flat surface of land rising well above the sea, and separated from it by no sort of barrier Most people know Lord's Cricket-ground. Would it not be in absurd contradiction to our common knowledge of the properties of water to imagine that, if all the mains of all the waterworks of London were turned on to it, they could maintain a heap of water twenty feet deep over its level surface? Is it not obvious that the water, whatever momentary accumulation might take place at first, would not stop there, but that it would dash, like a mighty mill-race, southwards down the gentle slope which ends in the Thames? And is it not further obvious, that whatever depth of water might be maintained over the cricket-ground, so long as all the mains poured on to it, anything which floated there would be speedily whirled away by the current, like a cork in a gutter when the rain pours? But if this is so, then it is no less certain that Noah's deeply laden, sailless, oarless, and rudderless craft, if by good fortune it escaped capsizing in whirlpools, or having its bottom knocked into holes by snags (like those which prove fatal even to well-built steamers on the Mississippi in our day), would have speedily found itself a good way down the Persian Gulf, and not long after in the Indian Ocean, somewhere between Arabia and Hindostan. Even if, eventually, the ark might have gone ashore, with other jetsam and flotsam, on the coasts of Arabia, or of Hindostan, or of the Maldives, or of Madagascar, its return to the 'mountains of Ararat' would have been a miracle more stupendous than all the rest.

Thus, the last state of the would-be reconcilers of the story of the Deluge with fact is worse than the first. All that they have done is to transfer the contradictions to established truth from the region of science proper to that of common information and common sense. For, really, the assertion that the surface of a body of deep water, to which no addition was made, and which there was nothing to stop from running into the sea, sank at the rate of only a few inches or even feet a day, simply outrages the most ordinary and familiar teachings of every man's daily experience. A child may see the folly of it. —*Nineteenth Century.*

The colleges of the twentieth century will have little room for dead languages and supernaturalism; the past and the future will defer to the claims of the present; the text books of the coming generation will teach the science of life.—*Dr. Felix L. Oswald, "American Auguries."*

The priest insists on five things—First, There is a God; Second, He has made known his will; Third, He has selected me to explain this message; Fourth, We will now take up a collection; Fifth, Those who fail to subscribe will certainly be damned.—*Ingersoll.*

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LOST TREASURES.

The Rabbis tell us that the rod of Moses had been carved by Adam out of a tree in Eden, that Noah bequeathed it to Shem, that it descended to Abraham, that Isaac gave it to Jacob; that during his stay in Egypt he gave it to Joseph, and it became the possession of Moses. Tradition has no more to tell us either of that or of the Tables of the Law, which were shattered on Mount Sinai, or of the ark of the covenant itself, save that when King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple, the prophet Jeremiah took the Ark and the Tables of the Law, and the other sacred relics, and hid them in a cleft of Mount Sinai, where the Talmudists add, one day he will reappear to point them out. The rock-hewn Tables of the Law are indestructable in themselves, somewhere hidden therefore, but still existing they must be. Will they ever return to the custody of the House of Israel? Where too, are the stones of the High Priests' breast-plate, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes? They cannot perish. We have stones in our possession of a far older date, signets and rings of Nimrod, and Erech, and Sennacherib and others. Is it not strange that these incomparably more precious engraved gems have passed away from sight, to which so awful and mystic significance is attached? Yet so it is. These rare, and sacred, and most valuable relics are among the irreparable and lamentable losses the chosen people have sustained. Where is that seal of Solomon concerning which the *Talmud* and the *Arabian Nights* relate such wonders? It had power, so the Jews affirm, to seal and unloose the Genii or bind them in captivity. Its owner was potent to understand the language of the birds and beasts. We have recovered the seal of Uzziah deep down in the foundations of Jerusalem, but if our explorers had lit upon Solomon's how much more to the purpose it would have been! "*All the Year Round*," *May*, 1882.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION.

Think of the heretical tribunals, inquisitions, religious wars, crusades, Socrates' cup of poison, Bruno's and Vanini's death in the flames! Is all this to day quite a thing of the past? How can genuine philosophical effort, sincere search after truth, and noblest calling of the noblest men, be let and hindered more completely than by a conventional system of metaphysics enjoying a state monopoly, the principles of which are impressed into every head in earliest youth so earnestly, so deeply, and so firmly, that unless the mind is miraculously elastic, they remain indelible. In this way the groundwork of all healthy reason is once for all deranged; that is to say, the capacity for original thought and unbiased judgment, which is weak enough with itself, is, in regard to those subjects to which it might be applied, for ever paralysed and ruined.—*Schopenhauer.*

HE PREFERS HELL.

A well-known Society widow who has worn the "weeds" for a little over a year, and whose temper is said to have a strong dash of pepper in it, attended a spritualistic *séance* one day last week. Table rapping was in order, and she seized this opportunity of communing with the late lamented."

"Are you happy in the other world?" she asked.

A single tap signified "Yes."

"Happier than you were in this?"

Again "Yes" was rapped out.

"Then you must be in heaven?"

Then there was quite a long pause, and all held their breaths as the shade of the late Mr. B. alphabetically rapped out—

"On the contrary, I am in hell."

The gay widow hastily grabbed her satchel and departed, vowing that spiritualism was an arrant fraud, while those present who knew her smiled audibly.

RUDE TO A BISHOP.

A venerable and dignified bishop was recently having his portrait painted by an eminent artist. After sitting steadily for about an hour in silence, his lordship thought he would like to break the monotony with a remark. Accordingly he said to the artist, "How are you getting on?" To the astonishment of his sitter, the knight of the palette, absorbed in his work, thus replied, "Move your head a little that way, and shut your mouth!" Not being accustomed to be spoken to in this fashion, the bishop said, "May I ask why you address me in this manner?" Artist (still absorbed): "I want to take off a little of your cheek." Collapse of the bishop.

PROFANE JOKES.

At a Salvation meeting a bright youth said to some young woman seated in front of him, "Don't be washed in the blood of the Lamb to-night; it's right dirty to-night, they have just been washing some colliers in it."

Miss Chatty (showing her library): "Yes, that's Browning. It's awfully good, I suppose, but I cannot say I understand him." Friend: "And you have Praed?" Miss C. (blushing): "Yes I have, but it didn't do any good."

Teacher: "Johnny, I should think you would be ashamed of yourself to run away from school for the sake of floating around in that old leaky flat-bottomed boat. Weren't you afraid of getting drowned?" Johnny: "No'm; not so much as on shore." Teacher: "What nonsense! Did you ever hear of anybody going out in a boat for fear of getting drowned?" Johnny: "Yes'm." Teacher (astonished): "Who?" Johnny: "Noer."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Heminfer, "The late Eight Hours Debate." Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell — 61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Heresy at Oxford: a Review of *Lux Mundi*."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30 Mr. T. Parris, "A Revolution Needed."

West Ham — 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, 'Richard Carlile and the Free Press."

OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, a lecture.

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. J. Fagan, "Belief, Disbelief, and Unbelief"

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Jesus and his Beliefs."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Robert Owen."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Morality of the Messiah."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Morality of the Messiah."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt will lecture.

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecies as a Test of Truth."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Prophets and Prophecies."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, a lecture.

Old Southgate — On the Green, 7.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Is Southgate a Christian Village?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Long, "Christian v. Secular Teachings and Practice."

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Why I Don't Believe in God."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, a lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Land of England and Jehovah."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. W. Heaford, "What Think ye of Christ?"

COUNTRY.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Doeg, "God so Loved the World."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, a lecture.

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Corbyn, "The Coming General Election: What do Radicals Want?"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, a lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London S.E. — North-Eastern Secular Federation tour:—Sun., Aug. 3, Durham.

August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning) Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening). Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 3, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 3 (morning), Camberwell; 10 (morning) Midland Arches; 17 (morning), Bethnal Green; 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell. 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green; 24, Brighton; 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 32.] SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

FOOLING JACK.

ONE of the most remarkable signs of the times is the spread of Freethought in the army and navy. More than one Branch of the National Secular Society is composed entirely of soldiers, and although the conditions of life on board ship do not admit (at least at present) of Branches being maintained there, the Society boasts of a good many members in that branch of the service. Copies of this journal are passed from hand to hand, and hundreds of our pamphlets are thumbed until they are almost illegible. Jack is not so superstitious as he used to be. He does not swallow the chaplain's nostrums with the old implicit faith. He is learning that he has a head of his own, and beginning to think for himself. His "superiors"—that is, the persons who are in office over him, and almost fancy themselves of a different species—resent this as an impertinence. They appear to think that Jack should not only do what he is told, but believe what he is told. His duty is to obey, and theirs to command; and the despotism on the one side, and the submission on the other, are supposed to be almost unlimited. Accordingly we hear from time to time of men being worried by the chaplain, and rebuked by the captain, for reading the *Freethinker*. Sometimes, indeed, the paper has been intercepted, and Jack has been solemnly informed that he will not be allowed to receive such "blasphemous" periodicals. But an editorial letter has generally put an end to this odious tyranny.

A proof that we are not exaggerating is furnished by a document to which we drew attention last week; namely, the August "monthly letter" from Miss Weston to "the Royal Navy and Royal Marines." Miss Weston is "the sailor's friend." By means of pertinaciously begged subscriptions she has raised a palatial building at Portsmouth for the men of the navy, though it may be doubted whether their patronage of the establishment is commensurate with its imposing exterior. However, it was recently opened by a prince of the blood, and therefore has the best chances of success; and so far as it induces Jack ashore to sleep in a clean bed, and drink twopennyworth of cocoa instead of a shilling'sworth of rum, it is deserving of praise; although, for our part, we are decidedly of opinion that a greater amount of good would be done if Jack were treated a little more like a man, and a little less like an overgrown baby.

Miss Weston is granted every facility for her work. She and her agents are allowed a free run of the ships and barracks. Her monthly letter is distributed wholesale, and apparently by the authorities, for we have seen copies bearing the official stamp. Miss Weston's writing is simplicity itself. Jack is reputed to be soft-hearted; Miss Weston treats him as soft-headed. She appears to think any nonsense good enough for him; or it may be that her letters are the best she can write, and that their ineptitude springs from no deliberate purpose, but simply from the lady's incapacity. In either case our title is justified. It comes to the same thing in the end, whether she is fooling Jack, or treating him like a fool because she cannot do better.

Miss Weston's letter for August is all about the *Freethinker*. We may take it, therefore, as a proof that she is aware of its being extensively read in the navy. Her letter assumes the form of "a little story." The arguments are of a similar character. In fact, the whole thing is a work of imagination.

"Joe the marine is gone to sea," the song says, and Miss Weston calls her marine Joe. Her sailor is Jack. These are the two characters in the story. Joe is a Freethinker, at least he reads the *Freethinker*. Jack "once belonged to the party," but thanks to Miss Weston, or some other capable instructor, he has learnt "a thing or two more." This is exactly as it should be. It is a very nice arrangement. Joe acts as a chopping-block for Jack, and Jack is a mouthpiece for Miss Weston.

Jack tackles Joe about reading the *Freethinker* and invites him to a confabulation on the contents of that pestilent paper, with its "Acid Drops" that are "sour enough to turn all the milk in creation"—though, on the whole, sailors would be more concerned if they soured all the *rum*. When the confabulation comes off, the *Freethinker* is judiciously dropped; at least its contents are not discussed. Jack begins to untie Bible knots for Joe, and this is how he does it.

First comes his exordium. He tells Joe that the Bible "is the most commonsense book in the world," which no person could help thinking it who had read our *Bible Absurdities*. Still, it has "very hard knots in it." But what of that? Its very hardness to understand is a proof that God wrote it. Any fool could write plain. Besides "there's lots of honey in it." No instances are given, but we presume the lady refers to Lot and his daughters, Judah and Tamar, the Levite and his concubine, Jacob's sleeping with the wrong lady, David's adventures with Bathsheba, and other edifying Bible stories; or perchance to the luscious descriptions of the Song of Songs which is (or rather *isn't*) Solomon's.

Jack takes the marlinespike of faith and undoes the Bible knots. He reads "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." There you are, says Miss Weston—we beg pardon, Jack: or should it be Jack Weston?—there you are, there is no date given, you can "roll in ten million years if you like." Perhaps so. But what if you don't like? And how about the six-days' creation? Well, says Jack, the world may have been building (note the word!) for millions of years, and it may have been fitted up for man's residence in a week. It wasn't after all, though; for Jack tells Joe that "day" means "period"; and Joe, who is only a Miss Weston sceptic, is floored at once. He does not reply (Miss Weston does not want him to) that "day" means *day*, and that, if it does not, the Fourth Commandment is a screaming farce.

As to light being created on Monday, and the sun on Thursday, Jack is very little troubled. He for-

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gets that the earth is a child of the sun. "I'm a torpedo man," he says, and goes on to argue that light may have preceded the sun by millions of years. There is electric light, for instance. True, but Jack forgets that grass and fruit trees come before the sun in Genesis. Perhaps he will ask a farmer to grow apples with electric light. If the experiment is successful it will be a great aid to the theologians.

Here endeth Jack's wonderful untying of the Creation knot. Poor Joe is dumbfoundered. The wonder is it did not send him into an asylum.

The next knot is the Deluge. Jack scouts the idea of a universal flood. True, the Bible says the flood covered all the highest hills under the whole heaven, but the Bible has a knack of not meaning what it says. The words mean "as far as the eye could reach." Then as to the height of the flood. "Ararat means a hilly district," and the hill the ark rested on may have been anything from a hundred to a thousand feet high. But Jack omits to tells us how a body of water, of that height, could be kept standing on a particular spot without flowing away, in obedience to the law that fluids will seek their level. Then as to the water. Where did it come from? "The fountains of the great deep were broken up." That means there was "a tidal wave," which, by the way, is a queer phenomenon in the part of Asia where the flood is said to have occurred. Shakespeare's ships in Bohemia are nothing to it. There were also the windows of heaven, that were opened. On this point Jack gives Joe some very novel information. "As to the atmosphere," he says, "I know from my studies that an electric spark passed through it will turn it into water at once," and "there would soon be enough to drown the world."

Poor Jack! Or rather poor Miss Weston! Some one has been abusing her easy credulity. The atmosphere does not contain the ingredients of water. It is composed of oxygen and nitrogen, while water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen. How wonderful that Miss Weston did not reflect on the precariousness of life on her theory. If an electric spark would turn the atmosphere into water, it would be all over with the human race in a single thunderstorm.

With respect to the beasts, birds, and insects that sailed in the ark, and constituted the most wonderful menagerie on record, it is Jack's opinion that they belonged only to "the part where the flood prevailed," although he gives no reason for believing that he is better acquainted with the meaning of the Holy Ghost than the editors of the Authorised and Revised Versions. Nor does he explain how, in that age, a ship was built as big as "the *Great Eastern*." He does attempt, however, to explain how the animals came together. During a thunderstorm the cattle, pigs, and geese on his "father's farm" used to "come to the farm yard for shelter," and "the creatures in Noah's day were not more stupid than those alive now." Perhaps not, though in view of what Darwin tells us the point is debateable. But how did all the animals of Mesopotamia, or wherever it was, learn that Noah was building an ark for them? How did they find their way to it when "the thunderstorm" began? And how was it that only two of each species had the sense to come along?

For all her cock-sureness, Miss Weston seems to feel that such "arguments" are insufficient. She therefore winds up with the old-fashioned appeal to sentiment, telling us how Ben Bolt (good old Ben!) silenced a red-hot sceptic. After piping his eye at hearing "the Savior he loved laughed at," Ben Bolt thumped his manly chest, and declared that he had got the Savior in there. That settled it. No one could resist the force of "Ben Bolt's internal evidence." We should think not, indeed. On the whole, we advise Miss Weston to stick to this line of argument. She does it well, for it is just on the level of her intelligence. If she wants to fool Jack, this is her only chance of success. It is better—for *her* at least—than floundering in the shallows of science, and fishing up such wonderful facts as that water is made of oxygen and nitrogen.

G. W. FOOTE.

SALVATION.

"WHAT must I do to be saved?" is the very improbable question put in the mouth of a Pagan jailor by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles to educe the answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Christians are fond of repeating this stereotyped question and answer without pausing to inquire into its pertinence or meaning. What is it human beings need to be saved from, and how is their salvation to be effected?

The evils which afflict mankind are plentiful, but from which of them can they be saved by belief? No one supposes it can save us from fire, flood, famine, or the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to. Will believing on the Lord Jesus Christ save us from ignorance, the fruitful parent of so many woes? Jesus himself thought that disease was the work of demons. The true attitude of the believer was expressed by Paul, who called the wisdom of this world foolishness with God, and who expressed himself determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Such a course is an encouragement of ignorance. Will it save us from poverty? Jesus taught "Blessed be ye poor"; and his teaching of taking no thought for the morrow, and giving to every one that asketh, would make pauperism universal.

What has raised man from the condition of a troglodyte with no thought beyond the immediate satisfaction of bodily wants? Growth of intelligence. This has taught him to plough and sow, to reap and mow, to provide for the future. Christian Salvation never produced a grain of wheat, and is as powerless to stay the hunger of a savage as to satisfy the intellectual aspirations of a civilised man. Remove all that science has done, let that only remain which Christianity has done, and what would man be but a credulous superstitious savage?

But it is said the mission of Christianity is higher than that of ministering to man's material wants. It saves him from sin. Is this really so? Is the Christian saved from sin; from lying, envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness? Are not our jails populated with Christians who have received a Christian education? Who will lend money to a Christian on the simple security that he is a believer? Christianity has had a long innings. What has this divine institution done to remove the palpable evils of war, oppression, poverty, drunkenness, prostitution or disease?

Every Sunday Christians confess themselves miserable offenders and pray that their trespasses may be forgiven. Why is this so if they are saved from their sins? Why is such an immense army of preachers employed in the war against sin? It is safe to say they have spent vastly more time and effort in endeavoring to suppress the imaginary sins of Sabbath breaking and inattention to their nostrums, than in coping with any of the real evils which afflict humanity. The Church has always devoted more energy to suppress heresy than to inculcate morality.

What then does Christianity save from? From the wrath of God and eternal damnation. That is it sets up a fictitious bogey and then pretends to be the deliverer from this invented terror.

The present generation has witnessed the rise and spread of a Salvation Army. Really there is nothing novel in the phenomenon. Religionists have ever been prone to outbursts of revivalism, more properly termed survivalism, being recrudences of semi-savage beliefs and practices dating from a time when religion

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was less under the dominion of reason than at present. Even the distinctive feature of the S. A., that which gives it all its force and power, its military discipline, is but a copy of the organisation of the Jesuits, and that body, though it has not ventured on bands, banners, and accoutrements, can boast of having its members more in hand than the followers of William Booth.

What is the Salvation of the Salvation Army? Manifestly it does not save from ignorance and vulgarity. It pretends, indeed, only to offer the Christian scheme of salvation through Christ's blood. Its aim is accomplished when its followers can sing,

> Although I was wicked and lazy, and always was drunken and low,
> I'm washed in the blood of Jesus, so now I am whiter than snow.

Salvation through the merits of another, Christian Salvation, is really a gospel of rascality, a comfortable creed for those desirous of escaping the consequences of their misdeeds, and who hope to gain everlasting happiness on the easiest terms possible. It is small wonder that a faith which promises so much for so little should become a screaming success, when in addition it turns religion into a popular entertainment.

We are far from denying that some persons are improved by joining the Salvation Army. Many of the same persons would be improved by becoming Mohammedans. A man has been a drunkard. He joins the Salvation Army and becomes a teetotaller. What is it saves him from drunkenness? He says it is being washed in the blood of the Lamb. But evidently it is simply giving up drink, for the same result would have followed had he joined a teetotal organisation though all of them were infidels. The Army is of course a support, inasmuch as it environs him with a public opinion favorable to his reformation in this respect. But it gives him a new stimulant of fanaticism, and of this we must say as of other stimulants. While we do not deny the efficacy of brandy in particular instances, we are certainly averse to recommending it as a beverage. We have no more belief in moral miracles than in physical ones.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN.

The road to Heaven!!! I mean the heaven believed in by hundreds of thousands of Christians; the heaven spoken of in the Gospels, where angels pass their time in singing anthems around the throne of God; the heaven in which Father Abraham resides, and where at one time he was wont to carry about with him a poor beggar named Lazarus in his bosom; the heaven to which Enoch was despatched because of an early habit he acquired of "walking with God"; the heaven to which Elijah travelled in a fiery chariot with horses of fire;—in short, the heaven to which Jesus, the Christian God, journeyed after he had risen from the dead, and about which the Christians talk without ceasing.

Two circumstances recently led me to think upon this subject; first the sight of a balloon in distress;—a balloon over which the aeronaut had temporarily lost control; and secondly a most audacious sermon by the Rev. Dr. Talmage on "The Ascension." In respect to the balloon, I observed that the aeronaut was entirely at the mercy of the wind as to the direction his machine should take, and that even when he wished to descend he could not drop within hundreds of yards of the spot upon which he wished to alight. So I reasoned thus with myself. "Here is a man," said I, "who by the aid of scientific knowledge is able in some degree to navigate a machine through the air, and if it were possible to reach the Christian Heaven, would probably, like Stanley, go on an exploring expedition through the darkest celestial continents in search of this 'home of the blest.'"

But how would it be possible for him to find it? In what direction does it lie? Nobody knows. None of the persons who are alleged to have taken the voyage have ever come back to give an account of the journey. If any of them had returned they would certainly have been invited to address the Church Congress, or read a paper before the members of one of the great scientific societies.

Now if the aeronaut with his scientific apparatus could not safely undertake a journey to heaven, what possible chance would an individual have who tried an ascent without such an appliance? I myself once saw an individual endeavoring to fly with a pair of "property" "wings," but he soon came to grief, and was converted into a ghastly pulp in one of the streets of Chelsea. But if the Gospels be true, Jesus flew off this earth in the direction of the clouds nearly two thousand years ago and has not been seen since. Who saw him fly? Certainly not Matthew, who mentions the resurrection, but is altogether silent on the important question of the ascension. Nor John, who either knew nothing of it, or forgot to mention it, or did not believe in it. Christians have therefore to rely upon the testimony of Mark or Luke for this extraordinary performance. But the very passage in Mark in which it occurs follows the now admittedly interpolated verses commencing "Go ye into all the world," etc., and stands therefore with them in the category of the highly improbable, if not the altogether discredited. The verse says: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God." Luke varies the sentence by saying that while Jesus was blessing his disciples "he was parted from them and carried up into heaven," but does not say whether Jesus sat on the right or the left hand of God—who being a "Spirit" has no hand either right or left to sit near.

But I repeat "Who saw Jesus fly?" Neither Mark nor Luke write like eye-witnesses. Neither of them says that "while we—his disciples—were speaking to him, Jesus suddenly leapt into the air, and went up, up, up, until he disappeared through the clouds and we never saw him again." No, they talk as though somebody had told them that Jesus had disappeared, and then they confidently affirm that he went straight off to heaven and sat at his father's right hand.

How could they know that he went to heaven because he went up? For all they knew to the contrary, he might have gone off to some other planet, to carry on the business of miracle-worker there. Indeed, he might have gone off to each planet in the universe in turn, to repeat the tragedy of the atonement, before finally making his appearance in heaven. Or—may I venture to suggest?—he might have gone straight off to Hell, for although he is said to have gone up, the word "up" in this case may have meant down, for when we are dealing with a planet of globular shape, it depends upon the position of the earth at the moment a thing or body leaves it as to whether it goes "up" or "down," and even then these terms are purely arbitrary. But Dr. Talmage knows a great deal more about it than either of the Gospel writers. He not only knows that Jesus went straight off to heaven, but he knows also what sort of reception he received on his arrival. According to Talmage, this is what the celestial inhabitants probably said: "Here he comes! Make way for him! Push back the bolts of diamond! Take hold of the doors of pearl and hoist them from their hinges of gold! Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in."

So the doors of heaven have bolts and hinges, and can be lifted up. Here's work for somebody, although

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"bolts of diamond" seems to be a new class of manufactured goods known only in the celestial regions.

Everybody knows to-day that to fly off the earth in the way in which Jesus is represented to have done, without any scientific appliance to assist him, is a distinct violation of the law of gravitation and a contradiction of the collective experience of mankind.

Some Christians say Jesus suspended the law of gravitation; to which Hume replied that to suspend one law involved the suspension of all the laws of the universe. More subtle-minded Christians, therefore, change the argument and say that Jesus did not suspend or violate any of the laws of nature; but by his omnipotent power he called into existence a force which modified the existing laws and enabled him to accomplish his purpose. But what proof can the Christians offer to substantiate this assertion? The Gospel writers did not think that Jesus called into being this new force; they regarded it as only one among the numerous miracles Jesus performed in order to demonstrate his divine origin and supernatural character.

They saw nothing more strange or wonderful in the ascension of Jesus than in his walking upon the sea, or calling Lazarus from the grave—it was all part and parcel of his miraculous career. Dr. Talmage, however, makes short work of such a trivial affair as the law of gravitation. If such a law as that stood in the way of Christ's ascension, so much the worse for the law of gravitation. It must go; it must relax its grip upon him, for is he not ready for flight? To use Talmage's words, "That law must now give way to him who made the law." It may hold the other stars, but it cannot hold the morning star of redemption; it may hold the noonday sun, but it cannot hold the sun of righteousness. But did Dr. Talmage understand what he was talking about? What is called the "law of gravitation" is not some written law that could be revoked at will. It is the observed order of natural phenomena, which has never been known to deviate in the smallest possible degree; indeed, to undo the law of gravitation would mean to undo the chain of causes and effects throughout eternity.

Talmage is sure also that it was the body of Jesus that ascended, and not his soul. "The same body that rose from Joseph's tomb ascended from Mount Olivet. Our human nature is in heaven to-day. Just as they had seen Christ for forty days he ascended, head, face, shoulders, hands, feet, and the entire human organism." Ah, that settles it! Talmage has gone and done it. He has committed the unpardonable sin. He has divided the substance. The Father and the Son are no longer one—the three persons of the blessed Trinity are separated and distinct for ever. Jesus the God has gone to heaven in the form of a man, and will remain so for evermore. The scarred and bruised form of Jesus carried to heaven in triumph! No wonder the angels waved their banners, blew their trumpets and chanted their hymns, for after all what is here typified is the ultimate triumph of humanity. So we too join in the hymn—

"The angels thronged his chariot wheels
And bore him to his throne,
Then swept their golden harps and sung
The glorious work is done."

But how long must we wait for the triumph of humanity over superstition?

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

NORTH EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION ANNUAL PICNIC.

GLORIOUS weather ushered in the morning of August 3rd, and the hope of hundreds of Secularists that fine weather would favor their annual picnic was realised. At 9 a.m. four brakes containing the Newcastle contingent started for the scene of action. All determined to enjoy themselves, and a brighter, merrier company could not have been. An hour's drive brought us to Chester-le-Street, where a halt was made at the Circus to wait for the other contingents. The Chester-le-Street friends were in force, Mr. Moss—who seems a great favorite among the pit folk—being with them. Close on eleven the Ox Hill and South Shields contingents were descried in the distance, and soon the whole company were once more on their journey to Durham. Arriving at the Market Place, it was found that the number present had far exceeded the highest anticipations, Freethinkers being there from all parts of the country. A move was soon made to Old Durham Gardens, one of the most beautiful and romantic spots imaginable, and no time was lost in the way of pleasure making. Dancing on the grass, musical chain, kiss in ring, were indulged in by the younger portion, and many of the old hands, for as our genial Mr. Moss, well said, "Let us enjoy ourselves like children; for what is a man but a grown up child?" Others enjoyed themselves in a quieter fashion, and parties could be seen lying under the cool shade of the trees, having a picnic all to themselves. At three o'clock a large number of the company assembled in the wood, on a sloping bank, for the purpose of being photographed. No doubt many present will prize this picture as a souvenir of this pleasant outing, comprising as it does most of the principal Freethinkers of the district.

By 4 p.m. the party had returned to the city for tea, and here the only hitch of the day occurred. The unprecedented attendance made it impossible for the hotel keeper to meet satisfactorily the demands made upon him, and caused some grumbling. The hotel keeper objected to the singing contest taking place, and it had to be postponed. But these were small matters, and in no way damped the enthusiasm of the trippers. The meeting in the Market Place was a big success, in spite of the fact that St. Nicholas' church bells were rung a quarter of an hour longer than usual. Our genial President was in the chair, Mr. Moss delivered a stirring reply to a sermon by the Bishop of Durham, and the old veteran, Mr. Thompson, spoke for half an hour in capital style. A hearty vote of thanks to the President, Secretary, and members of the Council, brought the proceedings to a close. Shortly after the branches started on their journey home, making the night air resound with song and jest, the Newcastle party arriving home at their rooms at 10.30.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec.

ACID DROPS.

The Russian Czar has ordered another Jew-Hunt, and this time it is to be a thorough-going one. About a million Jews will be turned out of their homes, and it is apparently the Czar's intention to drive out or exterminate the entire four million Jews in his dominions. Such is the noble fruit of Christianity! It is an unspeakable disgrace to civilisation.

Those who want to see how the Jewish people have paid for the real or fictitious crime of crucifying Jesus should read the chapter on "The Persecution of the Jews" in the *Crimes of Christianity*. It is one of the most awful episodes in the history of religious cruelty.

Mr. Swinburne's lava-torrent of denunciation does him infinite credit. His ode entitled *Russia* in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review* is sneered at by the *Weekly Dispatch*, all because Mr. Swinburne is a Unionist. So fanatical is party passion that a great poet becomes a ninny when he is on "the other side."

By the way, it is not true that Mr. Swinburne is an enemy of Ireland. He pleaded for mercy for the Fenians who were caught red-handed, for they were brave men who risked their lives for their cause. But his whole nature revolted at the misdeeds of the cowardly wretches who cut off girls' hair, shot old men in the legs, and houghed innocent beasts instead of killing the landlord. His indignation has blinded him to the just demands of Ireland, but it is idle to pretend, as Liberal papers are doing, that it unfits him for denouncing the tyranny of the Czar. It seems to us that, in an age which is mealy-mouthed as to foreign despotisms, a fierce cry like Mr. Swinburne's on behalf of humanity is precious and reassuring. When the springs of indignation are impaired the world is sinking into slavery.

Having lied about his "Converted Atheist," and kept silence in face of his exposure, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes

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has had to eat the leek over his impeachment of the Wesleyan missions in India. The committee of investigation has found his charges to be a perfect mare's nest, and the result is a very undignified rumpus. Mr. Hughes finds that it doesn't pay to treat Wesleyans with the same tactics as Freethinkers.

"Dagonet" of the *Referee* calls Mr. Hughes "a crank of cranks," and says that "Like his prophet, Mr. Stead, he is paved with good intentions." Altogether poor Mr. Hughes has fared badly of late, and none will enjoy his discomfiture more than the Freethinkers whom he treated so cavalierly.

Here is another little Price Hughes' libel. He states in the *Methodist Times* that "Pilate was a true representative of the *blasé* and demoralised autocracy of old Rome." We should like to know his authority for this statement. It is perfectly clear from the Gospels that Pilate tried to save Jesus, and the story of his washing his hands in public is perceived by every unprejudiced scholar to be a grotesque absurdity. Mr. Hughes makes much of Pilate's question, "What is Truth?" But surely any English judge would decline to discuss metaphysics with a prisoner accused of sedition. Pilate's question was tantamount to asking, "Do you think this is a debating society?"

Mr. Hughes exclaims, "Shall we take off our masks? Oh! for an hour of God-like reality!" Those are our sentiments too. Come then, Mr. Hughes, off with your own mask, and tell us the proper name and address of your Converted Atheist.

How the heart of the philanthropist must rejoice to know that a live lord and two baronets quarrel who should become guardian to a homeless orphan. Alas! it is only because the boy's religion was in dispute. The Roman Catholics claimed a son of Catholic parents lodged at Dr. Barnardo's Home, and Lord Denbigh offered to become his guardian. Thereupon those valiant defenders of the faith, Sir Arthur Stephenson Blackwood and Sir Robert Fowler were both willing to also become his guardians. Mr. Justice Kay, in deciding the question, remarked that if it were not a question of religion these gentlemen would not have come forward. After seeing the boy in private he said the boy had been made to swear an affidavit, the words of which were not his words. He ordered the boy to be given up to Lord Denbigh.

Something is gained by writing against Freethought. Here is the Rev. J. M. Wilson made Archdeacon of Manchester over the heads of all the local clergy.

At the Civil Tribunal of Nantes, France, the Sisterhood of Pont l'Abbé claimed £80 of one of its former borders. A sum of money for the girl's benefit was deposited by the father, but on growing up she had no inclination for convent life, and determined to be married. The husband, in his wife's name, demanded the money left in the hands of the Lady Superior, who in reply sent in a bill for board, education, and many extras, such as subscriptions towards missions, sums spent in buying souvenirs, ordering masses for deceased schoolfellows and nuns, and presents to relatives of the Superior and friends of the community. The Tribunal held that these extras, amounting in all to £80, should be struck out, and that the balance of the interest, with the principal, should be paid over to the ex-ward's husband.

The Rev. H. Banks, minister of Park Congregational Church, near Bury, attempted to commit suicide by cutting his throat with a razor. Religion is the only preservative against suicide.

Frederick Innis, of North Shields, hanged himself. The jury returned the usual verdict. A letter by the deceased hoped that "God would forgive him," and contained other pious expressions about "the great Creator."

Charles Williams, a private of the Royal Dragoons, stationed at Colchester, quarreled with his sweetheart and then blew out his brains. He left a letter for his "darling Alice," ending with the words "God bless you." Another Atheist, Mr. Talmage!

Many deaths from excessive heat are reported from America. Tornadoes have swept over New England, and at Boston the Catholic Cathedral was struck by lightning and half a ton of granite dislodged. The cholera is assuming alarming proportions among the pilgrims to Mecca, and a serious railway accident is reported from the Tyrol. "He doeth all things well."

The imitation of Christ is a dangerous thing in a Christian country. Franz Kreuger has been sentenced at Berlin to six months' imprisonment for denouncing Christian marriage on the principles of Count Tolstoi, that is, on the principles of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Walter Besant fires another broadside into the sweating firm known as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and promises to return to the charge later on when he has obtained fresh evidence. He accuses the Society of having lost all sense of morality in dealing with its literary employees.

The question of Cardinal Manning's precedence still occupies the minds of Evangelicals and others who are writing to the *Times* on the subject. The *English Churchman* regrets that the Prince of Wales's friends did not advise him "to beware how he acted in a matter which closely concerns the title by which his family occupy the throne of these realms." As the head of an important sect the Cardinal demands a certain amount of courtesy, but if the Catholics think that gives him any real status above the legal dignitaries of the country, they will probably find their mistake in due course.

The *Record* for last week tells how a clergyman going to a south country vicarage on a visit, found there installed as *locum tenens* a Jesuit whom he had heard preach in Rome. In the same week's number of the *English Churchman* there is a letter stating that Father Ouseley, the chaplain of the Church of England Monastery in Norwich, in connection with Father Ignatius's similar scheme at Llanthony Abbey, is a Roman Catholic priest of the Jesuit order. This correspondent states that he met Father Ouseley at Lisbon, and found that he was a member of a Jesuit college there. These little incidents indicate how active our friend the enemy is just now.

The Archducess Valérie has married her cousin. Yet Austria is a Catholic country, and the Pope has blessed the union, although it is forbidden by the Church's table of consanguinity. Of course the reason is that high and rich families can always make accommodations with heaven. When low and poor people are concerned the Church's law is enforced with the greatest rigor.

Dr. Parker likes Jews. We do not know if the feeling is reciprocated. He reminds the world that the Old Testament was written by Jews, and so was the New Testament. But this is a great deal more than he can prove. Nor can he prove that "The Jewish mind is the greatest intellectual power in the world." Spinoza was a Jew, and so was Heine, but both had to leave Judaism. The fact is, the Jewish mind is lacking in originality. What discovery or invention have the Jews ever given to the world? We begin to suspect Dr. Parker of having an eye on a rich converted Hebrew.

Poor Dr. Parker! His cup, as the Irishman said, is overflowing and it's not yet full. The secretary of the Peace Society writes to the *Christian World* that Dr. Parker was "never connected" with the Society. His pompous resignation was therefore a bit of advertising hocus-pocus.

"Unbelief," says Mr. Spurgeon, "is enthroned in the high places of the earth. The philosophers sneer at the notion that prayer is of avail without heaven; in fact, they know no heaven, and believe in nothing bu their own wisdom." True, most true; and what a change from the days when philosophers sang small for fear of being burnt or imprisoned by the gentlemen who believed in heaven! No wonder Mr. Spurgeon is looking for a fresh move from above.

Thy strong right hand, Lord, mak' it bare,
And weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

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Mohammedanism is superior to Christianity in its inculcation of sobriety and cleanliness, yet the congregation of pilgrims to the prophet's shrine at Mecca does much to propagate the germs of disease and death. Religious pilgrimages, which the English Catholics are seeking to revive, have much to answer for.

Canon Liddon is now in high favor with the Low Churchmen, who are delighted with his defence of orthodoxy against the authors of *Lux Mundi*. Those gentlemen wish to tack for safety, but the Canon is for steering straight on the rocks.

The *Church Reformer* rejoices at the spread of "the wax nose" theory of the Bible, and hails *Lux Mundi* as a deliverer from "the burden of a book of infallible sentences." It points out that the Archbishop of Canterbury supports this theory, and denounces both Canon Liddon and Huxley as prosaic persons who are foolish enough to think the Bible means what it says.

For our part, we are glad to see the Bible dying as "a book of infallible sentences," for this means that it is falling into a line with other ancient sacred writings. By and bye it will stand on the shelf with the rest of its species. But when that time arrives what will become of the "priests" of the Church of England?

Effete England is bad enough, but in one aspect of the freedom of the press America is a good deal worse. There is a nice little method in the States of suppressing obnoxious literature. The Post Office authorities are allowed to act as censors of morality, to open private letters to see if there is anything "indecent" in them, and to confiscate books which they decide to be unfit for the public to read. An edict has gone forth that Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata* is not to be carried in the mails. There is nothing like obscenity in the book, but what does that matter? It enforces, in chaster language than that of the Bible, the sexual teachings of Jesus Christ; and as this is hateful to the churches that trade on the name of Jesus, while defying his teaching, the Post Office authorities are sure of a strong backing. But fancy the hypocrisy of it all! And fancy the nation which tolerates this calling itself "free"! The American eagle should scream a little less until he has got his leg out of the official trap.

A missionary to Liberia gives the following as a part of the cargo of the steamer that carried him: 10,000 casks of rum, eleven cases of gin, 460 tons of gunpowder, and fourteen missionaries—all on their way to further darken the Dark Continent.

A petition was brought before the Lord Mayor and Court of Common Council from the inhabitants in the neighborhood of Finsbury Chapel, praying the Court to withhold its sanction to the proposed transfer of the chapel property to the Salvation Army. The memorialists urged that the noisy processions incident to the services of the Salvation Army would lead to public commotion in the neighborhood, and would seriously depreciate the value of the property. It was decided to refer the matter to a committee.

Some months ago we referred to the action of the Liverpool Corporation, who, having obtained parliamentary powers ostensibly for the purpose of regulating singing and dancing on licensed premises, were using those powers in quite an unexpected direction in the curtailment of individual liberty. The *Liverpool Daily Post* now remarks that the Frankenstein who framed that Act has raised a monster at which he probably stands aghast. The question has arisen over an application by the Liverpool Sunday Society for the use of a Corporation hall for their "lectures with music" on Sunday afternoons, as during previous winter months. The matter has been referred to the town clerk as to the legal position. Should his decision prove adverse, the *Post* points out that it is doubtful whether Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., can continue his "Undenominational Services" in the same hall on Sunday evenings. It will be a treat to see the bigots hoist with their own petard. Meanwhile placards announce services at a certain church for this day (Aug. 10) at which a charge will be made for admission, although this is a distinct breach of the terms under which places of worship are licensed and exempted from taxation. But it appears to be one of the privileges of the godly to break the law in this and many other respects, whilst demanding its rigorous enforcement against those who have the audacity to differ from them in opinion.

Two Brahmins named Krishna have started a tanyard and leather business. This, among a race where the cow is sacred, is awful sacrilege, and its mere possibility shows how far India has advanced out of its native beliefs.

By the way, the sacredness of the cow was not altogether a useless superstition in India. It prevented the most useful animal becoming extirpated in time of famine. Belief in the sacredness of the cow is not half so silly as belief in salvation through the blood of the Lamb.

According to Sir Edwin Arnold, the "tub" is more of an institution in Japan than in England. Every fairly-sized house in Tokio has its bath-room, and besides this there are no less than 800 baths in the city where 300,000 bathe daily at a cost per head of about a halfpenny. Cleanliness is said to be next to godliness, but we think it comes a long way first. Many of the godly have no time for a virtue that is unrecommended in Scripture.

Here are some clerical items from a single number of our American contemporary, the *Ironclad Age*—(1) Dr. W. Mitchell, pastor of the Broadway Presbyterian Church, of Fort Worth, was arrested on July 15 for forgeries amounting to 2,5000 dollars, and sent to prison in the absence of bail. (2) Rev. Oliver J. Booth, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, at Lincoln, is sued by his wife for divorce. He has been carrying on with the pretty wife of General Smith. (3) The *Iowa Register* reports that "An Ohio minister is charged with hugging lady members of his flock." (4) Rev. S. B. Martin, Methodist preacher, of Birmingham, being refused by a young lady named Susan Williams, split open his rival's head with an axe. He then fled, and has not yet been captured.

Miss Emma Hardinge Britten says, in *Two Worlds*, that "Spirits on a low plane require food to sustain their spiritual bodies. That food is fruits, vegetables and plants; never animal food." It would seem that the spirits are dietetic reformers. In old times it was considered there was nothing they were so partial to as blood and slaughtered animals. Jehovah rejoiced in the sweet savor of roast meat and his altars ran red with blood. The Vegetarian Society will be glad to learn of the improved habits of the spirits, who, we hope, cultivate their own "fruits, vegetables and plants."

A large and powerful lioness escaped from Sanger's Circus at Portsmouth, and was captured by a clown. The noble animal was utterly debased by servitude. Is not this typical? Call the lioness "Reason" and the clown "Priest," and you have history in a nutshell.

A letter in the *Church Times*, while lamenting that all cannot go to see the Passion Play at Oberammergau, suggests that the next best thing to going will be for every church to subscribe some £30 or £35, and send its clergyman, in order to have a good description on his return.

Mrs. Price, an Indianapolis lady, recently deceased, ordered that no religious ceremonies should be performed at her funeral; but she stipulated for a brass band to head the procession, and her pious husband circumvented her by getting the band to play "Nearer, my God, to thee."

Mrs. Howson, of Crewe, and the Bishop of Chester are at loggerheads on dancing. The lady thinks it bad for girls—that is, *charity* girls, but the Bishop thinks it useless to run amuck against human nature. Anyhow, the Bible is all on the side of the Bishop.

The melancholy Jacques has finished his fast at the Aquarium, thus outrivalling his Blessed Savior. Some good people cast doubt on the feat which, unlike that of J.C., has been under medical supervision. In August 1880 some of the highest medical authorities in America certified their belief in the genuineness of the forty days' fast of Dr. Tanner. But doctors differ on this point as on others.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 10, Hall of Science; 142 Old Street, at 7.30, "Mr. Swinburne and the Poetry of Freedom."

Sunday, August 17, Hall of Science; 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

AT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

T. THURLOW.—We are not in favor of any such action apart from the Branch. Our party needs discipline, like others; it will not do for every one to be fighting on his own hand. Any notice from the Branch will be inserted.

J. G. DOBSON.—The Huddersfield Branch has no doubt made a wise selection, and we hope its business will prosper under your management.

W. WARRY.—Your letter is a fair specimen of Christian insolence. Future communications from you will go into the waste-basket.

T. E. PERKINS.—We do not believe that Celestine Edwards will meet Mr. Heaford in a set debate. If he does you will have to guard against disorder. We are glad to hear that our paragraph brought you plenty of supporters in Victoria Park.

J. B.—We have given a special article to Miss Weston's letter, and our friends in the navy might circulate it as widely as possible.

A. WEBBE, 154 Windmill Street, Gravesend, and 28 The Hill, Northfleet, sells the *Freethinker* and other Secular publications.

C. DOEG.—Thanks for your letter. We are ready to make an earnest appeal whenever you give the word.

T. W. SMITH (not F. W. as previously printed), Barr's Place, Clarion Street, Belle Vue, Wakefield, will be glad to hear from any Freethinkers willing to co-operate in forming a Branch in that district.

H. CALASCA.—We have not seen the Ground letters. The anecdote of Gounod and Sarah Bernhardt has already appeared.

R. C. B.—Our space is too limited. No doubt you point to a very real grievance. Shopmen and shopwomen are worked villainously long hours, and we fear the working classes who go out gaily shopping late at night are largely responsible for the evil.

J. M. MCALISTER.—It has appeared.

E. H. JONES.—See "Sugar Plums."

T. GREEN.—We note your statement that the change is made with Colonel Olcott's "fullest approval." This is the substance of your communication. We only omit the padding.

W. HOLLAND.—Opinions will vary as to the best methods of advocacy. Let every one follow his own course. Natural selection will decide. We detest the narrowness of the superfine persons who would cut every man's cloth to their own pattern.

DR. MORTIMER.—The 5s. is applied as desired to the "Freethinker Circulation Fund."

T. RILEY.—Thanks for the volume, which shall be returned. Mr. Foote's *Is the Bible Inspired?* is now published as a pamphlet and should have a good circulation.

E. ALCOCK.—We will answer next week. It looks like a Hindu dialect.

A. B. Moss is requested, if this meets his eye, to send us his seaside address.

J. HUTCHINSON.—Your letter has been directed to Mrs. Besant. Her address is 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, N. W.

S. KAUFMAN.—We cannot afford to give illustrations at present.

FREETHINKER.—Blunt's *History of Sects and Heresies* or Cassell's *Dictionary of Religion* would supply what you want.

CORRESPONDENTS who send us MS. to look through are requested to remember that we work seven days a week from morn till night. Those who ask if any remuneration can be obtained for their writings, are informed that they had better turn to cracking stones if they want to earn money.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Referee—Chat—Echo—Manchester Guardian—Newcastle Chronicle—West Sussex Gazette.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (Aug. 10) at the London Hall of Science. His subject was to have been "Mr. Gladstone on the Law of Moses," but as Mr. Gladstone's article on that topic is postponed till the September number of *Good Words*, another subject has to be chosen. Mr. Foote will take a somewhat novel subject, namely, "Mr. Swinburne and the Poetry of Freedom."

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening (Aug. 10) at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. The admission is free, through the liberality of a well-known Secularist, and of course there will be a bumping house.

Before leaving for Canada the editor of *Secular Thought* will take an opportunity of seeing the London Secularists face to face again. Mr. Watts will take the chair at Mr. Foote's lecture on August 17.

We venture once more to press upon our friends the advisability of circulating this journal and other of our publications in every way open to them. Our means do not permit of wholesale advertising, but it is evident that there are many persons who would be readers of Freethought literature if they only knew of its existence. We advertised the new edition of *Bible Romances* recently in the *Weekly Times*, and this brought several customers, some of whom subscribed for the *Freethinker* on receiving a catalogue. One of them was so satisfied with the *Creation Story* that he inquired how many numbers there would be in all, and on learning that there would be twenty or so, he immediately remitted in advance for the whole number.

The next number of *Bible Romances* will be a double one, and the price twopence. It's title will be *Noah's Flood*. It will be ready on Wednesday, August 27. Subsequent instalments of the work will appear every fortnight.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive it was resolved to invite applications for the secretaryship, which will soon become vacant in consequence of Mr. Forder's resignation. All applications should be addressed to the present secretary, Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. They will be laid before the Executive at its next meeting.

It was also resolved that the N.S.S. Almanack should in future be published by the Society, the business arrangements being left in the hands of the Organisation Committee. Messrs. Foote and Wheeler undertook the editing of the next number. The calendar will be thoroughly overhauled, and new features will be introduced. Secretaries of Branches are requested to send in to the editors at once particulars of the meetings, etc. The Almanack will probably be issued in November.

Mr. A. B. Moss has returned home from a very successful tour in the North; a tour, by the way, which would not have been possible without the assistance of the N.S.S. Executive. Mr. Moss is now off for a fortnight's holiday at the seaside. He promises a brief account of his tour for our next issue.

In a recent railroad accident in America, a family of four persons were instantly killed. The father and son were unbaptised Infidels, but the daughter and mother were baptised believers and belonged to the Church. Mr. Watson Heston has seized the incident and represented in the *Truthseeker* cartoon, the Devil hurling males to hell and the angels leading their loved and loving ones to heaven.

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Mr. Gustave Nelson has now joined the staff of the *Truthseeker*. His "Items of Foreign Freethought News," and translations prove that he will be a valuable acquisition.

The *Church Reformer* says that "All true friends of religious liberty will rejoice to see that the question of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will not be altogether left out of consideration at the next general election." Candidates are being heckled, and many are promising to vote for the abolition of these odious laws.

Mr. Headlam's paper administers a just rebuke to its Socialist friends who so shamefully interrupted Mr. Bradlaugh in the recent debate. "Anything more disgraceful," it says, "than the conduct of Mr. Hyndman's supporters towards Mr. Bradlaugh is difficult to imagine," and adds, "No wonder men are afraid of State Socialism when Socialists show so little fairness or self-restraint."

The Lancashire Secular Federation is now on its legs, though the legs are still young and weak. There is a desire on the part of the Federation to carry on open-air propaganda during the summer. Mr. E. H. Jones, secretary, 47 Pigot Street, Manchester, will be happy to hear from any South Lancashire friends willing to arrange for meetings. No charge will be made beyond the lecturer's travelling expenses.

Mr. C. Watts' *Secular Thought* has now reached its eighth volume. It continues its policy of reprinting debates, and the number before us has a short paper by the veteran G. J. Holyoake.

We see from *Fritankaren* that our good friend Captain Otto Thomson is keeping the ball rolling with Freethought lectures in Sweden. We hope soon to hear of the formation of a Freethought Society in Norway, where the leading writers have done much to liberalise the reading public.

The *Shields Daily News* has fairly reported a recent lecture on Voltaire and Paine by Mr. Arthur B. Moss.

The Huddersfield Branch warmly thanks Mr. W. H. Spivey for his services as secretary. Mr. Spivey has resigned the post, but he will continue to assist the Branch in its work. His successor is Mr. J. G. Dobson.

We see from letters in the *Manchester Guardian* that a movement in favor of Sunday bands in the parks is growing in Cottonopolis. If the *Sunday Chronicle* will keep pegging away on the subject, the movement will soon be a strong one.

Rénan's third volume of his *History of the People of Israel* will be ready early in October.

Dr. A. Regnard, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the International Freethought Congress in Paris, has obligingly sent us a copy of the first volume of his *Le Bilan du Judaïsme et du Christianisme*, just published by Dentu. It is an important work, and will receive notice in a future number of the *Freethinker*.

"J'ignore" (I know not) is the inscription to go on the tombstone of the French poetess, Louise Ackermann, who has just died. She was a woman of remarkable powers. In early life she was a devout Christian, but she thought herself out of that superstition, and added some fine things to the literature of Freethought.

In the south of India a Society for the Preservation of the Hindu Religion has been formed, under the presidency of a Tamil Brahmin. When Brahmins are setting up tanneries it is too late to preserve the old religion, but something may be done to keep out the imported superstition of Christianity.

The *Women's Penny Paper* for Aug. 2, gives a portrait of the late Miss Constance Naden authoress of *A Modern Apostle*, *What is Religion?* and other Agnostic works, with an account of her views from the pen of Miss Jane Hume Clapperton, authoress of *Scientific Meliorism*.

Lux Mundi, the heretical High Church volume, which Mr. Foote has recently noticed in these columns has already reached a ninth edition at the price of fourteen shillings. The only chance of making a religious work pay at this rate is to put in a spice of heterodoxy.

We are reprinting an early pamphlet of Shelley's, published in 1814, entitled *A Refutation of Deism*. Mr. Foote furnishes a brief Introduction, from which we extract the following passage:—"Shelley's object was to attack both natural and revealed religion. The method he adopted in this pamphlet was not lacking in astuteness. Theosophus assails Christianity in the name of reason, and Eusebes demonstrates that the difficulties of Theism are as great as those of the creed founded upon the Bible. It is a bold extension of the logical method pursued by Bishop Butler in his famous *Analogy*, and considering Shelley's age, it is conducted with great ability. The style is rather stiff, as youthful prose is apt to be; but although something is sacrificed to sonorousness, there is no sacrifice of perspicuity to ornament. Shelley lost no time in cultivating simplicity of statement, with the result that his mature prose, even when dealing with metaphysical topics or the subtlest qualities of poetry, was as lucid as it was beautiful."

HUXLEY ON FAITH.

WHILE, therefore, every right-minded man must sympathise with the efforts of those theologians, who have not been able altogether to close their ears to the still, small voice of reason, to escape from the fetters which ecclesiasticism has forged, the melancholy fact remains, that the position they have taken up is hopelessly untenable. It is raked alike by the old-fashioned artillery of the Churches and by the fatal weapons of precision with which the *enfants perdus* of the advancing forces of science are armed. They must surrender, or fall back into a more sheltered position. And it is possible that they may long find safety in such retreat.

It is, indeed, probable that the proportional number of those who will distinctly profess their belief in the transubstantiation of Lot's wife, and the anticipatory experience of submarine navigation by Jonah; in water standing fathoms deep on the side of a declivity without anything to hold it up; and in devils who enter swine, will not increase. But neither is there ground for much more hope that the proportion of those who cast aside these fictions and adopt the consequence of that repudiation, are, for some generations, likely to constitute a majority. Our age is a day of compromises. The present and the near future seem given over to those happily, if curiously, constituted people who see as little difficulty in throwing aside any amount of post-Abrahamic Scriptural narrative, as the authors of *Lux Mundi* see in sacrificing the pre-Abrahamic stories; and having distilled away every inconvenient matter of fact in Christian history, continue to pay divine honors to the residue. There really seems to be no reason why the next generation should not listen to a Bampton Lecture modelled upon that addressed to the last:—

"Time was—and that not very long ago—when all the relations of Biblical authors concerning the old world were received with a ready belief; and an unreasoning and uncritical faith accepted with equal satisfaction the narrative of the Captivity and the doings of Moses at the court of Pharaoh, the account of the Apostolic meeting in the Epistle to the Galatians, and of the fabrication of Eve. We can most of us remember when, in this country, the whole story of the Exodus, and even the legend of Jonah, were seriously placed before boys as history and discoursed of in as dogmatic a tone as the tale of Agincourt or the history of the Norman Conquest.

"But all this is now changed. The last century has seen the growth of scientific criticism to its full strength. The whole world of history has been revolutionised, and the mythology which embarrassed earnest Christians has vanished as an evil mist, the lifting of which has only more fully revealed the lineaments of infallible Truth. No longer in contact with fact of any kind, Faith stands now and for ever proudly inaccessible to the attacks of the infidel."

So far the apologist of the future. Why not? *Cantabit vacuus.*—*"Nineteenth Century."*

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"FREETHOUGHT AND SALVATIONISM."

IT is, I conceive, incumbent upon me to furnish some reply to the article which appeared in the *Freethinker* of last week under the above title. Mr. Foote has, with commendable fairness, reprinted *in extenso* my original article from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of July 19, and both sides of the question at issue are thus before the reader. I do not propose to enter into any elaborate argument, for I am content to abide by the statement which has already been printed. For the sake of brevity and clearness I will deal with certain points that need some explanation.

The "Semi-official Headline."—My article in the *P.M.G.* was headed, "By a Vice-President of the National Secular Society." In adopting that course I certainly had no desire to conceal my identity from Freethinkers, many of whom I felt sure would at once know the particular Vice-President concerned. And certainly I had no desire to claim "official" or even "semi-official" sanction for my opinions. The title of the article, for instance, was "A Freethinker's View of the Salvation Army." Again, I said, "Speaking, then, as a Freethinker, for myself—and I am sure that I do not stand alone in this," etc. I explained, in a letter which appeared in the *P.M.G.* on July 26, my reasons for taking the course of which complaint is made. My name, I pointed out, was not widely known, and would have conveyed nothing to the general public; but the fact of my official connection with the Secular party at least established a *primâ facie* justification for writing on the subject. Mr. Foote possibly did not see that letter, as he has made no reference to it in his article.

Mr. Holyoake's "Caustic Criticism."—Mr. Holyoake is alleged to have "passed a caustic criticism" on my "tribute to 'the Army.'" Mr. Foote cannot possibly have heard the criticism, as he was some miles distant from the Hall of Science at the time, and he must in this matter be relying upon hearsay. Neither did I hear it, and the verbal reports which reached me were conflicting and even in some cases incoherent. But on that evening Mr. Holyoake spoke to me, and I informed him that I was the writer of the article which he had criticised. Mr. Holyoake replied: "Oh! indeed; well, you should have proposed that the Freethinkers should establish a Salvation Army of their own, with better bands and banners." This (in effect) he has since repeated to me in writing; and this is all. I am not sufficiently acute to discern any "caustic criticism" in this.

The "Sneers" at Freethought.—I have written no "sneers" at the Freethought party. Every word that I wrote was penned in sober earnestness and good faith. I would as soon "sneer" at the memory of my mother as utter a gibe at Freethought or the Secular party. Are there no bigots amongst Freethinkers? Has every member of our party risen superior to every failing of human nature? Mr. Foote suggests that I am a bigot myself, and he may be right; but I sincerely hope that he is mistaken. The head and front of my offending seems to be that I have expressed my conviction that the tenets of Secularism cannot be understood by "brutalised ignorance." Is this true, or is it false? My experience as a propagandist, extending over fifteen years, has convinced me that, while we *can* and *do* influence the instructed, the thoughtful, and intelligent among our brethren, there is still a very large class—the most unfortunate and degraded of all—to whom our principles and our advocacy would convey no meaning and upon whom they would produce no effect. Our recruits come to us, not from the slums, with their dreadful harvest of vice, selfishness and brutality, but from the most enlightened section of the working class and the so-called "middle class." Now the Salvation Army—the superstitious side of which I cordially detest—*has* in many cases reached and influenced for good those whom, I maintain, we do not and cannot influence. Are we to ignore or decry this good *secular* work because it is done in the name of a religion which we reject? Even if I stood alone in this against the whole Freethought party I would say, *No!* If a drunkard be reclaimed, his wife and family rescued from poverty and misery, then I say that is good work. If the reformed man derives his elevating impulse from the Salvation Army, he will probably spend some of his time in tamborine-shaking, singing and praying. I, personally, would of course very much prefer to see him devoting his leisure to the improvement of his mind; but I would rather see him sober and kneeling at a "holiness meeting" than find him drunk and lying in the gutter.

Let me go one step further. In the *National Reformer*, some months ago (in one of my "Atheist at Church" articles) I expressed my belief that the Salvation Army may prove to be the John the Baptist of Freethought. "Salvationism," with its childish appurtenances, may be the first stage in an evolutionary process with Secularism as its ultimate development. The principles of our party are not meat for babes. Our literature and our advocacy would be "gibberish" to those whose intellectual powers are practically a minus quantity. If the Salvation Army can arouse the germ of thought, it is to that extent making possible the future Freethinker. If there were no hope of development beyond the "Salvationism" stage, perhaps the cure might be almost as bad as the disease: but I have sufficient faith in my principles to believe that they will remain to influence and elevate when the temporary craze of superstition shall have passed away.

The "Opportunity" to the Enemy.—Something has been said of the "opportunity" I am supposed to have afforded to the enemy of decrying Secularism. But what is this to me? I know perfectly well that, if I had signed my name to a page of Bradshaw's Time Table, it would have been used by Christians as an infidel's testimony to Christ. Mr. Foote is not perhaps aware that his attacks on the National Secular Society of twelve or fifteen years ago are to this day among the cherished weapons of Christian Evidence spadassins. The Christians who, according to Mr. Foote, are sending my letter "all over the country" are doing nothing of the kind. They are using distorted extracts in the good old Christian style. In this way the Psalmist can be made to declare that "There is no God," Christians are to-day doing me the honor of misrepresenting me as they have misrepresented better men over and over again.

The only question to my mind is whether or not I was justified by truth and reason in writing and publishing my view. Mr. Foote suggests that I am a fool, and speaks in the *P.M.G.* of my "hallucination"; in the *Freethinker* of last week he suggests that I am something far worse than a fool—that is, a traitor to my principles and their visible embodiment, the Secular party. I will not stoop to defend myself against such insinuations. My record as a worker for Freethought is written in the minute-books of the National Secular Society for fifteen years without interruption. I have ever been chary of professions, but no Secularist can truthfully say that I ever shirked my fair share—perhaps more than my fair share—of party drudgery. If my good faith is not vindicated by the service I have rendered according to my abilities and opportunities, then judgment must go by default, for I will not say another word.

GEORGE STANDRING.

[No one is better aware than I am of Mr. Standring's long and faithful service to the Secular cause. But this is not in question. Mr. Standring chose to write a puff of the Salvation Army, he chose to have it printed in a journal very friendly to that body, and he chose to use the same vehicle for informing the world that there are "bigoted Secularists." That such Secularists are to be found I neither affirm nor deny; I confine myself to the statement that a Freethinker who writes in a public journal with religious leanings, praising a Christian society, and at the same time casting reflections on members of his own party, must expect to find himself the subject of criticism. I have not suggested that Mr. Standring is "a fool," and I am far from thinking so; nor have I called him "a bigot"; and I certainly have not suggested that he is "a traitor." But Mr. Standring has, however unintentionally, furnished the Christians with a useful weapon. It was not to be expected that his *Pall Mall Gazette* article would be reproduced in full, and it is only natural that religious and semi-religious journals should use what tells for their own side. For the rest, it seems to me that Mr. Standring overlooks all I said in opposition to his view of the Salvation Army. I may add that I did not see his letter of July 26, and that, with respect to Mr. Holyoake's remarks, I still believe I was correctly informed. —G. W. FOOTE.]

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IS AGNOSTICISM PRESUMPTUOUS?—II.

Agnostics, on the other hand, when bidden to accept this hotch-potch of sentiment and superstition, hold back, remembering the golden advice of Descartes, to give consent to no proposition the truth of which is not so clear that it cannot be doubted — a description which to our minds does not include the fairy tales of old-world barbarians. Churchmen themselves declare this sort of thing to be "incomprehensible." What wonder, then, if we rebel at any dogmatising on it, and refuse to believe that our non-acceptance of it will bring about our heads a fearful retribution.

That is our attitude, and the Christian tells us it is one of presumption. Why, Agnosticism has for its very foundation a protest against presumption! Is it presumption to decline to chatter a shibboleth in respect of things of which we can know nothing? Is it presumption to stand apart from the herd of noisy theologians of all kinds, who, like cheap-jacks at a fair, are constantly dinning into our ears the excellence of their wares and the rottenness of their neighbors'? Is it presumption to content oneself with the proven teachings of Science and the range of human faculties? Compare the principles of the Agnostic with, say the Athanasian Creed—a succession of silly paradoxes winding up with the modest announcement that "This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." On which does the stigma of presumption rest? It is not considered presumption in the ordinary affairs of life to suspend the judgment when it is assailed by divers people, each clamoring a different tale, each stating positively that his version is the only correct one, and all the time each talking of matters which are necessarily beyond his cognisance.

Theologians talk as though the onus of proof lay on the Freethinkers. But this manifestly cannot be so. The churchmen come to us with a lot of statements, which, to use the mildest language, cannot be regarded as easy of credence. It is for them to prove their propositions, not for us to actively disprove them. When their dogmas run counter to the knowledge of modern times, we do disprove them, but no law of logic compels us to the task, and as a rule the data of theological dogmas lie so far beyond the radius of either proof or disproof that any successful attempt at the latter is in the nature of things impossible. But that does not make our position any the less tenable, nor can it make us guilty of presumption. When, for instance, we have thrown at our heads the words of Tertullian—"certum est quia impossible est"—you must not charge us with self-conceit if our minds are unable to follow such a subtle train of reasoning. Rather does humility of mind impel us to reply in the words which Leigh Hunt addressed to Shelley:—

> In the midst of all this lovely world, that should engage
> Their mutual search for the old golden age,
> They set a phantom, swelled into grim size
> Out of their own passions and bigotries.
> . . . . . .
> And this they call a light and a revealing.

Forgive us if our dim eyes are too blind to see this light, and our minds are incapable of perceiving this revelation. If you don't we can bear it. Harsh words have a boomerang like way of recoiling on those who utter them. Such shafts of petty spite as the nineteenth century has left in the Church's memory are almost harmless. We feel ourselves encased with the breastplate of truth and protected by the shield of reason, an armor made to withstand far keener darts than any flippant sarcasm can hurl.

Let any one who deems humility of mind incompatible with scepticism cultivate the acquaintance of earnest Freethinkers. He will be unfortunate indeed if he does not meet in their ranks men whose minds are as humble as they are free. Take Science's great apostle, Darwin, as an example. After his death a model was taken of his skull, and submitted to the examination of some phrenologists on the continent. One of them, who did not at the time know whose was the head modelled, said that the skull belonged either to a priest or a scientist, so great was the development of the organ of reverence. The story carries with it a moral worth studying. Reverence was one of the great man's distinguishing characteristics. There was far more humility of mind in the author of the *Origin of Species* than is to be found in many of those who jostle one another in their eagerness to charge him with presumption.

I have said that we do not mind the sarcasm and abuse which are hurled at us. We do not, except when they come from those whom we love and respect. Then our feelings are hurt, strange as it is to some imaginations to conceive a Freethinker having any feelings to hurt. What we ask from those who differ from us is that they will appreciate our standpoint, or, if that is impossible, that they will at least give us credit for worthy motives. We are toiling painfully to find the path of truth in the tangle of the wilderness of life. If we strike a different road from that on which you who call yourselves Christians are travelling, do not therefore shout after us opprobious epithets. The world is not so full of charity that any of us can afford to indulge in that kind of thing. Believe that our attitude is not the result of an empty-headed "cocksureness." It is not vanity that makes us reject the Faith of the Fathers. It is that we see the rise and zenith and fall of system after system of religion—or their modification almost out of recognition by the encroachments of advancing thought; that we notice how devotion to dogma is coeval with the existence of other superstitions, and the measure of a people's belief the gauge of their lowness of intellectual calibre; and we sorrowfully but honestly arrive at the irresistible conclusion that a knowledge of the things unseen is beyond the grasp of the children of men.

ERNEST E. WILLIAMS.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews' March out of Egypt." Monday, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion. Members' subscriptions due.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, on Wednesday, Aug. 13, meeting of members.

Camberwell — 61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. J. B. Coppock, "The Fate of the Universe."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, a Fabian lecturer, "Socialism and Secularism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Swinburne and the Poetry of Freedom."

West Ham — 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. George Standring, "A Freethinker's View of the Bible."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Samson, the Strong Man."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. A. J. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. Durrant will lecture.

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christ's Teachings."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. George Standring, "A Tilt at the Christian Evidence Society."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and What did he Teach?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "Unbelief: a Plea for Mental Reform." Preceded by a dramatic recital by Mrs. Charles Watts.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Huddersfield—4 Thornton Road, Mr. J. Grange, 3, "Why I am not a Christian;" 7, "Does Man Survive after Death?"

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Bergmann, "Right and Wrong."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, a lecture.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, fortnightly members' meeting.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Googe, "The Eight Hours' Day: a Boon to Labor!"

Rochdale — Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. Henry Smith, "Evolution or Devolution."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street. — Members and friends meet at tram terminus, Snig Hill, and leave by 2.30 car for Hillsbro' and Little Matlock.

South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Rochdale—Town Hall Square, 3, Mr. Henry Smith, "Is there a Hell? and what Class will be most likely to get there."

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool—August 24, Manchester. Sept. 7., Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham—Aug. 10 (morning), Midland Arches; 17 (morning), Bethnal Green; 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell; 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green; 24, Brighton; 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

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THE TWO NEWMANS.

THE death of Cardinal Newman cannot have come as a surprise. A man of ninety holds a precarious tenure of existence. No "blind Fury" is needed to "slit the thin-spun life" with "abhorred shears." Death at such an age is rather the visitor sung by Whitman.

> Come lovely and soothing death,
> Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
> In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
> Sooner or later delicate death.

For all practical purposes Cardinal Newman had been dead for years. Though the sweet old man's presence was still dear to his friends, to the outer world he was an historic name. His work was long since finished, his books had become classics, and the public thought of him as the protagonist in an ancient battle. No one looked for anything more from his pen, his obituary was docketed in the offices of the daily papers, and except for his writings he was no longer reckoned as a living force.

Some things the newspapers could not help saying about such a man. They were not called upon to form a judgment of their own. There were accessible verdicts on Newman by very eminent writers. We hear, therefore, what is perfectly true, that he was a singularly attractive personality, a great scholar, and a magical master of English. For our own part, we are prepared to go still farther. We will assert that Newman is the purest stylist and the greatest theologian in our language. His perfect eloquence charmed his worst opponents; his subtlety of mind was in itself a fascination; and such was his persuasive power—so keen his dialectic, so consummate his marshalling of resources, so exquisitely urbane his manner—that a confirmed Atheist might almost regret the necessity of differing from him. We have often felt, even when dissenting from him most strongly, that we could kiss the hand that wielded the pen. "Here," we said to ourselves, "is one who is more than a Catholic, more than a theologian; one who has lived an intense inner life, who understands the human heart as few have understood it, who follows the subtlest workings of the human mind, who helps the reader to understand himself, who throws over every page the glamor of a lofty character as well as a capacious intellect."

Knowing Newman through and through, as far as it was possible without personal intercourse; studying his writings carefully as those of the greatest soldier in the army of Faith; we could never share the distrust of his sincerity. He was a Catholic by temperament. Like Pascal, another profound intelligence, he saw there was no logical halting-place between Rome and Atheism. Follow reason absolutely, and faith dies; follow faith absolutely, and reason becomes its slave. Newman saw that no religious dogma has ever been able to resist the solvent power of the human mind. To conserve his faith, therefore, he was obliged to set limits to his intellect. Certain first principles were to be assumed. Reason did not, and could not, prove them; but once admit e l, reason could be exercised in illustrating and defending them. When Newman flung himself at the feet of Father Dominic, the Passionist, and was received into the communion of Rome, he showed his conversion was a matter of temperament. The Father was greatly his inferior, but he represented the Catholic Church, and only within that Church could Newman find rest for his soul. Protestantism acknowledged in theory, though never in practice, the sovereignty of reason. Newman's nature constrained him to square practice with theory. He would hold his faith, but hold it consistently. He told the Protestants, after his conversion, that "reason was the substance of their faith," and that "private judgment does but create opinions, and nothing more." What he required was certitude, and he found it (such as it was) in the Church of Rome. The proof of this is patent to any judicious reader, who perceives the exuberance, the spring, the glow of Newman's writings after he became a Catholic. His genius was depressed by Protestantism. He left it with long pain and travail, but, having left it, he felt a mighty relief.

Properly to understand the elder Newman we must couple his case with that of his brother Francis William. A generous view of both was given by Thackeray in *Pendennis*. The words are Thackeray's, though put into the mouth of Arthur Pendennis. He is answering the old question about truth.

> "I see it in this man who worships by act of Parliament, and is rewarded with a silk apron and five thousand a year; in that man, who, driven fatally by the remorseless logic of his creed, gives up everything, friends, fame, dearest ties, closest vanities, the respect of an army of churchmen, the recognised position of a leader, and passes over, truth-impelled, to the enemy, in whose ranks he is ready to serve henceforth as a nameless private soldier. I see the truth in that man, as I do in his brother, whose logic drives him to quite a different conclusion, and who, after having passed a life in vain endeavors to reconcile an irreconcileable book, flings it at last down in despair, and declares, with tearful eyes, and hands up to heaven, his revolt and recantation."

Thackeray was not exaggerating. John Henry Newman had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, from a worldly point of view, in going over to Rome. For some time he did actually serve as a private soldier in the Catholic army, performing all the duties of a humble curate, and wasting his exquisite eloquence on illiterate and stupid congregations. Francis William Newman, on the other hand, was going through the bitter experiences recorded in his *Phases of Faith*. While his brother was moving from Protestantism to Catholicism, he was moving from Protestantism to Rationalism. Bit by bit his creed crumbled away. Doctrine after doctrine went, the divine claims of the Bible at length disappeared, and with them the "perfection" of Jesus. All that remained was a belief in God, and a somewhat faint belief in a future life. During this process he lost the "private friendship and acquaintance" of his brother, he was "cut off" from other members of his family, and dear friends fell away on every side. "My heart was ready to break," he writes; "I wished for a woman's soul, that I might weep in floods."

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Both brothers were honest. They went their several ways, according to the logic of their first principles. The one gravitated naturally to Rome, the other as naturally to Rationalism, or, as it was then called, Liberalism. And what is Liberalism? "Liberalism," said Cardinal Newman, "is the mistake of subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine Word." This is from the *Apologia*. In the *Grammar of Assent* there is a remarkable passage, tracing the development of three Protestants; one becomes a Catholic, the second a Unitarian, the third an Atheist. The Catholic was entirely logical, and so was the Atheist; but the Unitarian was half-logical. He let his reason play upon the Scripture, but not upon the contents of Natural Religion. He retained his belief in God and a future life simply on grounds of faith.

Francis Newman has verified this truth. Though still a Theist, he is constrained to admit that the proofs of God's existence are not what he once thought them. He can hardly be said to retain any *positive* belief in a future life. We gather from his later writings that he considers some form of Theism essential to human morality and elevation. But this is not judging according to evidence. It is in every respect *an act of faith*, as John Henry Newman would have shown him.

Cardinal Newman dreaded Atheism, but he never argued against it. He knew that was hopeless. His controversial writings were addressed to Protestants. He was always pointing out the intellectual unsoundness of their basis. Reason was their boast, and Newman told them plainly that reason was unable to find half their doctrines in the Bible, that reason affords no proper evidence of a future state, and that the very existence of God could not be rationally proved so as to produce a conviction. He admitted that the "unaided reason," if "correctly exercised," led to these beliefs; but unaided reason had a general tendency to exercise itself *in*correctly; and considering the faculty of reason "actually and historically," it had nearly always led to "simple unbelief in matters of religion." Thus, when Christ came, religious knowledge was "all but disappearing from those portions of the world in which the intellect had been active and had had a career." And at present, outside the Catholic Church, things are tending rapidly to "atheism in one shape or other."

Here, then, is the reason why many Atheists complained that Cardinal Newman was not in contact with modern thought. He had nothing to say about Darwin and evolution, and so forth; his polemic was antediluvian. The complaint was excusable, but it overlooked two important facts. First, modern science has invented no new *argument* against Theism, and Newman was perfectly familiar with the old ones. Secondly, if Darwinism has triumphed in science, Catholicism is still living, and seems likely to live. It is as the logical, uncompromising, and infinitely dexterous defender of this citadel of superstition that Newman is worthy of study by those who are engaged in its attack; his other qualities being chiefly interesting to the lovers of literature and psychology. And if the Atheists who study Newman are struck by his saintliness, if they find that the champion of superstition is terribly strong and adroit, it will be a double lesson to them—first, in human sympathy, and secondly, in the perfecting of their own weapons and methods of warfare.

G. W. FOOTE.

Goliath is in London—not the gentleman that David slew, but one who could probably pick him up and run away with him. His strength is almost incredible. Had he lived in Palestine he would have had a whole book of God's Word's all to himself.

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS.

THE story of the sailor who thrashed a Jew because he had just heard of the crucifixion is symbolical of the historic treatment of the chosen race by Christians. Century after century the followers of Christ have set upon the people to whom they owe their God and Savior, as though they had only just heard of their alleged doings in the days of Pilate. The story of the gospel, depicting Jewish judges as spitting in the face of their prisoner—an historic falsity if ever there was one—tends to perpetuate hatred. The fictitious sins of the fathers are visited on the children even unto the sixtieth generation. Their real crime is that they are a standing witness of the falsity of Christian claims. The position of Jews and Christians is always that of an armed neutrality. This chronic feud, smouldering or flaming, retains its vitality wherever religious feeling is strong.

If the conscience of Europe has not been awakened by the threatened renewal of persecution in Russia at least its self-interest has been aroused. Next month we may hear of scenes of persecution and pillage similar to those in 1881-82. A stream of immigration is sure to follow, and this makes the subject one of international interest.

The indignant remonstrance of every civilised nation should exercise some pressure on the side of humanity. Some may think it is not a matter in which other nations than Russia have a right to be heard. If the Jews choose to live there they must live under such restrictions as the Government choose to enforce. But where are they to go? There is not a country in Europe but thinks it has already sufficient specimens of the Russian Jew for the students of comparative anthropology. Many wish them to fulfil the prophecies and go to Palestine. The Jews, despite their religious sentiment, are no fools. They know that the land of promise, once said to be flowing with milk and honey, is far too poor and sterile to support one hundredth part of their number. They know they have no aptitude for agriculture, so they piously say they will wait till God in his own good time chooses to restore them.

I am aware there is more than religious difference between the Russian and the Jew. The Jew is a usurer. He will not work with his hands, yet he grows rich at the expense of the peasantry. The intention of the laws of May 3, 1882, which are to be enforced, is the protection of the rural population from the rapacity of usurers. But the *Moujik* is so improvident and so taxed to maintain a vast unproductive army that he must borrow. It is not fair to lay the whole blame of his misery on the Jew who accommodates him, and of course takes advantage of his necessities.

Nor must we forget how largely Christian persecution has made the Jew what he is. To gather wealth by any and every means has been his only way of purchasing safety and toleration. Christian laws against usury at once degraded money-lending, and threw the trade into the hands of the Jews. Christian intolerance and Christian scorn have cemented their caste feelings and made them repay oppression with hatred. The Christian treats the Jew with contempt, and the Jew takes it out in usury. Dislike of the chosen race in Russia is intensified by the fact that both the ignorant peasantry and the impecunious aristocracy are largely in their debt. To kick out the creditor is the easiest way of settling the account, and the fact that the victim is of a different religion becomes the sanction of injustice.

The solution of the Jewish question lies in freedom and Freethought. The surest, the only way, to break down their tribalism is to place them on a footing with other citizens. Intercommunion is the force which slowly but surely removes the prejudices of race. "Every country," it has been said, "has the

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Jews it deserves to have." The Russian Jew is a bad specimen just because intolerance has made him so. He is more orthodox and far more bigotted than the English Jew, just because Christian persecution makes him resort to religion, the common bond of all his tribe, as only in strict association with his fellows can he find refuge from injustice. In taking such revenge as he can on his persecutors, he but executes the villany he has been taught by Christians. In France, England and America, where he is becoming accustomed to freedom, the native Jew is a different creature. His race prejudices dwindle. His religion becomes a mere philosophical theism, or not even that. He becomes a Freethinker and a gentleman. Let no Freethinker then be classed with those who from fear of Jewish competition are ready to apologise for outrage and persecution.

J. M. Wheeler.

FREETHOUGHT IN THE NORTH.

Few London Freethinkers have the faintest conception of the vast amount of work performed each year through the instrumentality of the North Eastern Secular Federation in the North of England in spreading the gospel of intellectual liberty. Remembering the miles that divide each district comprised within this Federation, and the difficulty of getting the members of the Council together, it is quite remarkable the progress that has been made in recent years in furthering the interests of Freethought in this part of the country and in marshalling the members of the party into a strong army of warriors against those insidious foes of progress—ignorance and superstition. For several years past I have devoted the greater portion of my summer holidays to travelling through the country and delivering Freethought lectures—and during the last two or three years I have gone north. But why north? Why not east, or west, or south? Because Freethought is better organised in the North than in any other part of England. There is no earthly reason why it should be so, but the fact remains that it is, and all the credit is due therefore to those indefatigable workers, who by their intelligent activity have contributed to the success of the Federation.

Between the 25th of July and the 3rd of August, I travelled to Newcastle, South Shields, Sunderland, Blyth, Bedlington, Chester le-Street and Durham, on missionary work, delivering ten Freethought addresses, and doing all in my power to strengthen the organisation. How far I succeeded in this latter respect time alone will show, but I have reason to believe that my efforts will be attended with good results on this as on previous occasions.

In the first place my lectures attracted large audiences—in no case less than three hundred persons, and in two cases, Blyth and Bedlington, considerably over a thousand. And these audiences were for the most part intelligent, orderly, and well-conducted. Occasionally a drunken man put in a word, but in a great crowd that is not remarkable. Sometimes, too, a fervid Christian, writhing in agony on hearing his creed mercilessly criticised, rudely interposed with an irritant question or a stupid interjection; but, all considered, the audiences in the North are admirable examples of what intelligent working men can be when they are trained to listen to argument and disputation. But in the North those who take up the cudgels on behalf of Christianity are no better reasoners than the same class of individuals in the South. They rarely grasp the point at issue, and when they do they generally manage, either wilfully or otherwise, to evade it. Sometimes they strive, by giving a new interpretation to a text, or a new meaning to a word, to get a momentary victory; but when the trick is exposed and its folly revealed they appear in a worse light than before.

An example of this kind occurred in the Bigg Market at Newcastle. I had said in my lecture that I did not believe in the efficacy of prayer.

"Yes you do," said my opponent; "and what is more, I heard you pray just now—I heard you pray that the person behind you who has been interrupting should cease from doing so."

My opponent also played upon the word "faith," and represented that I had as much faith as he had. To this I replied that there was a difference between secular and theological faith. Theological faith meant "shut your eyes and open your mouth and see what the Lord would send you"; but secular faith was based entirely upon experience. The audience saw the difference at once when I had given a familiar illustration, and there followed a regular roar of applause.

At South Shields and Sunderland no one replied to my lectures on "Voltaire and Paine" and "Bible Makers." At Blyth, however, I had two opponents: one a local missionary, and the other an enthusiastic disciple of General Booth. The missionary, having no argument, tried to be funny, but his wit was pointless; and when he thought he had made a joke he chewed it so persistently that the audience got positively tired of it. The "hallelujah man," as he was called, told us the wretched story of his life. How he had starved his wife and beaten his children until he had to go to gaol for his iniquities; and how, when he came out, the Lord changed his heart, and made him a teetotaler and a Salvationist. And then leaping in the air he shouted, "What could Charlie Bradlaugh do for him?"

Somebody suggested "Give him better sense"—but the general opinion was that his case was hopeless. In my judgment it is a mistake to suppose that Freethought can do nothing for the ignorant and degraded. Freethought can make the ignorant thoughtful and give the degraded new aspirations. I have known it to do so. Therefore I pointed out to the Salvationist that it was not Christianity that had saved him, but total abstinence, and that while the Bible had no definite teaching on the subject, the Koran had, and that reckoning the Mohammedans and the Freethinkers together, there were more "Infidels" who were total abstainers than Christians. I also challenged any Christian to give me a text in favor of total abstinence; and as none of them could do it, my opponents were silenced.

At Bedlington also two opponents appeared. One wished to know what I would give in the place of the Bible—to which I replied that instead of the guesses of ignorant men of the past, I would give the facts of science, the facts of history—that truth was always preferable to error to honest men. My second opponent told a few pretty stories that had no particular bearing upon the subject.

After a visit to Chester-le-Street, where I was pleased to renew the acquaintance of many old friends, I was driven on Sunday, the 3rd inst., in the brake from Oxhill over to Durham, where the Federation holds its annual picnic. A more brilliant day could not have been chosen. The sun shone with all his radiant power and beauty, and sent a thrill of joy into the hearts of all present. Nearly five hundred Freethinkers met together that day in the cathedral city of Durham. Under the broad canopy of heaven, surrounded by the trees of a garden on the banks of a fine river, the Freethinkers of the North sported about like young children, engaging in all sorts of country games. After tea at the Shakespeare Hotel, where unhappily inadequate provision was made for the vast number that sat down, we adjourned to the market place, and I made a brief speech, which was followed by an able address by Mr. Thompson (of North Shields), and then after several votes of thanks and general handshaking, the proceedings terminated.

A special word of thanks is due to Mr. Peacock (the President) to Mr. Joseph Brown (Secretary), and to Mr. J. Birtley, for their indefatigable labors on behalf of the Federation; and I wish also to thank in most hearty fashion Dr. and Mrs. Spiers for their kind hospitality during my stay in Newcastle. Nearly all the local papers gave reports of my lectures.

Arthur B. Moss.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

Council Meeting held at Hall of Science, on Thursday, Aug. 7, the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, reports were made by various Branches as to the financial result of the Excursion; a small balance accruing to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.—Miss Vance stated that the work at the Midland Arches was progressing satisfactorily; and Mr. H. Courtney reported that the propaganda at Hammersmith, both indoor and in the open-air, had been so well supported as almost to defray expenses.—Applications for grants in aid of open-air work were referred to Committee.—Mr. J. M. Wheeler brought forward the matter of a Children's Summer Excursion. After discussion it was thought advisable to defer consideration of the matter till next year, when steps would be taken to organise the gathering in a successful manner.—Mr. Foote then introduced a "plan of campaign" for the coming half-year, and suggested that courses of free lectures should be given in various parts of the metropolis. On the motion of Mr. George Standring, the

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Secretary was authorised to arrange for a course at the Hall of Science in September, and to report at next meeting on any other places where lectures might be given.—The advisability of conducting a class for the systematic study of Christian Evidences, introduced by the President, was next discussed; and it was agreed that Mr. Foote should report what arrangements could be made in the matter.—The monthly programme was ordered to be printed; and, on the motion of Mr. Baker (Camberwell), the Secretary was instructed to draw up a list of Freethought lectures in London and forward it for insertion to the weekly papers.—The Council then adjourned till the first Thursday in September.—Edmd. Powneeby, Secretary.

THE OUTLOOK.

The individual perishes; man thrives,
Though æons of stern failure balk
With ruining hindrance. We may talk
Whole heavens of hope about our lives
Hereafter, while our spendthrift days
Glare at us here with sarcasm in their gaze.

Live for the actual balm or sting
Of joys and sufferings that concern
The intense keen present. Do not turn
Mystery's mute acolyte, and swing
Blind faith's theatric censer, fraught
With suave insidious fumes that strangle thought!

Edgar Fawcett.

ACID DROPS.

Over in America the Methodists have bishops. One of these dignitaries, Bishop Warren, addressed an open session of the Methodist Conference at Bristol. Despite the tremendous growth of Freethought in America, as evidenced by its many journals, and the strong articles by Ingersoll and others in the *North American Review*, this gentleman declared that "infidelity" was played out on the continent. He boasted that no infidel organisation in New York had a roof over its head, which is untrue; and of course he forgot to say anything about other cities, or about the Freethought lecturers who are busy week after week throughout the States. In the same way, Bishop Warren said that America had produced cosmopolitan Christians but "never a cosmopolitan infidel." Indeed! What about Whitman, what about Parker, what about Emerson, what about Ingersoll?

Numbers are a rather vulgar test, but it is appealed to by Bishop Warren. Well now, it is a fact that Ingersoll can be sure when he lectures (which is now too seldom) of filling the biggest hall anywhere at an admission price of one dollar per head. Is there any other orator in the States who can do the same?

Another speaker at the Methodist Conference was the Rev. Dr. Lelievre, who hoped the zeal of British Methodists for Continental missions would not slacken. He hoped great things from France yet. Not very much had been done, but people must be patient. "The rising generation is no longer satisfied with the trenchant negations of Atheism or Positivism, and is seeking to reconcile Faith and Science." We have not, for our part, observed this tendency in recent French literature. But if the French do seek to reconcile Faith and Science, it is a million to one against their ever finding it in Methodism. The truth is, we take it, that these Missions are ingenious little devices for extracting cash from John Bull's pocket. When appealed to in the name of religion, John blubbers and shells out.

Not only is Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata* not to be carried by the mails, but the book has been seized at New York at the instigation of a new society for the suppression of vice. It is enough to make a Freethinker scream with laughter. Here are the Christians putting down a book as immoral for advocating the principles of Jesus Christ. Could there be a more signal proof that Christianity is an organised hypocrisy?

Tolstoi's book is certainly not indecent. It is hard to see how such a subject could be treated more chastely. The real crime of the book, we repeat, is its uncompromising imitation of Christ. The Prophet of Nazareth frowned on marriage, and taught the religious duty of sexual abstinence. Tolstoi points this out with great force, and the loud-mouthed followers of that very Prophet bark and how at the wretch who calls upon them to be honest.

While they are about it why don't they seize the Bible Compared with the "blessed book" the *Kreutzer Sonata* is a book for girls.

Tolstoi has made two big mistakes; first, in becoming a disciple of Jesus; secondly, in thinking he could induce the Christians to follow Christ. Surely he will see the hopelessness of the attempt, and leave the Christians to stew in their own hypocrisy.

It is stated that 800,000,000 dols. of church property is now exempt from taxes in the United States. This, if fairly assessed, would yield a revenue of 10,000,000 dols. a year, or nearly enough to support our poor. As it is, a large number who never enter a church are paying far more than their just share of the burden of taxation. If this is justice, some people cannot see it in that light.—*La Salle Republican.*

The Creek Indians, according to Schooleraft, had a belief that they might be purified from all sin by taking a decoction of Cassina tea, known to the whites as black drink. It was, in fact, a kind of tea, which acted as a gentle diuretic, and at the same time affected the nerves. The medicine had *some* effect which is more than can be said for the blood of Jesus.

In Russia, beside that interesting sect of primitive Christians, the Skopski, who make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake in accordance with the recommendations of Jesus Christ (Matt. xviii., 8, 9; xix., 12), there is a sect called the Strannike, who, in obedience to Deut. xiii., think it right to take the lives of heretics. Fortunately the government, though it has little toleration for heretics, gives no countenance to the Strannike.

A letter from Shrewsbury to the *Nonconformist* gives a story of clerical interference, the like of which could doubtless be paralleled in many places. An aged widow died consoled by the thought that her two children had been promised a place in Muller's Orphanage, near Bristol. The curate, however, came to inquire if it was a church orphanage. He was told it was a Christian institution. "Don't talk to me of its being a Christian institution if it does not belong to the Church," exclaimed the man of God; and he urged the relatives not to let the children go, but send them to the workhouse, where they would be taught "Church principles." Such pressure was brought to bear that the result is the two children are now paupers, and the poor-rate will be burdened with the cost of their maintenance and education for many years. But then they will have the benefit of "Church principles."

"Dagonet" writes in the *Referee*:—"I had intended to visit Ober Ammergau this year, and give Refereaders a faithful and true account of the Passion Play; but, upon telegraphing to the burgomaster for rooms, he informed me that I should have to lodge either with Pontius Pilate or Judas Iscariot, and so I shall let it stand over till the next performance, ten years hence, when I trust, by early application, to get billeted on to one of the respectable disciples. I have a tremendous amount of moral courage, and in the cause of duty and the interests of the public there are very few things from which I would shrink, but I am absolutely unable to risk having my letters addressed for the next month 'Dagonet, care of Judas Iscariot.'"

A secret meeting of the incumbents, who are known to use lighted candles at the administration of the Eucharist, was called recently at St. Alban's, Holborn, to consider their position in regard to the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln. About one hundred and sixty incumbents attended. The *Church Times* gave a very guarded report. It appears they decided, in the first place, to object to the Archbishop's jurisdiction, and in the next affirmed the following:—"Any inquiry in the Ecclesiastic Court being directed only to the question of the guilt or innocence of the accused person, the judgment of the Court is personal to and affects him only, and therefore is not binding on any other person or persons."

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It is needless to say, however, that if Bishop King is condemned, as the Ritualists evidently fear he will be, the smaller fry may find a shorter shrift.

"Thou shalt not smoke" is the new law of the Salvation Army. Booth doesn't enjoy a pipe or a cigar himself, and his tastes are to be imposed on other people. This is the tendency of all fanaticism. Of course there is a good deal to be said *against* smoking, though the pretence that it deadens the mind is idiotic in face of the fact that Ben Jonson, Sir Isaac Newton, Hobbes, Milton, Carlyle, and other men who worked their brains terribly, were lovers of the weed. But to make non-smoking a religious *sine quâ non* is worthy of Christianity, a religion in which, as Mill said, "thou shalt not" predominates over "thou shalt." Its method is to tell men not to do this and not to do that, and when a man has given up some perhaps perfectly harmless pleasure he is fit for the kingdom of heaven. Yet every sensible person knows that a man may, from a religious motive, deny himself many satisfactions, and still remain a pig and a fool. True morality rather asks what a man did do than what he did not do.

Angels' visits are said to be lucky, but when the boss calls look out for mischief. A soldier being killed by lightning at Aldershot, the jury brought in a verdict of "Died by the visitation of God."

The Church of England Working Men's Society, an organisation run by Mr. Powell, and a few others who are not working men, in the interests of the Ritualists, saw it was best not to have a public meeting this year. At the private meeting a vote of censure on the secretary, president and other officials was moved and negatived, though by what majority is not stated.

The *Methodist Times* places on its front page an article "Why is British Methodism Stationary?" Of course stationary means declining. Mr. Hughes laments the bickerings of Methodists, which he has done so much to foment, and says "What we want is a good old-fashioned Revival." He forgets that Methodism has got too respectable to play down low. This it leaves to the Salvation Army, which has thriven at the expense of Methodism and other "revival" sects.

Atheism, the Great Stumbling Block to Progress and Civilisation, concluding with an original poem, The Vision, by W. Shepherd. Such is the title of a pamphlet sent to us. Its value as a serious contribution to the question of Atheism may be judged by the following quotation: "It was to Atheists Christ directed the words, 'Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made he becomes twofold more a child of hell than yourselves.'" Mr. Shepherd is evidently unaware that the Pharisees were the most religious of the Jews. We shall be excused for not quoting from his "original poem."

According to the early reports of the New United States Census, the various religious bodies have an aggregate of 25,000,000, which is not one half of the entire population. The rest must be counted as no church. The Methodists number about five millions, the Catholics over four millions, the Baptists nearly the same, the Presbyterians three millions, and the Episcopalians two millions. But for accurate details we must await official publication.

"He doeth all things well." But there is a potato blight in Mayo, and a famine is feared during the winter.

Noah's Flood was a respecter of persons. It spared one old fuddler and his family. But other floods are more impartial. During divine service at St. James's Church, Bury St. Edmunds, on Sunday, the building was flooded, and many of the congregation had to beat a retreat. What is still worse, the floods did great damage to the West Suffolk crops.

St. Savior's Church, Lower Walmer, was struck by lightning on Sunday morning. The oak tiling was torn off, also a large patch of the roof slates, and the ceiling fell into the gallery. How curious that Jehovah should mistake his own house in a thunderstorm!

The Rev. Llewellyn Davies has been trying to take a rise out of Mr. Herbert Spencer. He denies the philosopher's right to use the word "ought," as though he were bound to take his vocabulary from a parson. Mr. Spencer says he condemns the cruel treatment of inferior races, not from any divine command, or thought of reward or punishment hereafter, but because he feels for them in their sufferings, and cannot help being interested in the welfare of his kind. Mr. Davies replies that Mr. Spencer has no right to say that other men "ought not" to be cruel if they like cruelty. But this is mere hocus-pocus. It is quarreling over a word. When Mr. Spencer says they "ought not" to be cruel he simply means that their conduct is a violation of his ethical standard; nor can Mr. Davies possibly mean anything else, unless he sticklers for God's will and Heaven and Hell. But in that case Mr. Davies's "ought" only means "I had better" or "It will pay," and is merely a calculation of personal interest.

"There are very few clergymen who, on the social question, do not side with the unjust and cruel rich against the poor. I look for no help from the clergy, as a rule. They will wait to discover which side wins, and then espouse that side."—*Ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost.*

Ezra Heywood, editor of *The Word*, Princeton, has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for reprinting the letter for which Moses Harman, editor of *Lucifer*, Kansas, is suffering five years' imprisonment. The fact that Heywood reprinted the letter shows he is a conscientious fanatic like Jesus, Paul and Luther. The great Republic seems to have fallen under the rule of Anthony Comstock. It should not need to be told that nothing is gained by sitting on the safety-valve.

A writer in the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, gives the following rejoinder to those who complain that spiritist manifestations need darkness to cover them:—"Sure enough, why was the earth created in darkness? why did God require a bush as a cabinet when he appeared to Moses, or a cloudy pillar at the door of the tabernacle? Why did the angels come to Lot in the evening, or release the apostles in darkness? The Christian fabric rests upon dreams and darkness; the veil was rent, and saints arose from their graves in the dark; the ascension was in a cloud." What nonsense is there that cannot be defended from the Bible?

At one of the churches recently the congregation were astonished at the following announcement: "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we want a few more altos and tenors for the choir."

It has often been questioned how such really eminent men as the late Cardinal Newman or Bossuet or Pascal, could adhere to so corrupt a Church as that of Rome. But the answer is simple According to the fixed principles of these men, the only alternative was Romanism or Atheism. Early training and inherited instincts made the latter a bugbear, so, seeing the inconsistences of Protestantism, they rested their faith on authority. Cardinal Newman, in his *Apologia*, stated the issue in his masterly way. These great Catholics held that Christianity, being a divine revelation as to what is necessary to human salvation, it cannot be subject to the inevitable discordances and doubts arising from private judgment. An infallible revelation needs an infallible interpreter, or its object will be defeated. Hence Bossuet thought he had gained his case by showing the *Variations of Protestantism*. Those came after him who showed that the variations of Popery were as serious as those of Protestantism. But Catholicism sets up a claim to infallibility, which cannot be ventured upon by any admitting the right of private judgment.

It has been observed as illustrating the decline of religion in Catholic countries that whereas of old both monks and friars were recruited from the middle and upper classes, no one now takes the cowl unless he thereby escapes a life of menial toil. Much the same phenomenon is to be seen in England. The Salvation Army officers are largely recruited from those who could not make as good a living elsewhere, while a lower class of men are found to prepare for the ministry than formerly.

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An American Methodist Episcopal church has decided to use a non-intoxicating beverage for the communion. It was given in evidence that a drunkard had twice returned to his bad habits through partaking of his blessed redeemer.

The poor old prisoner of the Vatican is dissatisfied with his present summer residence, and a new one is to be built for him on an eminence in the Vatican gardens, at a cost of £12,000. Evidently it pays well to be "servant of the servants of God."

Judging from the foul-mouthed fury of "Kestrel" in the *Blyth Examiner* it is pretty clear that Mr. Moss's lectures in the district were successful This person has the very gratuitous impudence to compliment Mrs. Besant on her finding "God," and to express a belief that she is "strugg ing after a brighter goal." He has also discovered that her old colleagues in Secularism have "stumped the country against her" and "poured out their filthy slime upon her." We have seen "filthy slime" poured upon Mrs. Besant, but it was by the champions of Christianity. We should imagine that the praise of such men is the hardest infliction Mrs. Besant has to bear.

We predicted that Edwards, the black preacher, would *not* debate with Mr. Heaford. On Sunday afternoon he referred to our paragraph, and declared he would debate with Mr. Heaford in Victoria Park. Hearing this, Mr. James Neate, secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, asked him if he would debate in a hall. Edwards curtly replied "No." He would not help to raise funds in that way. "But how," said Mr. Neate, "if we make the admission free?" Still he would not consent. It must be Victoria Park or nowhere. In other words, he knows he can beat Mr. Heaford at bawling, and that he can rely on the support of a number of rowdies.

The Chester-le-Street *Advertiser*, which is edited by a very bigoted Christian, prints an odious calumny on the North-Eastern Secular Federation excursionists. It hints that they returned home drunk, and says their conduct along the road was scandalous. The editor knows very well. however, for he has been informed of the fact, that the rowdy excursionists he refers to had no connection with the Secularists. They went from Newcastle to Durham, it is true; but surely it is no miracle that more than one excursion should be made to a favorite spot on the same day. It seems to be the opinion of Christian editors that any stick is clean enough for the Secular "dog."

Ingersoll says that nothing flourishes like a good, sound, healthy, religious lie. Kill it a thousand times, and it comes up smiling. That old story of the Queen placing her hand on the Bible, and telling an African chief, "This is the secret of England's greatness," has been officially contradicted, yet it does duty in one of the letters of the Rev. W. D. Ground in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

By the way, Mr. Ground has an extraordinary opinion of his own merits, which he is trying, though apparently with small success, to induce the world to share. He tells the readers of the *Chronicle* that a certain volume of his is "fairly on a level, as regards elevation and grasp," with Butler's *Analogy*. Still, although Mr. Ground blows his own trumpet so vigorously, we think there is force in his criticism of the late Bishop of Durham. Dr. Lightfoot was a "learned bug," but he had not an elementary conception of the real issue between the Church and modern thought.

Wesley died in 1791, and the Wesleyans are arranging to celebrate the centenary of his death. The *Church Times* makes out that he died in the communion of the Church of England.

Wesley certainly held some views not shared by his followers. One was the resurrection and immortality of animals. In his 65th sermon he asks, "What did the meaner creatures suffer when man rebelled against God? It is probable they sustained much loss even in the lower faculties—their vigor, strength, and swiftness; but, undoubtedly they suffered far more in their understanding, more than we can easily conceive. Perhaps insects and worms had then as much understanding as the most intelligent brutes have now."

Wesley goes on to say, "The whole creation will then undoubtedly be restored, not only to the vigor, strength, and swiftness which they had at their creation, but to a far higher degree of each than they ever enjoyed."

Mr. P. O'Brien is still bent on having Mr. Swinburne's blood. He is going to call attention to the Ode on Russia again, and is said to be looking through Mr. Swinburne's writings to see if he can find any other "incentives to tyrannicide." We are glad to hear that Mr. P O'Brien is thus engaged. The occupation cannot but improve his mind. But before he does anything desperate we hope he will take the advice of a friend (if he has one) who is able to read with accuracy. If he does so he will find that he has discovered a mare's nest. Mr. Swinburne puts the tyrannicide into the mouth of a Russian, who finding no justice seeks "the wild justice" of revenge, and the strongest words are actually marked with inverted commas. Speaking in his own person, the poet asks how Englishmen, of all people, can rebuke the Russian revolutionist.

We fancy that if Mr. P. O'Brien reads Mr. Swinburne's writings, he will find the poet more open to a prosecution for "blasphemy." Some of Swinburne's verses—notably the *Hymn of Man* and *Lines Before a Crucifix*—are as hot as anything that has appeared in our columns.

There is a little rift within the Irish lute. Mr. A. O'Connor is a Catholic first and an Irishman after, and does not relish the contemptuous way in which Mr. Healy and Mr. Sexton treat the Pope's interference in Irish affairs. We guess there will be a pretty quarrel about Papa Pecci, or his successor, when the Irish have a Parliament of their own.

Mrs. E. S. Phelps, the authoress of *Gates Ajar*, has written a thunderous attack in the *Forum* on the American ladies who go to theatre and into society "naked and not ashamed." Surely it is amusing, after all these centuries of the only *pure* religion, which has done so much for the *modesty* of woman, to find Christian ladies exposing their charms in a fashion that would have astonished a Greek or Roman matron. Such exhibitions in Pagan times were only affected by courtesans.

The Advocate-General of Bengal, in addressing the High Court recently on the subject of Mahomedan oaths, in the old Supreme Court of Calcutta, said that the Moslem interpreter employed in administering oaths to witnesses made a good deal of money by means of a private understanding with the witness as to the mode of adjuring him. The form binding on the Mahomedan conscience is to make the Koran rest on the head while the oath is adminittered. But if the Koran is skilfully held just above the head, so as not to be in actual contact with it, the form is not so valid and the oath not binding. Many witnesses were thus enabled, through the aid of the interpreter, to lie without perjury. In an insolvency case, in which a Jew sought the benefit of the Act, to the surprise of the counsel, he denied everything he was asked by an opposing counsel. At this juncture it was suggested that the Jew be required to swear on the life of his son. The Jew was adjured accordingly. The same questions were again put to him, but this time they elicited affirmative replies.—*Star*.

The *Star* pillories William Harper Bradshaw, of Milton House, Plaistow, who is doing three months' hard labor. The fellow is one of the pious gang who exploit benevolent Christians. He pretended to keep a Children's Home at Southend. and his circulars brought him in last year about a thousand pounds. On investigation it turned out that the Children's Home, like the parson's heaven, existed in the land of imagination; while the beautiful carriage drives for the dear children, and the special arrangements with railway companies, were the product of Bradshaw's flowery fancy.

Holy Moses! Nay, that's not strong enough. J. C. and all the twelve Apostles! Those blaspheming Jews are said to be farming the Oberammergau Passion Play, and the Regent of Munich is reported as declaring that the play shall not be performed again. Well, it *is* funny. But after all, as so many thousands of Christians make cash out of Jesus Christ, why shouldn't the Jews rake in a few shekels?

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 17, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 7.30, "A World without God."

August 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

F. LESTER.—Not a bad idea, but impossible to carry out this year.

F. W. KENNAWAY.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

E. ALLCOCK.—The tract, which extols the virtues of a curative syrup, is in the Gujarati character, the dialect used in Gujerat, a peninsula between the Indus and Bombay. The language is a modern derivation from the Sanscrit, and is much used by the Parsees, that interesting remnant of the followers of Zoroaster.

R. CROSS.—The Creed of Pius IV. declares that none can be saved out of the Catholic faith, which it lays down. English Catholics try to throw a veil over this doctrine by stating that Protestants may be saved if they labor under invincible ignorance of the true faith.

W. G.—*Lux Mundi* is published at fourteen shillings. The Hebrew word rendered "day" in Genesis means *day* absolutely. No scholar maintains the contrary as a matter of etymology. Many books deal with the Old Testament critically. Colenso's *Pentateuch* (People's Edition) can be bought for a few shillings. The works of Kuenen and Wellhausen are more expensive, so is Kalisch's great work on the Pentateuch, with Hebrew text, English translation, and fine commentary.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We await choice of subjects. A copy of bill should be forwarded.

FREETHINKER.—The comment was founded on a paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. If Mr. Gladstone writes on Sunday, as was reported, is it not a rational inference that he wrote a part at least of his *Good Words* articles on that day? That he gets a good sum of money for them is hardly open to dispute.

H. CALASCA.—We understand that Peter Weston's sale of the *Freethinker* still improves. Thanks for the cuttings.

T. THURLOW.—Pleased to find you take our remarks in good part. We must all work together as far as possible.

J. SAUNDERS.—Thanks for the cuttings.

J. FRASER.—Mr. Forder will not cease to act as our publisher He will simply sell Mr. Bradlaugh's publications as he has hitherto sold ours, the stock being supplied to him at a certain price. Our own stock, a large and growing one, is warehoused at 14 Clerkenwell Green. We are always prepared to receive deposits of capital for the extension of our business, on the terms already advertised; namely, five per cent. interest, and the deposit recallable at six months' notice.

G. RUTLAND.—The brutal insolence of the Christian Evidence Society's outdoor lecturers is a byeword. You were disgusted with Tarry, but we assure you (although you may hardly believe it) that he is far from being the worst of them. Glad to hear you were "charmed" with the lecture on Swinburne. Such themes are a pleasant variation.

J. NEATE.—Just as we thought. See "Acid Drops."

H. J. STACE.—We hope your propagandist efforts on Bank Holiday will bear fruit.

C. K. LAPORTE.—It is not possible to equip every outdoor lecturer as you suggest. After all, Englishmen must be saved or damned in English—not in Hebrew. "The Dream" shall appear.

GRIST ON.—A good title.

T. BIRTLEY.—Glad you so appreciate our article on "Fooling Jack." See "Acid Drops."

W. HOLLAND.—Good jokes are always welcome.

G. FRASER.—Let the bigots rave. The Reading Freethinkers need not mind. When you hear a pig grunt you know it is the natural expression of the species.

C. DORE.—Write when you find opportunity.

CAMDENIST.—We have no recollection of what you refer to. As a matter of fact, the observance of the first day of the week as the Lord's Day gradually crept in among the Gentile Christians. It was not likely that they would observe the Jewish Sabbath. They took the old Day of the Sun (Sunday) which was observed by the Pagans, and turned it to their own special purpose.

J. EDMUNDS (Cardiff).—You are quite correct at bottom. Belief is only opinion. Facts are the only proofs, and the ultimate facts of mind are sensations. You have only to put a clause in your will that you are to be buried without religious rites. Mr. Forder will supply you with a form if you apply to him.

W. SIMMONS.—Thanks for the extract. It may be useful.

AN ENTITY.—We do not recognise it as a phase of Freethought. Unpremeditated thoughts are not inspiration, and are apt to be worthless.

ANONYMA.—The matter shall be inquired into, and your offer born in mind.

H. J. STRONG.—The letter of Carlyle's reprinted in the *Star* was unworthy of him. He was too much swayed by antipathies, perhaps owing to his dyspepsia. A disordered stomach is a curse to the sufferer, and often to his acquaintances. Shakespeare must have had a fine stomach and pure blood. Carlyle was doubtless in the dumps—if not positively savage—when he wrote that letter. Some time afterwards, Tyndall tells us, he met Darwin personally, and pronounced him the most charming of men.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec. North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, desires to acknowledge the following subscriptions:—Captain Thompson, 4s. 6d.; A. B. Dawson, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Pace, 5s.; E. G. Suffolk, 2s.; Newcastle Branch, £1 3s. 5d.; South Shields Branch, 2s. 4d.; T. Birtly, 2s.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 2s.; Ox Hill Branch, 13s. 6d.; Collection at Durham, £1. 4s. 3d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star——Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—La Rennovation—La Verité—El Clamor Setabense—Portsmouth Evening News—Blyth Examiner—Der Lichtfreund.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

"A World without God" is the title of a special new lecture that Mr. Foote will deliver at the London Hall of Science this evening (Aug. 17). He will work out what the world would be like in the absence of all forms of theology. The picture will interest Freethinkers, and perhaps believers. Mr. Charles Watts will take the chair, that being his last Sunday in England. He sails for New York on Saturday next (Aug. 23) in the Cunard ship *Servia*.

The London Secular Federation will carry on its week-night Free Lectures with fresh spirit during the coming winter. Arrangements are being made for several courses in various parts of the metropolis, and full announcements will be made shortly. The enterprise will of course involve expenditure, and we hope the friends of Freethought in London will contribute according to their means. Subscriptions can be sent to the Treasurer, Mr. B. O. Smith, 142 Old Street, E.C., or to the editor of this journal.

On Sunday the Reading Branch had a river excursion to Marlow—a place once consecrated by the presence of Shelley. There was heavy rain in the morning, but the weather cleared up, and nearly seventy members and friends had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

The Sunday opening of the Irish National Gallery in Dublin has been a success. Of the 90,000 visitors last year no less than 25,160 went on "the Lord's Day."

The Duke of Westminster opened Grosvenor House on Sunday to the National Sunday League. No less than 1,910 persons visited the House and enjoyed a sight of its splendid collection of pictures. Tickets for admission this afternoon (Aug. 17) can be obtained of Mr. H. Mills, 8 Theobald's Road, W.C.

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The Naples Municipality has decided to spend £10,000 on a monument to Garibaldi. Our readers will remember that the great Italian hero was an Atheist. This must be another dreadful pill for Holy Mother Church.

In Milan nearly two thousand bodies have been cremated during the last thirteen years. To members of the Cremation Society the cost is only one pound sterling. In the case of strangers it is just double that sum Relatives who oppose the expressed wishes of the deceased to be cremated have been compelled by the Italian tribunals to carry them into effect.

The Catholic papers are making a fuss about the threatened suppression of religious guilds and seizure of their property in Italy. Especially do they dwell on the horrible profanity of a Church which is to be turned into a theatre. Well, the religious guilds have long been supported at the expense of the nation, and if it can see no further use for them it does well to turn their property to national account.

Two lectures on Giordano Bruno by Daniel G. Brinton and Thomas Davidson have recently been published at Philadelphia. Dr. Brinton, who is author of an able work on Indian Myths, says of the significance of the monument to Bruno by New Italy. "It means an open war on dogmatic belief of every kind, a declaration of independence of the intellect, an announcement that philanthropic working is better than grossly believing, a proclamation that truth as shown by actions are the only sacred things, and alone merit reverence."

Mr. Charles Voysey, whom we will not lower by giving the title "Reverend," has been giving a series of ten discourses entitled "Revelation Tested on Moral Grounds." They are published among his *Theistic Sermons*, and form a pretty full impeachment of Christianity from the Theistic standpoint.

Madame Clemence Royer, the translator of Darwin into French, has a capital article on the *Revue de Belgique*, on "Is the Idea of God Tenable"? This article is in reply to Dr. Paul Carus, and reproaches him for retaining the word God, when he has given up the ideas to which the word has been attached, Mme. Royer says "Each age and each doctrine needs its own language and its own rhetoric. The modern mind ought to rid itself of the obsolete words which no longer answer to its thoughts."

The National Federation of Freethinkers of Belgium propose to the Freethinkers of Paris, that they shall interchange visits of holiday parties of Freethought children, that the younger generations may fraternise with those of a different race. We hope the French Freethinkers will be able to carry out this project.

The *Freethinker's Magazine* for August, reprints Mr. Moss's paper on Forward Young Widow Ruth, and Mr. Wheeler's on The Decline of Christianity, both with acknowledgements, from our columns.

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, concluding his articles in the *Freethinker's Magazine* on "What would Follow on the Effacement of Christanity?" says "At this day no lawyer is able to draw any will by which property can be derived for any use which may be challenged as contrary to Christianity; and donors of money for such uses are constantly intimidated and discouraged from making bequest. The world has thus been deprived of gifts of millions in amount, which would have been devoted to public uses under sceptical direction." Mr. Holyoake holds that the social and moral effects of the discontinuance of Christian teaching and the abolition of its institutions would soon be seen to be advantageous to society. "Were Christianity effaced the liberated forces of science and morality would take its place." Evidently there is no decline in the father of Secularism whose interesting reminiscences, entitled "Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life," continue to occupy the first place in the supplement to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

The Newcastle *Daily Chronicle* reproduces almost in *extenso* the North Eastern Secular Federation's annual report. Summaries are also given in the other local papers. This is a sign of the times.

Our new supply of Tracts is going off merrily. We have already sent out nearly seventy thousand, and we hope to send out a quarter of a million before the end of the year.

Mr. Foote is hurrying on with the new edition of "Bible Romances." Number IV., *Noah's Flood*, will be on sale next Tuesday (Aug. 9). Numbers V. and VI., *The Tower of Babel* and *Lot's Wife* will be ready a fortnight later. The Flood number is a double one, price twopence, and contains more than twice the matter of the old edition.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Executive Meeting July 30, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Bater, Bentley, Dipper, Gordon, Heath, Hunt, Ivatts, Larkin, Reynolds, Roger, Smith, Standring, Truelove, Warren, Wheeler, and Forder, Secretary.

The minutes having been read and confirmed, the report of the Organisation Committee was considered, which included the sending of lecturers to Brighton and Halstead, the recognition of a new branch at Trinidad, etc. Mr. Roger moved and Mr. Larkin seconded that the report be adopted; carried. Mr. Hunt moved and Mr. Reynolds seconded that the Executive invite applications for the office of Secretary consequent upon the resignation of Mr Forder, such applications to be sent to the secretary before the next meeting of the Executive; carried. The question of continuing to publish an Almanac was then considered and after considerable discussion Mr. Hunt moved and Mr. Reynolds seconded that the Society continue to publish the Almanac; carried. Mr. Standing moved and Mr. Ivatts seconded, that Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler edit the Almanac; carried. Mr. Reynolds moved and Mr. Roger seconded, that the business arrangements in connection with the Almanac be left in the hands of the Organisation Committee; carried. A conversation ensued respecting price of the Almanac; some of the Council advocating that it should be cheaper than hitherto. Eventually Mr. Warren moved and Mr. Bentley seconded, that the price of the Almanac be sixpence; carried. Mr. Reynolds moved and Mr. Roger seconded, that the Organisation Committee be recommended to publish the Almanac in November; carried. Mr. Reynolds moved and Mr. Warren seconded that the National Secular Society affiliate with the Metropolitan Radical Federation. Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Hunt seconded that the affiliation be deferred until next meeting. with a view to the affiliation being effected by the London Secular Federation. On a division being taken the affiliation was carried by ten votes to four. Mr. Warren moved and Miss Vance seconded, that Messrs. Standring, Foote, Roger and Forder be the delegates to the Federation; carried. Mr. Roger moved and Mr. Standring seconded, that the London Secular Federation be requested to take over the management of children's parties; carried. A question having been asked as to the sale of shares announced in *National Reformer* and *Freethinker*, the Secretary stated that no applications had been received for them. Mr. Hunt moved and Mr. Bentley seconded that the matter of the transfer of the shares stand over until next meeting; carried.

Shares.

The shares in the various Hall Companies transferred to the N. S. S. from Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are still for sale, and the Executive will be glad to receive offers for them. An appeal is specially made to friends in the towns where these halls are situate, so as to retain them in the Freethought Party.

Benevolent Fund.

"Daylight," 5s.; East London Branch, 3s. 3d.; Mr. and Mrs. Barralet, 3s. 6d.; North West London Branch, 6s.; J. Pickett, 2s. 6d.; surplus on West Ham Branch Excursion, 15s. 3d.; V. Rogers, 3s.; parcel of underclothing from Ignoramus. The stock of left-off clothing which many of our friends have sent to me during the past ten years is now quite exhausted. These gifts have been of considerable service to our poor members, and the Committee will be grateful for a further supply. Parcels can be sent to me, to 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.—R. Forder, Secretary.

At a wedding the other day, the officiating clergyman having concluded the marriage service, gave the young couple a a suitable address. He had not, however, proceeded far, when the bridegroom, going up to the verger, whispered in his ear, "Tell your guv'nor to cut it short—I've got the cab by the hour."

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THE THOUGHTFUL DOG.

Some learned Churchman once asserted,
Founded on some twaddlish creed,
That man alone possessed a soul,
And animals of lower breed,
Like me, for instance, being a dog,
Had no such claim on gifts eternal.
My carcase dead, my soul died too,
Escaping tortures most infernal,
Stored chances of a transmutation,
Bliss in heaven or blister in hell,
Which seems to dogs to be dogmatic,
For how the deuce could that man tell?
No souls return to solve the problem,
Distilled in spirit, crowned, or roasted,
And miracles seem quite died out,
And all those tricks the godly boasted.
Man certainly seems very greedy,
For, not content with one life here,
Deceives himself he'll have another
Of angel form in heaven's sphere,
And fly with wings and blow loud trumps,
His rotted trunk and purblind mind
Restored and cleaned, to glorify
The manufacturer of mankind.
How crude, how coarse is this conceit,
When worms have shares in him invested,
And ducks have thought the worms fine fare,
And fairer ducks these ducks digested.
A dog, I know, should not have thoughts,
For instinct was his only share;
Still, brains in man are sometimes less,
And brute in man will not compare
With brute as dog, for dog *is* brute,
So styled *imperject* brute by man.
Thus man must be a *perfect* brute,
And has been since the world began.
Some say he was of monkey breed;
Before that time I cannot trace,
But certainly I still see men
Who still resemble well that race.
No doubt some sixteen thousand years
Might trace him to a parasite,
A caterpillar, bug, or flea,
Who married with a cheesy mite.
To say he is of God's own image,
Then surely this God cannot boast,
Grotesque as man appears to dogs
Of being a very handsome host.
In qualities they may be like,
For godly advocates, I find,
Have harder laws and harder hearts
Than other men of sceptic mind,
And punish with religious zeal
Invasions on their Persian story,
Condemning all who won't accept
The only route to heavenly glory.
Yet why this route was necessary
To parent love, in God seems queer,
When just as easy 'twould have been
For him to make him happy here;
And if man boasts free agency,
How comes it he can't exercise it?
A slave to passion's stronger will—
So kind was God to so devise it—
His weaklier dictates have no chance,
And fights and struggles hard to gain
A goal that grins at his attempts,
A myth that tells him all is vain.
Machine-made, charged, and started off,
Propelled by powers he must obey,
He dashes down the line of life,
Encountering on his destined way
Accidents in ambush planned,
By this inventor at his leisure,
Who knew full well the damn'd result,
But set it working for his pleasure;
And if it does as he arranged,
With all its imperfections rife,
Endows it with a soul accurst,
And says it has eternal life,
With chances of redeeming creeds
Involving murderous contention,
Grill and griddle, sword and stake,
And worse for those who choose dissension;
For they shall have a double grill
And all their heretic fraternity,
With Satan as the Holy Friar
To fry and grill to all eternity.
So ill-bred Sykes' immaculate,
And brother dogs, give me your paws,
Congratulate our lucky selves,
We're free from all celestial laws;
And thank your stars, you cross-bred curs,
You have no lottery at stake:
And, being dogs, don't run the chance
In heaven or hell, to reign or bake.
We certainly are better off
For when we're dead we're let alone
And have not to be born again,
For something we have never done.
So master, though you're born in sin
I'm not above association,
And though we've oft been on the Cross
We cannot alter this damnation.
I do not envy you your soul;
Your flesh I'd rather have cooked here
Although a trifle tough you've been;
When your soul goes, I'll shed a tear.
So godly humbugs grind your teeth,
And say this dog wrote doggrel rot,
And worthy only of a dog
Who when he writes, writes something hot.

Crawford Carton.

REVIEWS.

The Origin of Worship and the Genesis of Belief. By J. H. Mitchener. Kegan Paul, Trübner and Co.—This is a paper read before the Croydon Socratic Society, a body that evidently permits full and free utterance. The author finds the origin of worship in the sun and in the recognition of the mystery of life as manifested in sex. No doubt these natural elements have had an important influence on the religions of the past and can be even traced in the religions of to-day. But we would remind Mr. Mitchener of the evidence that moon-worship among nomads was considered even of greater importance than that of the sun. The month was used as a time reckoner long before the year. The worship of animals too is an ancient faith in no way dependent, we believe, on the signs of the zodiac. What we consider the main genesis of belief—the fear of ghosts, arising from dreams—Mr. Mitchener takes no account of, and his pamphlet would be strengthened by a reference to such works as Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, and Massey's *Natural Genesis*. The little pamphlet, if it does not carry out its ambitious title, is yet worth reading. The author is evidently one who thinks for himself, as may perhaps be judged from the following: "In the system of Christianity the doctrine of a future life is found in close relation to the dogma of the resurrection of the body, and as the spread of knowledge shows the latter to be an impossibility, the evidence for the former is proportionately weakened."

Appel aux Libres-Penseurs pour la Fondation d'un Comité d'Etudes Morales. Par Jean-Paul Cée, avec un preface par J. B. Schacre. Paris, E. Pasquier 6 Rue de Jarente, 1890. 30 centimes.—M. Cée, who was one of the representatives at the Paris International Freethought Conference, desires to see a Freethought Congress for the purpose of drawing up a Code of Moral Laws, a sort of declaration of principles somewhat similar to the famous declaration of the rights of men of a hundred years ago. Our own opinion is that practical organisation for definite objects is far more necessary, and this conviction has not been lessened by reading M. Cée's other work, *Avant-Projet d'un Code des Lois Morales*, fondé sur les principes Démocratiques et Socialistes et presénté au Congrès Universel des Libres-Penseurs reuni à Paris en 1889, par Jean Paul Cée: M. Pasquier, 6 Rue de Jarente; 1 fr. 50. This is one of the papers submitted but not read to the International Congress last September. It makes in fact a book of 185 pages M. Cée has given much attention to moral education, and traces what he conceives it should be from first infancy to the grave. His main principles are that there is no morality without liberty, that useful labor is the moral form of human activity, laziness being the mother of vices, while moral authority resides in the totality of con-

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sciences and sovereignty in the totality of citizens. The aims of the author are high. He says, be pure to be strong, be strong to be good. His socialism only amounts to this "To each according to his works." Much thought has been given to the production of the book and many useful suggestions are found in it, but we feel as we feel in reading Comte, that we are dealing with an idealogue, a system-maker unaware how little amenable the complex organism of society is to any system originating in the mind of one of its members.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. HEADLAM EXPLAINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your statement that I said that "a Sunday-school teacher is capable of refuting the average Freethought lecturer and the men on your platform could not pass the simplest examination in biblical knowledge" is extremely inaccurate. I doubt whether anyone could "refute" some of your lecturers: they won't be refuted; and as they are doing such good work in conjunction with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the authors of *Lux Mundi* in overthrowing false notions about religion and the Bible, why should the Sunday-school teachers attempt to refute them? I never said that your people could not pass an examination in biblical *knowledge*. On the contrary, they know the Bible well. I am astonished at Secularists wasting their time and study on it as they do. It is not in knowledge, but in interpretation of the Bible that they seem to me to be sadly deficient. Their exegesis is hopelessly out of date. You may know a book by heart, be able to quote sentence after sentence from it, and yet not understand one bit what it means. That seems to me to be the condition which some of your lecturers are in. Still, they serve a useful purpose by showing to many Christians who may still treat the Bible as a book of infallible sentences, instead of as a collection of inspiring literature, what is the logical outcome of their idolatrous folly. It would be better, perhaps, if, as Secularists, they attended to secular work; but as the Christian Church is taking to that pretty vigorously now, it would be ungracious to complain that Secularists are more eager to get rid of superstition than to get rid of poverty. You are kind enough to say that one of your lecturers would be happy to show me what Christian Socialism is. It would be most interesting to hear him; so it would to hear from a man of science what art is, and from the manager of the Bank of England what poetry is. It is always interesting to hear men talking on subjects entirely outside their own special line. But life is too short to indulge in these luxuries, and for practical purposes I should rather learn what Secularism is from a Secularist, and if I wanted to know what Christian Socialism is, go to a Christian Socialist for my information. STEWART D. HEADLAM.

[We accept Mr. Headlam's correction, without saying whether it will be accepted by Mr. Thurlow and other Secularists who heard his lecture at West Ham. Passing over Mr. Headlam's facetiousness, we notice his artful substitution of "inspiring" for "inspired" in relation to the Bible. We also notice his admission that God's word to his children is of such a character that men as honest as Mr. Headlam, and perhaps as intelligent, may study it carefully without understanding it a bit. We further notice his astonishing statement that the Socialism of the New Testament can only be understood by those who believe in it—of whom Mr. Headlam is not one. With respect to superstition, we have to inform him that Secularists regard it as the *parent* of poverty, as well as other evils. As to their neglecting Secular work, we have only to say that Mr. Headlam is singularly blind if he does not see their activity in every advanced movement. Finally, we admit that the Church is playing at Secular work; that is, it takes the flesh-pots of superstition on the pretence of feeding "the poor." We say this without meaning any offence to Mr. Headlam, whose own treatment by the Church is full of eloquence.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

PROFANE JOKES.

What is the difference between parsons and poultry?—The ones are clerical and the others lay.

An American says there are lots of Swindling Trusts nowadays, but the most deceptive trust, is Trust in God.

Political Parson: "Ah, yes, that is all very well sir; but you know that hell is paved with good intentions." Ward Politician: "No! I never heard of that job! Who got the contract."

Mother: "Jennie, what makes you such a bad girl?" Jennie: "Well, mamma, God sent you the best children he could find, and if we don't suit you it ain't my fault."

Revivalist: "Uncle Rastus, why don't you give up your evil ways and become a Christian?" Uncle Rastus: "I'se tried it, sah, I'se tried it. I'se 'sperienced 'ligion more'n wunce, but 'tain't no use." Revivalist: "What seems to be the trouble?" Uncle Rastus: "I 'spects I'se too fond of chicken, sah."

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(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Miss Robertson, "The Sins of God." Monday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell — 61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. A. Besant, "Christianity and Woman."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30 Mr. G. W. Foote, "A World Without God"; Mr. Charles Watts will preside.

Hammersmith - Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, Mr. H. Snell, "The Rise and Progress of Religious Beliefs."

West Ham — 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. Arthur Lovell, "Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecy as a Test of Truth."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Does the Bible Bear the Stamp of God?"

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "What is a Christian?"

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Romans viii."

Hammersmith Bridge, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Is Deity Conceivable?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. L Keen will lecture.

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. Samuel Soddy, "What is Christianity?"

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Good King David"

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. J. Dipper, "Christianity: its History."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Duty of Freethinkers."

Old Southgate - On the Green, 7.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Teetotalism."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner "Man's Soul."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Civilisation and Progress."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. James Marshall will lecture; 6, a debate between Mr. T. Thurlow and Mr. Elphlein on "Is Slavery Supported by the Bible, and who have abolished it?"

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."

Wood Green — Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Miracles."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite Arsenal gates) at 7, Mr. E. Calvert, "History of the New Testament."

COUNTRY.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Old Things have passed away."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. John Grange, "Why I am not a Christian."

Portsmouth - Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Googe, "The Eight Hours' Day: a Boon to Labor!"

Sheffield Hall of Science Rockingham Street. —7, A local gentleman, "An Inquirer's Difficulties"

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield—Market Place, 3, "Is Christianity Reasonable?"; 7, "School Board Religion."

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, "Does Man Survive Death?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethna Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 24, Manchester. Sept. 7., Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 17 (morning), Bethnal Green; 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell, 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green; 24, Brighton; 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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ADAM'S BREECHES.

BLUSH not, fair reader; nothing is coming to offend your modesty. No doubt you have seen pictures of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, dressed in the primitive costume of simple innocence, or, as Hans Breitmann says, "mit noddings on." And perhaps you felt the remarks of some thick-skinned friend at your side as rather embarrassing. But our intention is to take the Grand Old Gardener and his wife at a later stage, when they got clothes, and laid the foundation of all the tailors' and milliners' businesses in creation.

For some time, nobody knows how long, whether six hours or sixty years, Adam and Eve never discovered their nakedness. It never occurred to them that more than one skin was necessary. And as the climate was exquisite, and the very roses grew without thorns, they had no need of overcoats or sticking-plaster. But one day they ate an apple, or for all we know a dozen, and they and the world underwent a change. "My dear Adam," said Eve, "you are quite shocking; why don't you dress yourself?" And Adam replied, "My dear Eve, where is your dressing-gown?"

Necessity is the mother of invention, and when a woman wants a dress she will get it somehow. There was no linen or woollen, so they had recourse to fig leaves, which were large and substantial. Needles and thread turned up miraculously, and Eve took to them by instinct. She sat down on a grassy mound, and worked away, stitch, stitch, stitch, while Adam looked on with the ox-eyed stupidity of his sex in presence of a lady engaged in this interesting occupation. In half an hour, more or less, she produced two splendid pairs of—well, yes, BREECHES. The Authorised Version calls them aprons, but we may believe it was a double-barreled arrangement. This at any rate was the opinion of the translators of the famous Breeches Bible, first published in folio in 1599, in which the seventh verse of the third chapter of Genesis reads—"And they sewed fig-tree leaves together, and made themselves *breeches*," from which translation it has been ingeniously argued "that the women had as good a title to the breeches as the men."

There is no dispute as to the color of Adam's breeches. They were *green*. Hence that universal wit, and recondite scholar, the author of *Hudibras*, represents the knight's attendant, the worthy Ralpho, as

> For mystic learning wondrous able,
> In magic Talisman and Cabal,
> Whose primitive tradition reaches
> As far as Adam's first green breeches.

Such was the substance and color of Adam's first unmentionables. They were soft and cool, and infinitely preferable to the coarse articles purveyed in English bathing-machines. But they were hardly calculated to stand the wear and tear of the life of labor to which Adam was doomed after the Fall, and before Jehovah evicted his tenant he took pity on the poor fellow's limited wardrobe. "Poor devils," he said to himself, "that fig-leaf arrangement won't last them long. It's sure to burst the first time Adam hoes potatoes. I'll start them with something stronger. Perhaps the lass will find out how to rig herself. There's the first pond for a looking-glass, and I guess it won't be long before she gets Adam to hold a skein of wool. But meanwhile I must do something for her dolt of a husband. Yes, he shall have a new pair of breeks."

And Jehovah made them. Not of shoddy, or good woollen, but stout leather. Adam changed his *green* breeches for *brown* ones, and when he got then on he said "My God, ain't they hot!" Eve declared she would never wear a thing like that. "I don't waddle," she exclaimed, "and I won't look bandy." So a committee of seven archangels was appointed to find a fresh pattern.

Leaving Eve's outfit alone, and confining our attention to Adam's, we may ask a few questions about his second pair of breeches. Let no one object that such questions are frivolous. Did not England ring once with tidings of O'Brien's breeches? And shall it be thought undignified to take an interest in Adam's? Nor let any one object that such inquiries are blasphemous. They are obviously prompted by a spirit of reverence. What else, indeed, could excite our curiosity about an old pair of breeches that were worn out many centuries before the Flood?

What were the dimensions of Adam's breeches? The Bible does not tell us his altitude, but as he lived nine hundred and thirty years, and perhaps had a fourth of that time to grow in, it is not surprising that the Jews regarded him as excessively tall. His original height was incalculable; when he stood upright his head reached to the seventh heaven. But his appearance alarming the angels, the Lord flattened him down to a thousand cubits. Fifteen hundred feet, therefore, was his height before he shrank away subsequently to his expulsion from Paradise. Consequently his breeches must have been about eight hundred feet long, and the circumference proportionate. Suits might have been carved out of them for a whole regiment of Dutchmen.

What animal did Jehovah kill and flay for such an extensive skin? Even the mammoth would be ridiculously insufficient. We presume, therefore, that a wholesale slaughter of beasts took place, and that Adam's breeches were made of a multitude of skins. These were of course of divers colors or shades, and the garment must have borne some resemblance (to compare small things with great) to the well-mended trousers of a poor fisherman, blessed with a careful, industrious wife, who makes one pair last him her lifetime by insinuating fresh patches as the old ones wear away.

Happily the world was not then peopled, or Adam's life would have been unbearable. There were no little boys, about two hundred feet high, to pass exasperating remarks, such as "Who's your tailor?" "Does the missis know you're out?" "Hullo, old Patchwork!"

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How long was Jehovah employed? Did he give the breeches out in sections to the angels, and do the connections himself? According to the Bible he made them alone, but we may well assume an omission in the narrative, and give him assistance in executing such a liberal order.

How did he kill the animals that furnished the skins? Did they die instantaneously at his order, or did he slaughter them with a knife and a poleaxe? How did he dress the skins? Were tan-pits constructed? Were the usual chemicals employed, or did Jehovah's science only extend to the use of bark?

The ingenious reader will be able to ask a number of questions for himself. Our own must be brought to a close. We have only to add that the world is impoverished by the loss of Adam's breeches. Those who have read Dr. Farrar's *Life of St. Paul* will recollect how he sheds rhetoric and tears on the Apostle's old cloak. But what was that battered garment in comparison with the subject of this article? Not only were Adam's leather breeches the first piece of tailor's-work in the world, but they were worn by the father of all of us, and made by God himself. Such an article would be better worth seeing than the coats of Kings and Emperors. But, alas, it is lost! Yet the voice of Hope whispers it may be found. Who knows? "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Adam's breeches, too dilapidated for use or decency, may have been carefully rolled up and preserved by Seth. Perhaps they were taken into the Ark by Noah. And when the regions of Mesopotamia are thoroughly explored, they will perhaps be found in some deep cave or dry well, carefully wrapped in waterproof, and accurately ticketed. Oh what joy when they fall into the hands of the Christian Evidence Society! Then will Engstrom dance with glee, even as David danced before the Ark of God; then will the infidel slink away disgraced and crestfallen; and then will the Christians cry out to the Huxleys of the world, "Oh ye of little faith, who denied the existence of Adam, come and see his breeches!"

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGIOUS CELIBACY.

Count Tolstoi's striking article on Christianity and Marriage in the *Universal Review* for July, opens up one of the most interesting and important questions connected with the history and doctrines of Christianity. Although the New Testament cannot be said to enforce universal or even priestly celibacy, there can be no doubt it extols the unmarried above the married state. Its great exemplar, nay its God, was a bachelor. Jesus said, he that was able to receive the doctrine of making oneself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake "let him receive it" (Matt. xix., 12), and declared that the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage (Luke xx., 34-35). Paul declared "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," and while permitting marriage "to avoid fornication" would that all men were even as he himself, unmarried; and pointed out that "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. vii.) The Apocalypse speaks of the redeemed as "not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv., 4).

All the Fathers of the Church, her popes, councils and priests have in all ages sounded the barren virtues of virginity. It was supposed to have some mysterious value in the eye of God, not easily understood save on the supposition that he was like an old Jewish patriarch, very particular about the character of his harem. By perpetual vows they secured the profession, not the possession of this particular virtue. Enthusiastic youths and maidens, taught that the path of perfection is inseparable from a life of celibacy, have had their piety turned into a source of woe and vice. The "brides of Christ," the spiritual harem of the bachelor god, are kept in bastilles of superstition for his service, secure not from temptation but from exposure. The male virgins are set to hear the confessions of confiding females under pretext of spiritual superintendence. Christianity denounces the immorality of Paganism but it had nothing to equal this.

Celibacy and chastity are two different things; some might be tempted to say two incompatible things. The history of sacerdotal celibacy is the history of priestly immorality. Readers of the *Crimes of Christianity* will be acquainted with some of the evidence on this point, or the Christian reader may be directed to the more orthodox pages of Mr. H. C. Lea or Isaac Taylor. All the great fathers of the Church unite in the praise of religious celibacy. St. Augustine, in answering the objection that if all the world followed the principle he recommended, the earth would soon become a desert, says in a tone of triumph, *Oh felix mundus exitium!* If all human beings were blotted from the earth by celibacy it would be a happy world—for the other animals. Apes would take the lead in the line of evolution. This is what religious celibacy has done. Like the Inquisition it has eliminated the pick of the race. No doubt it may be contended that it has been of service to mankind in hindering the propagation of priests. Even if this is disputed it may be conceded that it helped in the Dark Ages to preserve Europe from the dominance of an hereditary priestly caste. In Norman England it was the custom of all the clergy to keep concubines and wives, and even an Archbishop of Canterbury, Reginald, was the son of a bishop. Lea says "They arranged to have their benefices transmitted to their sons, while their daughters were married to the sons of the other priests, thus establishing an hereditary sacerdotal caste in which marriage appears to have been a matter of course."

The Church spared no effort to crush priestly marriages. Celibacy meant both completer subordination than could be expected from those with family ties, and also the inheritance by the Church of property and funds which might otherwise pass into lay hands. The lay view of clerical celibacy has always been unfavorable. When the system was established in Denmark the peasantry broke into insurrection and demanded that the clergy should be compelled to marry, as otherwise no man's wife or daughters would be safe. At a later time it was common in Switzerland for the inhabitants of a parish, on the arrival of new pastor, to oblige him to choose a concubine, though the precaution was not always sufficient to secure the virtue of the female parishioners. A synod at Palencia, in 1322, is evidence of a similar custom in Spain.

But to show the evils inseparable from religious celibacy there is no need to rake up the chronicles of history. All with human hearts and passions, and that love of children which is one of the great foundations of social life, see that the state is unnatural. Vows are taken by those ignorant or unheedful of the dangers which beset their path. The issue of perverted instincts is always misery and vice.

Protestants may say that arguments against religious celibacy do not affect them. So much the better. But Protestants after all are only a fraction of that large army of superstition which we have to encounter. At a time too when numbers of a most important party in the Church of England are seeking to establish Celibate Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods,

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and when Theosophists are extolling the mysterious virtues of virginity, it may not be out of place to direct some attention to the observed effects of religious celibacy. J. M. WHEELER.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWMANS.

EVIDENTLY the passage in Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, referred to in our last week's leader, concerning three Protestants, one of whom became a Catholic, the second a Unitarian, and the third an Atheist—was inspired by the Cardinal's own experience. He himself became a Catholic, and his brother Francis William an advanced Unitarian. There was a third brother, who died a few years ago at Tenby, after living there for some time as a recluse. He was a declared Atheist. We have heard that he was a very remarkable man, highly accomplished, and of great powers of mind. It is a pity that some one who knew him does not give a fuller account of the third Newman. How curious that three brothers should have covered the whole field of religious thought; the eldest a Roman Catholic, the youngest an Atheist, and the middle one a Deist.

Some of the papers have referred to the Achilli incident. Achilli was a beastly profligate, but coming to England as a convert from Catholicism, he was fulsomely patronised by leading Protestants. Newman attacked the reptile with his consummate skill, and Achilli appealed to a British jury. The charges were all made good, at least to the satisfaction of honest men, but a Protestant jury gave a verdict against the hated apostate from the English Church. Newman was sentenced to a fine of one hundred pounds, and imprisonment as a first-class misdemeanant until the money was paid. Even the judge—it was the present Lord Coleridge's father—read Newman a lecture on Christian charity. Achilli got a verdict, but his own admissions and Newman's exposure damned him completely. Soon afterwards he disappeared, and it transpired that the Protestants who patronised him, and found the money for his libel action against Newman, were thoroughly aware of his being an unprincipled scoundrel.

So much for the Protestants. But let not the Catholics crow too loudly. Newman was urged to attack Achilli by Cardinal Wiseman, who promised to supply overwhelming evidence to sustain his accusations. But when the trial came on Wiseman broke faith and left Newman in the lurch, preferring, as the *Speaker* says, that "Newman should be ruined in character and fortune rather than that the doings of Achilli, while a Roman priest, should be exposed." This is the Church all over. Everything and everybody is sacrificed to its interests. It reminds us of the declaration of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, that if he caught a bishop in the act of adultery he would throw his mantle over the holy sinner rather than cause a scandal to the Church.

IT WAS A DREAM.

After studying the Holy Bible one night, I fell asleep, and dreamt that I was God Almighty, the manufacturer of the universe. All worldly thoughts not having left me, I had the brilliant idea of making my *ci-devant* fellow mortals happy, and roared down from the skies, so as to be heard by all nations: "Let me know your wants and they shall be satisfied!" Hundreds of millions of mouths were opened, and a babble and cackle commenced that would have puzzled anyone but a god. My elongated divine ears were thus assailed: "We want peace. We want war. We want to live for ever. We want to die at once. We want one language. We want none at all. Make all people Christians. No, no, make all Turks. No,—Jews. No,—heathens. Let's all be equal. No, let's all be nobles. No,—kings. Make Spurgeon our leader. No,—Bradlaugh. No,—the Pope. No,—Foote. Give us riches. No, don't. Give us all enough. Abolish art. No,—science. No,—let them flourish. Shut the pubs. No, no; turn on the tap all round—beer and the Bible! No,—women and the Koran! Make us all white. No,—black. No,—transparent. Away with niggers! Down with the whites! Let's have eternal summer. No, eternal spring! Let's get no more children! Let's have one each. No more religions. Yes, any quantity. No,—one only. Let's be taller. No,—shorter. Let's know everything. No, we don't want to know anything. Give us instinct (a safe guide, bravo!). We want fun. *Panem et Circenses.*" I was getting positively alarmed, when all of a sudden I heard the ominous words: "Get down old cock! You've perched up there long enough! Let me be boss." I roared out in a voice of thunder: "To the devil with you, insane wretches! You have driven Jehovah mad, but you won't me. *As you were* is my motto." Here I awoke, and felt considerably relieved that I had no hand in making such a cursed pack of idiots. That would have been a disgrace.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

SOUR GRAPES AND SWEET GALL.

A well-known, gouty Baptist recently said that pain is a blessing, etc.

The fox in the fable disguised his disgust,
  On fruitlessly grabbing at grapes;
Quoth he, "They are sour," then although all adust,
  A jaunty contentment he apes.

The fox feigned to slight what he failed to secure—
  Determined to hide his defeat;
Called crude what he saw to be ripe and mature,
  And sour what he knew to be sweet.

A brain-hating Baptist, whom God goads with gout,
  On proving all pray'r to be vain,
Now seeks to escape from the sceptical flout,
  By groaning out, "Gout is a gain!"

This gouty, but godly and pawky old priest—
  A saint from his hat to his socks—
In feigning to like what all life must like least,
  Inversely out-vulpines the fox.

Disgusted to find that his faith fails to move
  His Savior to save him from gout,
Says he, "Pain a pleasure and profit doth prove,
  And thus I put scoffers to rout!"

This podagric preacher pretends to delight
  In troubles he cannot avoid;
A sort of a negative, sanctified spite
  'Gainst God, at whose ways he's annoyed.

The artful old fox tried to reach, but in vain,
  The ripe bunch of berries so sweet;
The priest vainly prayed to get rid of the pain
  That addled his head through his feet.

The fox told a lie to condemn what was good,
  The priest lied to praise what is bad;
They lied in a pride-prompted, mortified mood,
  To hide what they hadn't, and had.

O Baptist! beware!! for your soul is at stake
  Whene'er from the truth you may trip!
False footsteps, though gouty, lead straight to the lake,
  Where devils give liars a dip!

O foxes, and parsons, and tricky folk all!
  Remember, 'tis silly to lie;
So try to be truthful, though gout make you squall,
  And grapes may be hanging too high.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

A four-year-old boy who has been in the habit of repeating a formulated prayer every evening, surprised his parents the other night by saying: "Oh! God, I wish you would make the trees walk!" When remonstrated with for his singular request he replied:—"You say God can do anything, and I shan't pray for anything else until they do!"

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INGERSOLL ON THE PRESBYTERIAN CREED.

Col. Robert G. Ingersoll was interviewed at Rochester, N.Y., the other day, and in answer to the question, "What do you think of the revision of the Westminster creed?" he said: "I think that the intelligence and morality of the age demand its revision. The Westminster creed is infamous. It makes God an infinite monster and man the most miserable of beings. That creed has made millions insane. It has furrowed countless cheeks with tears, and under its influence the sentiments and sympathies of the heart have withered. It was produced by those who were suffering with two diseases—petrifaction of the heart and putrefaction of the brain.

"The civilised Presbyterians do not believe it, the intelligent clergymen will not preach it, and all good men who understand it hold it in abhorrence. It gives me great joy to know that the churches are getting better; that they are growing more and more humane; that they do not really hate all forms of joy. Infidels are reforming Christians, teaching them to be generous, intellectually hospitable and happy. After all, happiness is the only good, and the time to be happy is now, and the place to be happy is here."

"Christians owe a debt of gratitude to Haeckel, Huxley, Voltaire, Diderot, Hume, Paine, Humboldt, Darwin, and many others. These great men have helped to destroy the awful fears, ghosts, and devils of the orthodox religion. Yes, the creeds must be revised or the churches will have to be closed."

THE HUMBUGARIOS.

The Humbugarios are a queer people. They worship a certain God but do exactly the reverse of what he tells them to do; when their friends die they say they have gone to a place of eternal happiness, but they weep and wear black clothing as if they had gone to a place of eternal misery; they say they love freedom better than life, but they unwillingly pay billions of dollars every year to support a great army of persons who do nothing but make and enforce arbitrary rules preventing freedom; they say that love in a cottage is the highest form of happiness, but they all try to live in a mansion; they say poor people are the happiest people in the world but they all try to get rich; they say love is the only tie that should bind people in marriage, but they also say people are not married unless bound by law; they say we should forgive sinners, but they imprison and hang sinners; they say honesty is the best policy, but they have to watch each other like hawks to keep from being swindled; they say idleness is a disgrace and industry an honor, but the only people they respect are idle and the only people they thoroughly despise are industrious. Where do you suppose the Humbugarios live?—*Twentieth Century.*

SORT YOURSELVES.

There lived some years ago in western Pennsylvania an old circuit preacher, Father West by name, whose genial humor and general kindliness of heart had greatly endeared him to all the people of his district. He was a particular favorite with the young folks matrimonially inclined, and his opportunities to "tie the knot" were numerous. On one occasion he found upon his arrival at a certain town several couples awaiting his blessing. The old man was tired, and wished to make short work of the job. "Stand up" he began, "and jine hands." Which being done, he rattled through a marriage service that, like himself, was original. "There," he said, when it was finished, "ye can go; ye're man and wife, ev'ry one o' ye."

Two of the couples hesitated, and finally made it apparent that in the sudden "jining" they had become confused, and had taken the hands of the wrong persons. The old preacher's eyes twinkled as he took in the situation; but he instantly straightened up, and with a wave of his hand dispersed them. "I married ye all," he said, in a deep voice. "Sort yourselves."—*Harper's Magazine.*

DIDN'T APPLY TO HER.

"Now, my good woman," said our celestial representative, 'I hope my sermon has borne good fruit by making many a lasting impression upon your mind. You heard what I had to say about the everlasting fire?" Here his voice became hushed, even solemn, in tone as he continued: "That place where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "Well," said the toothless old party, "all I can say is, let them gnash 'em as has 'em." Our sin shifter has since reported this old woman's care as hopeless.—*Boomerang.*

ACID DROPS.

We rejoice to see the Cardiff strike settled without the intervention of Cardinal Manning. What on earth does he know about the business? It was amazing to see how John Burns and other labor leaders played into his hands during the Dockers' strike. The Cardinal also tried his hand on the gas-stokers' business, and with what result? Of course he will do anything to advertise himself and gain a fictitious reputation for his Church.

Only second in silliness was the attempt of some busybodies to get Lord Dunraven as arbitrator. Fancy the workmen and their employers so incapable of settling their own affairs as to beg an aristocrat to leave his yacht and do it for them! Happily they did not sink so low. Neither the Earl nor the Cardinal had a finger in the pie.

When will the world cease to believe in "Saviors"? There have been thousands of them, yet we still need salvation. The latest is an African gentleman, the Sheik-el-Mahdi (not *the* Mahdi) who lives at Djerboub, in Tripoli. His followers, who are numerous and devoted, look upon him as the Savior who is to regenerate the world. Well, the world will take a lot of regenerating. London, the capital of the most Christian country in the world, will give the African gentleman a terrible tough job. We should like to know when he is going to begin in these parts.

Mr. Cotter Morison, in his *Service of Man*, pointed out the superiority of science over religion in ministering to human suffering. Religion might send a few devoted priests and nuns among the victims of cholera, to console them in their agony; but science would counteract its ravages, or perhaps keep it off altogether. Mr. Morison's reflection is just enforced by a lady's letter from Johannesburg. Miss Rose Blennerhassett, whose position in the Nurses' Home gives her an opportunity of judging, is severe on the Catholic nun-nurses. Nothing, she says, could be worse than their incompetence, lethargy and untidiness. She pities the poor maimed diggers, whether Kaffir or English, who come under their skilless hands. No doubt the nun-nurses are good creatures, in their way, but religious devotion is a poor substitute for fair human sympathy, a sense of duty, and scientific instruction.

God seems moving about in his mysterious way, as usual. Serious floods, with loss of life, are reported from Upper Styria, Austria, and also from Beloochistan, where six miles of railway have been destroyed. The cholera is mowing down the Mohammedan pilgrims fast at Mecca and Jeddah. The phylloxera is spreading so rapidly in the vineyards of France and Germany that these countries are terrified at the visitation. Lightning struck an aged man at Mansfield, Notts, and the verdict was "Visitation of God." A man and a boy were also killed by lightning at Heanor, near Ilkeston, and during a thunderstorm at Crefeld a house containing fifty persons fell and over twenty lives were sacrificed.

Sam Jones is a noted revivalist of America. He can boast of sending many victims to the lunatic asylum, and has just helped to dispatch a young lady to Jesus. Miss Mattie Wilson, who attended one of his revival meetings, was so unhinged by the religious excitement that she committed suicide. Religion is worse than rum when administered at its full strength to delicate people.

Religious publishers in America are much the same as those here, or perhaps a shade worse. Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls, the largest religious firm, unblushingly reprint the articles from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as though they had been paid for instead of stolen, and when taxed therewith point out that other American publishers do the same.

William Warry writes a most impudent letter in the *North Middlesex Chronicle*, pretending that one of the N. S. S lecturers has been "expelled" from Finsbury Park for "impurity." Nothing of the kind has occurred. Mr. Keen was somewhat short-tempered and indiscreet in answering opponents, but that is the worst we have heard alleged against him. Fortunately the *Chronicle* inserts a crushing reply to Mr. Warry from the pen of Mr. A. J. Field, the new secretary of the Finsbury Park Branch, who

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is carrying on the work with so much energy, tact and success. The *Chronicle* itself honorably appeals for fair-play for the Secularists. "Looking at the matter from a Christian standpoint," it confesses to the "greatest possible misgiving as to very much that goes on, even when inspired by the best conceivable motives, in connection with open-air services."

"A Tradesman of Woolwich," who has not the courage to give his name and address, complains in the local *Herald* of the "abominable lewdness" of the Secular speakers in Beresford Square. This led the editor to go and hear for himself. He admits that he heard a good deal of "blasphemy," but "nothing obscene." Whatever may have been said by persons in the crowd (some of whom were doubtless believers), the editor declares "There was, at any rate while we were there, no encouragement of obscenity on the part of those in the van." So much for the "Woolwich tradesman's" libel. Evidently he drew on his imagination, and not on his memory, for the filth of the Secularists.

The editor of the *Herald* complains that the Secularists are allowed to "collect money" in Beresford Square, and the matter has been brought before the local Board of Health. But what about the Salvationists? They meet earlier in the day at the same place, they make collections and sell the *War Cry*. If the Secularists are stopped, the Salvationists will have to be stopped too, or the Secularists will know the reason why.

Two Christians, formerly members of the Salvation Army, have annoyed the Woolwich Secularists ever since the first Sunday in June. On Sunday week they overshot the mark and got "run in." They were charged at the Woolwich Police Court with disorderly conduct—or, as the *Kentish Mercury* reports, for "yelling at the speaker at an Atheists' meeting"—and bound over to keep the peace for three months. Behind these yelling ruffians there is a local clergyman, whose acquaintance the Secularists are extremely anxious to make. But perhaps, as his lambs have fared so badly, he will continue to lie *perdu*. We use the word *lie* in its fullest significance.

Two women and a man have been expelled from a church in Richmond, Kentucky, for "going astray after false gods." They professed their belief that Christ has come to earth again in the person of Schweinfurth, the German American Messiah.

Wanamaker, the Postmaster-General of the United States, is a universal provider at Philadelphia, and also an occasional preacher at the Presbyterian church. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports one of this wealthy man's sermons on the blessing of poverty, and "the evident intent of God that the majority of mankind should be poor." At the same time we learn that before prosecuting Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*, Mr. Wanamaker applied to the publisher to let him have a large supply of the work at reduced rates.

"Little children, love one another."—"Damn it! I'm not a child, and she's not a child," exclaimed Mr. Somebody, farmer and churchwarden, on finding a middle-aged lady in his seat at Easton-in-Gordana parish church, near Bristol. And as she wouldn't budge, all the seats being free, he hauled her out like a sheep from a ditch. The lady's arm was severely bruised, and she brought an action in the Bristol County Court for £50 damages. But it turned out that the churchwarden had a prescriptive right to his seat, and the lady had to be satisfied with a paltry five-pound note. Indeed, if the churchwarden had not paid that sum into court, the judge would have ruled there was no case to go to the jury. Evidently, therefore, Mr. Somebody has a legal right, which he seems likely to enforce, to play the devil with any gentleman or lady who squats on his seat in the House of God.

Considering how the man after God's own heart was allowed to carry on, it is rather hard that the Rev. N. E. Howe, the vicar of Swindon, should be worried by his bishop for kissing and cuddling a pretty Sunday-school teacher.

The Rev. Andrew Colville, Methodist minister, of Grace Chapel, East Twenty-second Street, New York, has a thick head or a tough constitution. He attempted to commit suicide with a revolver, but after putting two bullets in his top loft, and finding himself still on this side of Jordan, he quietly walked a whole mile to Bellevue Hospital, where the doctors are in hopes of his recovery.

Dr. Eliot Coues, of Washington, has been "expelled", from the Aryan Theosophical Society. He retaliates by making serious charges against its members. These were published by the New York *Sun* in the report of an interview, and the Society is bringing an action for 50,000 dols. This the blessed result of the new universal brotherhood.

By the way, Madame Blavatsky "cannot as a Theosophist" go to law with her "libellers." The American Theosophists don't appear to share her scruples.

Apropos of the French youth, Montant, who is curing diseases by the laying on of hands (and feet), the *Standard* remarks—"It seems the height of folly to believe in miracles and miracle-workers." Very true, but just carry this principle out to its logical issue, and what becomes of Christianity? The Gospels are stuffed with miracles, and Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the rest of them, were all miracle-workers; and precisely as the *Standard* thinks it the "height of folly" to believe in thaumaturgists like Montant, other people think it the "height of folly" to believe in thaumaturgists like Jesus.

The Pope threatens to ruin Rome, but we guess it will take a good deal of ruining. He is said to be so exasperated by the "fierce persecution" of the Church—that is, making it mind its own business—that he will "soon issue a manifesto to the Roman Catholic world and announce his intention of abandoning Rome together with his court." In the opinion of the faithful this will be a terrible blow to the Italian capital. No more pilgrims will flock there to kiss the Pope's big toe, and the shopkeepers and hotel-keepers will all be bankrupt. But there is one thing omitted in this little calculation. When the pious parasites clear out of Rome the city will probably become more honest and industrious.

According to a correspondent of the *Manchester Courier*, "it is impossible for any Christian now to live in Rome, which is fast becoming the headquarters of Atheism and Freethought. The shop windows are full of shocking caricatures of the Deity, and the license allowed to blasphemy has never been surpassed" How sad! Who would not put on sackcloth and ashes?

The *Eastern Post* reports a sermon by the Rev. Reuen Thomas, who treats his hearers to such stale stuff as that "we could have no thought of God if there was no God." Instead of exhibiting his thought of God Mr. Reuen Thomas is satisfied with declaring "If we all had purity of heart we should have no doubt of the divine presence but men enclose themselves in unwindowed mud huts of sensualism." This is a fine way of saying "If you don't see as I do its because you are a brute."

The sanctity of an oath sometimes means the immunity of crime. In the bad old days before the Evidence Amendment Act, Freethinkers were often robbed because their evidence could not be taken against their robbers. In Massachusetts an attempt to assault a four-year-old child was made a short while ago. The criminal went free, because the only witness to the dastardly act was the assaulted child herself, whose testimony was not taken as valid, for the reason that she had no conception of the sacredness of an oath.

Judge McSherry, of Frederick, Md., has filed an opinion declaring that "baseball playing on Sunday by men who are under contract for the season at stated salaries, no one being admitted to witness the games except those who pay, can be construed as nothing else than work, and therefore comes within the purview of the prohibitory statute." Preaching is done on Sunday "by men who are under contract for the season at stated salaries, no one being admitted to witness the games except those who pay." Will Judge McSherry now kindly construe this as "nothing else than work," and decide that it "therefore comes within the purview of the prohibitory statute"?—*Truthseeker*.

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The Lord was invited to be present at the tea given by the rector of Cogenhoe, near Northampton, to the Young Women's Bible Class. But the Devil seems to have got into the buns or the minced beef, for in the evening, with two or three exceptions, all became ill and showed symptoms of being seriously poisoned.

The *Adelaide Advertiser* is sent to us from Australia, with a report of a sensational divorce case, in which the wife of Llewellyn John Ford, of North Adelaide, eloped with a married officer in the Salvation Army. After deserting her husband she wrote a pious letter to him, asking him to send on her money and clothes, and telling him to "Be good, and true to God."

The Salvation Army was in full force on Sunday afternoon at a corner in the Seven Sisters Road, Holloway. On drawing near we heard a thin voice proceeding from the midst of the meeting, but when we joined the crowd we were unable to see the speaker. Working our way through the first two or three rows, we managed to catch a view of his physiognomy. He was a pasty-faced boy about fourteen, or at the outside fifteen. His eyes rolled about like a monkey's, never looking at anything in particular. And this is what we heard him say:—"Prepare to meet yer Gawd! Dear friends, prepare to meet yer Gawd! Thenk Gawd, I'm prepared. Dear friends, prepare to meet yer Gawd this afternoon. Dear friends, make yerselves ready. Thenk Gawd I'm ready. Dear friends, we must all stand before Gawd." That was as much as we could stand. It was a hot afternoon, but we made tracks at six miles an hour.

Two ministerial changes were reported last week. On the one hand the Rev. Ernest Maitland, Roman Catholic chaplain of St. Marylebone Infirmary, Notting Hill, renounced Roman Catholicism, and, it is stated, will accept a curacy in the Church of England. On the other, the Rev. S. B. Thorp, curate of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, and formerly of Christ Church, Clapham, has been received into the Romish Church. Which is the conversion and which the perversion? and will not probably both the men of God enhance their worldly prospects by the change?

The death of Cardinal Newman forces a comparison, or rather a contrast, with the living English Cardinal. The one a recluse, devoted to the intellectual life, and free from all suspicion of sordid self-seeking, the other a persistent self-advertiser, adroitly seizing every opportunity to push himself to the front. Compare Cardinal Newman's respect and unaffected regret at the apostacy of Dr. Döllinger with the frantic attempts of Cardinal Manning to keep the Atheist Bradlaugh out of Parliament. The first may be compared to St. Francis, the second to St. Dominic. Yet both Catholics and heretics have rightly felt that it is the latter who most fitly embodies and expresses the type of Roman Catholicism.

Mrs. Diss Debar, an American spiritist mejum, who has been residing at Rome, says she was requested by one of the leading Roman dignitaries, Monsignor Campbell, to dematerialise the statue of Bruno on the feast of Corpus Christi. Possibly Mgr. Campbell is a subtle jokist.

Some one has taken the trouble to send us the August number of the *Monthly Evangel* emanating from Greengate Congregational Church, Plaistow. We have looked through it, and found it hardly worthy of the idiot department of Colney Hatch. The brains of a domestic rabbit are surely sufficient to edit such a publication. We notice, however, that the reverend conductor has an eye for the main chance. He guarantees to devote £120 to benevolent purposes, and asks for twice the sum to enable him to do it. He also describes the *Evangel* as "a splendid advertising medium," which is doubtful; but then "the charges are reasonable," which is very likely.

A number of Japanese journalists have been sentenced to four years' imprisonment, with hard labor, for writing disrespectfully of the Emperor Jimmu, who, according to some authorities, flourished about 2,200 years ago, and according to others never flourished at all. The *Manchester Examiner* commiserates these unfortunate scribes, and pokes fun at the Japanese Constitution. But surely the English Constitution is open to the same criticism. How long is it since the editor of the *Freethinker* was imprisoned? And what was his offence? He wrote disrespectfully of an old Jew ghost named Jahveh, who according to some authorities flourished about 2,500 years ago, and according to other authorities never flourished at all. He also wrote disrespectfully of a Jewish mystery-man, who multiplied loaves, turned water into wine, and cured the blind with clay ointment, 1,800 years ago, though some say he never existed either.

Dr. Parker sniffs cash in the wind as keenly as Jay Gould. Not satisfied with his present sources of income, he is going to imitate Mr. Stead, and run a syndicate letter in as many journals in the universe as will take it, and pay for it. By way of a start he gets a good editorial advertisement in the *Christian World*, from which it appears his object is simply to promote the kingdom of God. Ahem! Parker is no fool.

A Philadelphia paper refers to "that advanced thinker, Mr. Stead." Most people on this side the Atlantic regard him as no thinker at all. He has a keen eye for the main chance, and a fine aptitude for advertising himself; but for the rest he is a bundle of sentiments and prejudices. His religion is a perfect chaos.

Talmage is figuring in a law suit. It appears that some of his enthusiastic admirers hit upon the idea of having a terra-cotta bust of the great man, which they thought would sell by the thousand, and help to raise money for the new Tabernacle. Talmage approved the clay model, and an order was given for fifty replicas. But when they were delivered the Tabernacle trustees refused to pay. They alleged that the likeness was bad, the features were not majestic enough, and the mouth was too large. Surely the last item is incredible.

Emma Bates, of Pitt Street Eckington, was paralysed in body and apparently in mind. She went to the Salvation Army room, and in coming out fell, and had to be taken home by two men. A Mrs. Caroline put her to bed, but crossing the yard soon afterwards she looked through the window and saw poor Emma Bates lying with the back of her head on the fire. Mrs. Caroline got through the window, shot the bolt, and raised an alarm; but no one would render any assistance, not even the members of the Army. At the inquest the coroner said "these people" should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. Perhaps Booth will get some one to write a poem about them in the next *War Cry*.

"Not more than others I deserve, but God hath given me more," is the song of Mrs. Reilly, of Carrigallen, county Longford, who has given birth to a triplet of boys, whom she has gratefully named Peter, Luke and John. The Queen has sent her three pounds. What Providence, who sent the children, will send her to feed them with, remains to be seen.

It is a sad business to get wetted with the wrong sort of holy water. So thought the Rev. S. K. Simcox, of Ewelme, who found a child had been messed about by a Primitive Methodist minister, and so terrified the mother by his remarks on the child's spiritual danger, that she let him mess the child over again in the Church fashion. Wouldn't it be well, now the child has had two baptisms, to try the holy water of *every* sect, in the hope of finding the right one among the lot?

The town of Kieff, in Russia, boasts of a splendid relic. It is no less than the shoes of St. Joseph. When the husband of Mary brought her and the baby back from Egypt, he found his shoes were in a sad condition, and being aware of the excellent leather-work done in Russia, he sent them to Kieff to be repaired. Somehow they remained there. Either Joseph forgot to send for them, or the honest Kieffer forgot to return them. It is now reported—at least the *Daily News* says so—that the Archbishop of Sophia proposes to re-sole the shoes and then "expose them to the veneration of the faithful." We suggest that he should re-top them too, and bring them up to date.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 24, New Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Portsmouth; at 11, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; at 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; at 7, "Heresy at Oxford."

August 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

H. GEE.—See "Acid Drops." Glad to see you are making an impression on the bigots at Woolwich. The game is in your hands if you all keep cool. Be as civil and polite as possible, and leave all the ill manners to the opposite side. If you are interfered with by the authorities, apply at once to Mr. Foote.

H. NICHOLSON.—Your notices for N. S. S. Almanack received.

J. S. ROGERS.—Do not send your Guide notices to Mr. Forder, but to the editor as above.

T. CRISFIELD.—Thanks for your trouble, but we gave an "Acid Drop" to the Bishop's utterance some weeks ago.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Thanks. How is it we hear from you so seldom now?

W. GILMOUR.—We hope to hear soon of a branch in Govan. Glad you found our letter useful.

F. EDWARDS.—You will probably be surprised to learn that *Reynolds'* will not advertise Freethought publications. Stamps will do.

E. T. H.—The verse is not at all bad substantially, but the execution is very uneven.

A. J. FIELD.—See "Acid Drops." Glad to hear your good report of Finsbury Park. Mr. Foote has decided not to tax his voice out of doors this year. He will try to give some of the outdoor stations a turn next summer. Couldn't you manage to get a room for indoor lectures in the winter?

W. SMITHSON.—Better let it drop now.

S. M. PEACOCK.—We hope it has been amicably settled.

E. SMEDLEY.—The Josephus passage is dealt with in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in *Crimes of Christianity*. No one denies that the passage is "quoted" by Eusebius. But he lived nearly three hundred years after Josephus. The historic case against the passage is, that it is never referred to by any Christian writer *before* Eusebius, although it would answer their purpose. Internally, the case against the passage is equally strong. It is altogether out of connection with the context, and the language is not such as a Jew, which Josephus was, *could* have written about Jesus. There is not a scholar in Christendom, of any standing, who regards the passage as genuine. Those who favor it, like Milman, can only say that Josephus wrote *something* about Jesus, and somebody has altered it into its present form!

S. STANDRING.—Your report on Finsbury Park confirms Mr. Field's. Glad to hear you had such large and orderly audiences, and found a brisk demand for our publications. We hope you will get more assistants in the work of your Federation.

H. O. THOMAS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. HILLERBY.—We have given it a paragraph.

T. BIRTLEY.—Pleased to see your letter inserted. The editor has obviously no evidence. He seems to think his bare word sufficient proof against any number of dissentients.

J. ROBINSON, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunniside, Tow Law, Durham, R. S. O., desires the Freethinkers of the district who are willing to join in forming a Branch of the N. S. S. to meet at his house on Sunday, September 7. Unfortunately he does not mention the hour.

J. LUNNON.—The passage you refer to in Matthew xix. does not refer to marriage *per se*, but to divorce. Why stop at verses 5 and 6, where Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament? You should read right on to the end of verse 12.

SENEX.—Your post-card to hand. We hope you are having a pleasant holiday. Does the new flag make any difference in the Heligoland air?

J. SMITH.—Remittance received, but not the photograph.

R. W. HEARNDEN.—Shall be acknowledged with other subscriptions to the Central Fund next week.

T. CRISFIELD.—We cannot answer the conundrum. The lady must apply to a priest.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—People's Press—Chat—Tocsin—Liberty—Eastern Post—Ashore and Afloat—Woolwich Herald—Sheffield Independent—Jewish World—Churchman's Magazine—Christian Miscellany—North Wilts Herald—Adelaide Advertiser—Morpeth Herald—Der Lichtfreund.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's new lecture on "A World Without a God" drew a good audience on Sunday evening. Mr. Charles Watts presided, and made a brief farewell speech. He had perfectly recovered his voice, and was in excellent form. On Saturday he sails for New York.

Mr. Watts desires us to tell the Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and other friends who have invited him to lecture that he was quite unable to pay them a visit. His stay in England was a brief one, and all his time was fully occupied. Next time he comes to England he will try and stay longer, and make a lecturing tour. Mr. Watts is very pleased to find how he is still remembered by his old friends on this side of the Atlantic, and on a future occasion he will be very happy to see as many of them as possible again.

Colonel Ingersoll, as Mr. Watts informs us, does not intend to resume lecturing. His law practice is large and increasing, and he has less and less inclination to leave his happy home. He intends, however, to go on contributing Freethought articles to high-class journals and reviews, by which means he addresses a very large audience, and thinks he does even more good than by platform work. Still, it is a pity in one sense; for Ingersoll is a consummate orator, a master of smiles and tears, and his great gift is very largely lost to the world if he refrains from public speaking.

Colonel Ingersoll commissioned Mr. Watts to pay his best respects to the Freethinkers in England. Mr. Foote, on their behalf, amid the warm applause of the Hall of Science audience, desired Mr. Watts to convey back, not their compliments, but their admiration and deep affection.

No less than 4,800 visitors inspected Grosvenor House on Sunday afternoon. The Sunday League received no less than 10,000 applications for tickets.

The Dockers' demonstration in Hyde Park was large and orderly. Evidently the working men don't believe in the "sanctity of the Sabbath," or they think "the better the day the better the deed."

The Sunday League this year increased the number of its Sunday bands in London from three to six. The music has been appreciated by audiences which have amounted to about 150,000 persons each Sunday. There are still some parks unprovided for and there is already a deficit. Subscriptions towards its reduction will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, 8 Theobalds Road, Holborn, W.C.

An Episcopalian priest of the diocese of Ohio, Mac Queary by name, has categorically denied, at least two articles of the Creed, viz.: That J. C. was born of a virgin, and that he rose from the dead. He has been inhibited by his bishop, but was previously invited to state his views at the American Church Congress.

Joanne-Magdelaine, a French Freethinker, puts out a brochure on Church and State in France, in which he contends that the forty-four millions of francs annually voted for the subsidy of religion in France, is really augmented by the gift of buildings, land, etc. to the enormous total of five hundred and fifty millions of francs. Anyway France pays pretty

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dearly for the privilege of being called a Catholic nation, which it is fast ceasing to be in reality. Yet the clericals complain because they are not allowed to use their influence in elections.

The *Truthseeker* noticing some recent letters in our columns suggesting the formation of a Freethought Museum, hopes that some future decade may discover among American Freethinkers enthusiasm and means adequate to the erection of a like institution. It suggests that various types of religious fossils should also be preserved, and that the great Talmage himself may be found pickled in a Chamber of Horrors.

Five applications have been received for the secretaryship of the National Secular Society. Any further application should reach the present secretary, Mr. R. Forder, before Wednesday, August 27.

About a thousand people listened to a debate in Victoria Park on Sunday between Mr. Thurlow and Mr. Elflein on "Is Slavery Supported by the Bible?" Happily the greatest order prevailed. The Secularists are delighted with the result.

Mr. C. J. Hunt visits Halstead to-day (Aug. 24), on behalf of the N. S. S Executive. He lectures in the Co-operative Assembly Room, Trinity Street, at 2.45, on "Christianity and Secularism." After the lecture, and any debate, a Branch will be formed.

In *Open Court* Mr. Moncure D. Conway writes on "The Mythical and Mystical Shrine of Agnes." He holds that St. Agnes was the prototype of Lady Godiva. What will the people of Coventry say?

Mr. Wallace Nelson appears to be travelling a good bit about Australia. The *Liberator* reports a successful lecture at Charters Towers.

We regret to read, in the Melbourne *Liberator* that an accident has happened at the Melbourne Hall of Science. A Mr. Abbott was killed by a revolver, which it was supposed had the charges withdrawn. There was, of course, an inquest, and the jury found that it was a pure accident; but no doubt the Christians will make the most of the melancholy and regrettable accident. Mr. Symes has had many difficulties to encounter, but he has a spirit that will overcome them all. It appears that a riotous Anarchist section, lately expelled from the Society, made a raid upon the hall, which had to be defended night and day, and the accident occurred during this trouble.

Even the Primitive Methodists are showing signs of discontent with the old dogma of eternal torment, and there is a correspondence on the subject in the *Christian World*.

The *British Weekly* discovers that on a liberal estimate not one fifth of the inhabitants of London who might, could, and should attend some church or chapel do so. The rest take the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

The Welsh Anti-Tithe League have succeeded in hindering distraint for tithe in many Welsh parishes for such a length of time that one half year's tithe has become irrecoverable.

An interesting work just published by the French Cremation Society is entitled *La Crémotion en France*, 1797-1889, par G. Salomon. It appears that the project of cremation was put forward in the days of the Revolution, but was put out of sight when Napoleon made the concordat with Rome. The work gives several views of the Crematorium at Père la Chaise.

The Rev. Harris Cohen the Jewish pastor of Merthyr has sent a letter of protest to the *South Wales Daily News*, against the operations of Christian conversionists among the Jews. Mr. Cohen says they do no good and only raise doubts and sow dissension among families. Of the converts he says: "It is a known fact that these are the scum of the Jewish nation, and it is an equally established fact that from being bad Jews they are turned into worse Christians." Mr. Cohen shudders to think that so much money should be so ill-spent.

Professor Huxley is a busy man and doesn't care to waste his time in writing letters to people who only want his autograph. In one of his letters sold by auction the other day was the following:—"I look upon autograph-hunters as a progeny of Cain, and treat their letters accordingly; heaven forgive you if you are only an unusually ingenious specimen of the same race."

Mr. Forder will send a sample packet of twenty of our Tracts post-free for twopence.

David Hume's *Liberty and Necessity*, an argument against Free Will and in favor of Moral Causation, is just reprinted and issued from our office. It forms a valuable adjunct to Anthony Collins's work on the same subject. Every Freethinker should read and re-read it. The price is fourpence.

THE ELEPHANT-UNDER-THE-EARTH.

(*From a Chicago Paper.*)

The child asks the father what supports the earth. To avoid an explanation which is beyond the child's comprehension, the father tells him that it rests upon a great elephant's back. The child, who is intelligent enough to think that the earth needs a support, at once wonders what supports the elephant, and if told that it stands upon a terrapin's back he again asks what supports the terrapin, and his mind thus follows the trail *ad infinitum*, never finding any final support that does not itself need to be supported as much as the very earth with which he began his questions. So, even he, child as he is, comes to the conclusion that his father's explanation is all fudge.

The foregoing is a very plain case of false philosophy; so plain, indeed, that everyone at once rejects it as insufficient and inadequate. We have introduced it here because its very simplicity and plainness will enable us, by comparison, to see the fallacy of many scientific theories and philosophical explanations, some of which are now, and have been in all ages, accepted by learned and wise men without murmur, although they are of precisely the same character as the theory of the elephant-under-the-earth, and are just as absurd and ridiculous. Our books, ancient and modern, are full of such foolish inventions of men of science and philosophers; they are taught in our schools, colleges, and universities; they are preached from our pulpits, and they pervade the popular mind, cropping out in the columns of our magazines and our weekly and daily papers, and in the conversation of the learned and the unlearned, as matters that are fixed and settled and not to be questioned for a moment—and woe be to him who does question some of them.

Before we proceed in the application of our illustration to other theories, so as to make their absurdity appear as plain as that of the illustration itself, let us look more closely at the elephant supporting the earth, and see what that supposition involves. In other words, let us see what an elephant-under-the-earth really is, so that we may ever after know him at first sight, no matter how disguised or by whom introduced.

In the theory of the elephant-under-the-earth, we find the following elements which are essential, characteristic, specific:

1. It is supposed that the earth cannot support itself.

2. The elephant-under-the-earth is also a supposition, a pure invention, made to supply a supposed need.

3. The sole business of the elephant-under-the-earth is to do that one thing—to support the earth—and there it must stand forever, merely supporting the earth, with no other office or function. In other words, one thing is supposed to have been created, or to have happened into being, merely to wait upon another—to do the work of another, work which that other can just as well be supposed to do for itself.

4. If the earth is inadequate to do its own work, the elephant-under-the-earth is equally inadequate, and so needs a terrapin under it; and the terrapin, for the same reason, needs something under it, and so on *ad infinitum*.

5. Then, to meet all the requirements of the case, we must do violence to our own reason, and suppose the elephant-under-the-earth to be not only big enough and strong enough, but in every respect fully adequate and adjustable to the work. Of course, when a need is to be met by a supposition, it is easy enough to suppose a supposition that is fully adequate and adjustable to all the requirements of the case, no matter how unintelligible it may be. There

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is no use in mincing matters. Suppositions are cheap—they cost nothing.

6. The elephant-under-the-earth is totally unnecessary; for it is just as easy (and it is more economical of elements or principles) to suppose that the earth can support itself, as it is to suppose that the elephant can support itself.

The foregoing being characteristics of the elephant-under-the-earth (I mean of the species), then in looking for the elephants-under-the-earth (individuals of the species) we must not look for immense four-footed beasts with leathery hides, short, tufted tails, ivory tusks, and great muscular trunks; for none of these enter into the constitution of the species. On the other hand, all things that contain the foregoing specific characteristics, no matter whether they be things visible or invisible, tangible or intangible, shaped or shapeless; no matter for how many centuries or millenniums they may have been cherished as the very energy of world, the very soul of man, or the very God of the universe; and no matter how completely they have been fused and welded as something real, rational, and ever-abiding into our mental machinery, and into our language, and into the very forms and habits of our thinking, are, nevertheless, all equally fictitious, equally unphilosophical, and equally absurd and ridiculous. Sooner or later science will disown them and philosophy must ultimately reject them all. Take for instance the following examples:

Bodies are known to vary in temperature, being now hot, now warm, now cold. To account for this varying temperature, it was at one time supposed that there exists in nature an imponderable element distinct from matter, to which the name caloric was given; and that if a body takes into itself some of this caloric it becomes warmer than it was; and on parting with caloric it becomes colder than it was. Caloric has, long since, shared the fate of the elephant-under-the-earth. It has given way to the modern theory that water warms itself by the rapid vibratory motions of its molecular constituents. And if we test the caloric theory by the six characteristics already enumerated, we shall see that it is merely an elephant-under-the-earth, and was justly abandoned, even if there had been no such reasons as we now have for believing that matter warms and heats itself.

Again, it is supposed that mere matter is dead; yet we see living things all around us. How is that? The prodigal inventor of ultimate elements comes forward with his vital principle, and supposes that it, under certain circumstances, gets into matter and makes it alive. The theory of a vital principle is pretty well abandoned in recent times, though there are still a few able and learned men who cling with tenacity to that ridiculous and unnecessary hypothesis. If the reader will take the trouble to analyse it, he will find that it contains all the specific characteristics of the elephant-under-the earth, and as such should be surrendered.

To the same class belongs the theory of an electric fluid, considered as an element distinct from matter. The theory will not cover all the facts, and is now regarded either as obsolete or not proved; and although the term, electric fluid, is still used in standard treatises on electricity and magnetism, and the passage of electricity along a conductor is spoken of as a flow of something, yet such an expression is not intended to convey the idea that there is an actual flow of an element which is distinct from the matter that constitutes the conductor, but is simply used as an illustration, a comparison which will enable us to conceive the movements, methods and formulated laws of electricity and magnetism, for which, as yet, there is no satisfactory theory that will serve us any better, or as well. The same may be said of human or animal magnetism, when spoken of as an element distinct from matter. It is an unphilosophical hypothesis.

Again, it is said that matter can neither feel nor think. Yet we know that animals and human beings do think and feel. Philosophers were here in a quandary again; but only for a little while; for nothing is easier than to imagine an immaterial element whose special business is to think and feel; and there is nothing easier than to suppose that it, somehow, gets into the bodies of men and animals, and does their thinking and feeling for them. But this theory of an immaterial element, a thinking principle, a mind, considered as something different from the element called matter, is evidently an elephant-under-the-earth, having all its specific characteristics, as follows:

1. It is supposed that matter cannot think or feel.

2. The immaterial element, the mind, as something distinct from matter, is a pure invention, made to supply a supposed need.

3. The sole business of that immaterial element is to do that thing, to think and feel for matter—to wait upon another element called matter—to do its work, work which matter can just as well be supposed to do for itself. If it be said that no one ever perceived matter in the act of thinking or feeling, that it is necessarily non-sentient and unthinking, and that it is impossible for us to understand how it can think or feel, it can be said, with equal truth, that no one ever perceived an immaterial element in the act of thinking or feeling; that there is nothing in the nature of such an element that necessarily makes it a thinking and feeling element, and that it is impossible for us to understand how it can think or feel. If, therefore, I ask you how your immaterial principle really does think and feel, you can only answer, I make it do so. How? By my supposition. But cannot a supposition do as much for matter?

4. If we are obliged to suppose that one element, matter can neither think nor feel, we are equally obliged to suppose that the other element can do neither, and, therefore, needs some other element to think and feel for it; and so on, *ad infinitum*.

5. But suppositions are cheap; and as one seems badly needed here, it is made fully competent and duly adjusted to its work, although in doing so the inventor is compelled to do violence to his own reason by supposing that what is invalid in one case is perfectly valid in another similar case—that while the earth cannot support itself the elephant can.

6. The immaterial principle is totally unnecessary, for it is just as easy (and it is more economical of elements or principles) to suppose that matter can think and feel as it is to suppose that any other element can.

In this discussion it is not necessary that we should make any attempt to find out what matter really is; nor is it necessary that we should know what it is. What we are now aiming at is simply to show that, in interpreting that phenomenon of nature, it is unnecessary and unphilosophical to multiply principles or ultimates; and that even two (matter and mind) are as bad as a dozen, because one will answer all the purposes required. In the case of matter and mind) it is immaterial which one is supposed to take precedence over the other in their joint action. Turn them up side down or right side up, and, in either case, one is elephant to the other, and is therefore unnecessary.

PAYTON SPENCE.

(To be concluded.)

PROGRESS IN THE NORTH.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch is still progressing, and increasing its membership by leaps and bounds. What speaks well for its future is the increased interest taken in it by the members; all seem desirous of helping on the cause, and instead of all the work falling on the shoulders of a few, as is too often the case in societies, there are plenty of willing supporters to be found. Our energetic member, Mr. Penny, who conducted a shorthand class with such signal success last winter in connection with the Branch, is desirous of further extending the usefulness of the society, by starting a science and art class during the forthcoming winter, and providing we can get the necessary powers from the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, it has a fair chance of success, Mr. Penny having generously promised to provide the necessary materials and to conduct it himself. There is a growing desire also among the members to spread the gospel of Freethought by a more plentiful supply of lectures in the future, and Mr. Dickenson, who since his connection with the Branch has been one of our hardest workers, has hit upon a scheme, by which we can ensure for every lecturer a fair remuneration, and also ensure the Branch against loss. He has gained the sanction of the Branch to obtain from Freethinkers both inside and outside the society a guarantee for three tickets for any lecture that is held under the auspices of the Branch, such tickets to be transferable, and no sooner had he received the authority at our last meeting, than he obtained a guarantee from all the members present, and up to now he has not met with a single refusal. Several of the members also intend undergoing a course of study during the winter to enable them to carry on an open-air propaganda during the summer of 1891.—CHAS. H. KELF, cor. sec.

A million and a half sterling has been raised to build the Church of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre, Paris. Yet the *Star* says there are scores of churches empty in Paris, and thousands of poor Catholics who want bread.

That canny Scot, the Rev. J. McNeill, appears to have come to a decision about the "call" to a church at Westminster. He is climbing the ladder of fortune, and though he "seeks the Lord" at every rung he will never fail to hear him say, "Friend, go up higher."

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REVIEW.

Social Songs. By MUNULLOG, Manchester. R. J. Derfel, Publisher, One Shilling.—Some years ago "Munullog," who is perhaps to be identified with his publisher, issued *Hymns and Songs for the Church of Man*, several pieces from which are incorporated with the Secular Hymn Book, published at Leicester. "Munullog" is a Freethinker and political and social reformer, and though his verses are of very unequal merit and often lacking in polish, they always express brave thoughts and manly aspirations. The most important piece in the present volume is entitled "The Forum." It gives a number of different and often very heretical views, the doubter and Secularist having decidedly the best of it in reply to the gospel of the priest. From some verses written in memory of Mr. Ridgway, the well-known Freethinker of Manchester, we give the following verse as a sample of Munullog's quality—

Faith he had, but not in Churches,
Faith in truth and love for man,
Human sorrow moved his passions,
Duty held him to his plan.
Doing good was his religion,
Knowledge was his life and joy;
Something to improve his brethren,
Ever did his mind employ.

No fastidious critic would give these *Social Songs* the coveted title of poetry, but no honest man could deny that they embody the thoughts, aspirations and sympathies of the masses.

OBITUARY.

Died on the 15th inst., at his residence, Haughton Street, Liverpool, aged 48 years, Mr. E. Sims, a staunch Freethinker, well known to many lecturers and others visiting Liverpool. By his death, after a protracted illness, great grief has been brought upon a very happy family, and humanity has lost a most straightforward citizen.—C. D.

Died at Hull, Aug. 13, William Leak at the ripe age of 84. He had held Freethought views from youth, and up to the last expressed no fear of death, but hoped no religious service would be read over him. A constant reader of the *Freethinker* since its first issue, he passed away calmly and sensible to the last, and was buried at Hedon Road Cemetery.—W. Stewart.

PALESTINIAN HOLY PLACES.

Persons who have faith in supernatural occurrences because the places are still shown where they took place have little conception of the way in which legends grow. Any strange object such as a salt pillar is sure to have a story attached, and any story currently believed in is sure to have local corroboration. Sir Walter Scott in his *Kenilworth* has a notable scene at the Black Bear Inn at Cumnor, kept by Giles Gostling. After the publication of the novel, some undergraduates of Oxford painted a sign of the Bear and Ragged Staff, and got a landlord at Cumnor to substitute it for a totally different sign, and since then the house is generally pointed as the identical one where the scene mentioned by Scott occurred. A still more pertinent illustration may be taken from Palestine itself. In his *Idol at Horeb*, Dr. Beke relates how he believed he had found the site of Rebekah's well. The inhabitants had no idea whatever that there was any ground for this belief. But they took up the suggestion. The tradition was set on foot and Captain Burton found it had spread to Damascus within nine years. No doubt a similar origin may be ascribed to the other sites imposed by craft on credulity.—LUCIANUS.

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister (to class): "Yes; all you little children are made of dust. Now, boys, what am I made of?" Class: "Mud!"

"John," said a Sunday-school teacher, "when your father and mother forsake you, who will take you up?" "The police" responded the youth.

A mother, hugging a four-year-old, said, "Charlie, what makes you so sweet?" "I think, mother, God must have put a little sugar in the dust."

"Poor woman! have you no husband to help you to earn a living?" "I have a husband so-called, but he is deeply engaged in something else." "Of what nature?" "Trusting in Providence."

"George," asked the teacher of a Sunday-school class, "whom, above all others, shall you wish to see when you get to heaven?" With a face brightening up with anticipation the little fellow shouted, "Gerliah."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 8, Free Concert by members and friends. Monday, at 8, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Some Quack Remedies for Life's Ills."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. J. B. Coppock, "Animals, Plants, and Minerals: their Relations."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "The Morality of the Messiah."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, a Freethought lecture.

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "This Age of Reason."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Has Man a Free Will?"

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. G. Standring, "A Freethinker's View of the Bible."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 7, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Moral Reasons for Rejecting Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Dead Dogmas."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. Samuel Soddy, "Evidences for Evolution."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Recantation."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Bible a Good Book?"

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Who are the 'Infidels'?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic"; 6, Mr. Cohen, "Religion."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "History of the New Testament Canon."

Wood Green — Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "A Tilt at the Christian Evidence Society."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite Arsenal gates) at 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

COUNTRY.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, Mr. Hewson, a reading.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. S. Thompson, "Intellectual Development of Europe."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 11.30, meeting of members and friends respecting hall; 7, Mr. Freeman will lecture.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "God and Design." Free.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, meeting of members.

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, an interesting paper will be read.

Portsmouth—New Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 7, "Heresy at Oxford: a Review of *Lux Mundi*."

Rochdale — Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A Chat about Devils and Demons, Ghosts and Goblins."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "A Geologist's Visit to the Isle of Man"; 7, "Wonders of Geology."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, meeting to arrange for pic-nic to Holywell Dene on the 31st.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield—Market Place, Mr. H. Smith, 3, "Evolution or Devolution: which Prevails?"; 7, "Does Hell Exist, and who are most likely to go there?"

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Stanley Jones, "A Criticism of the Biblical Creation."

Rochdale—Town Hall Square, 2.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A History of Freethought."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning) Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 10, Hyde Park; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 24, Manchester. Sept. 7., Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Aug. 24, Brighton; 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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"I do not know of anything that has been advanced by later writers in support of the scheme of Necessity, of which the germ is not to be found in the Inquiry of Collins."—*Prof. Dugald Stewart.*

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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MISTAKES OF MOSES.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S *Mistakes of Moses* is a work of world-wide celebrity. The title is a happy one, and the writing is in his happiest vein. He brings the genius of a great lawyer as well as a great orator to bear on the scientific and moral blunders of the Pentateuch, and the result is a work which never has been and never will be refuted.

The celebrity of this work has induced the Yankee infidel-slayer, Mr. H. L. Hastings, to issue a pamphlet entitled "Remarks on the Mistakes of Moses." It is widely distributed in England by the Christians who accept Mr. Hastings at his own estimate. But on opening it we find not a single reference to Ingersoll's volume, but merely a bare-faced attempt to trade on its fame. Instead of dealing with the enormous mistakes of Moses, the writer endeavors to show that in other respects he was *not* mistaken; which is like refuting a criminal charge by proving that on several other days than the one on which the offence was committed the prisoner conducted himself with perfect propriety.

Mr. Hastings need not labor as he does to show that the Mosaic Law contained some beneficial rules. The same may be affirmed of the Mohammedan law, which enjoins frequent ablutions and abstinence from intoxicating drinks. But this does not lead Mr. Hastings, or any other Christian, to pay an exaggerated respect to the Koran.

From statistics which are mostly old, and probably inaccurate, Mr. Hastings tries to establish the greater longevity of the Jews, in comparison with the Christian populations among whom they live; and, with hasty logic, he ascribes this advantage to their obedience to the laws of Moses, overlooking the fact that there are historical reasons, connected with Christian persecutions, for the toughness of modern Jews. A people subjected for more than a thousand years to the worst oppressions must, unless they are annihilated, become very tenacious of life. The struggle for existence being intensified for them, they come under a more rigorous law of natural selection.

But without arguing this point at length, we cannot help remarking that Mr. Hastings is exalting Moses at the expense of Jesus. His contention is that Jews outlive Christians, and show a much smaller percentage of crime. Why not, then, revert to Judaism? All Mr. Hastings can urge in reply is that Christians do not follow Jesus. But, after two thousand years' trial, this is a strong argument against his religion; for if men cannot (because they do not) follow it, they might as well be without it. The Jews, apparently, do follow Moses, and a leader who can be followed is better than one who is always out of sight.

Mr. Hastings consoles himself by reflecting that Freethinkers are worse off than Christians, though he does not inform us where he obtained the information. "Look over a crowd of sceptics and blasphemers" he exclaims "and see how many faces bear the marks of youth, or of that premature old age produced by vice and sin." Now we have seen more crowds of "sceptics and blasphemers"—to use this gentleman's polite language—than a Christian like Mr. Hastings, and we venture to say that he has drawn an imaginary picture. In the preface to *Letters to the Clergy* we had occasion to write as follows:—"For the convenience of many readers, who may keep this collection of Letters by them, and refer to it at intervals, we have had it printed in large clear type. . . . Happily there *are* young Freethinkers, and they are the hope of the future; but a very large proportion are 'declined into the vale of years,' and their eyes will find the type of this little volume a positive comfort." This was written from a business point of view, long before the pamphlet of Mr. Hastings fell into my hands, and whether we are right or wrong, it proves that our opinion is seriously and firmly entertained. We are confident that an unprejudiced reader will attach more weight to an opinion which guided us in selecting the type for a book, to our own disadvantage in point of cost, than to an opinion which is expressed by an adversary whose object is depreciation and calumny, or who, on the most favorable view, is ready to say the worst he safely can against his opponents.

Let us now descend to particulars. We are told by Mr. Hastings that the Jew was forbidden to eat pork, and was "strong, pure-blooded and healthful" in consequence. But how does he know that? Whence does he obtain his information? It is undeniable that the Mosaic Law is very largely concerned with leprosy, and the prevalence of this loathsome disease is an indifferent proof of the "strong pure blood" of the ancient Jews.

We do not dispute that Gentiles eat pork, but we are unable to follow Mr. Hastings in his medical account of the consequences. Tape-worms, so far as we know, are not produced by pork, but by beef, and the trichinæ do not necessarily "destroy life," for if they are subjected to sufficient heat—that is, if the meat is properly cooked—they are destroyed themselves.

Nor has Mr. Hastings gone very deeply into the question of why the Jews are less prone than Christians to consumption. He finds the explanation in the Mosaic order against marring the corners of the beard. The Jews cultivate the hirsute adornment of their chins and throats, while "the Gentile, year after year, scrapes his face with a razor, removing the protection which God gave for his respiratory and vocal organs, and then, after years of feebleness and distress, dies of laryngitis, bronchitis, or pulmonary consumption."

A student of evolution, who has read the second part of Darwin's *Descent of Man*, will laugh at this sciolist. We do not propose to discuss the great shaving question with Mr. Hastings. We believe there are no statistics on which to found an argument; but we venture to ask him why the Almighty, when dealing out beards for the "protection of the

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respiratory and vocal organs," so grossly neglected the Chinese and the American Indians. Why, also, are so many Europeans devoid of this "protection," and why is it denied to the whole female sex?

Another good point in the Mosaic Law, according to Mr. Hastings, was its forbidding the priests to own land. But they made an excellent exchange. The tribe of Levi was not one of the largest; its share of the land would not have amounted to a twelfth; and in return for abandoning this claim it secured a right to exact *a tenth* from the incomes of all the rest. This may seem a wonderful stretch of self-denial to Mr. Hastings, but it seems to us a splendid bargain, which ought to satisfy a gentleman in the "shent per shent" business.

Mr. Hastings makes much of the institution of the Jubilee, but there is no proof of its being once observed in the whole course of Jewish history.

With respect to usury Mr. Hastings is unconsciously facetious. He rejoices in the fact that the Jews are not allowed to lend money on usury, and thus the poor are guarded against the economical exactions of the rich. Nevertheless the Jews are the greatest money-lenders in the world. Rothschild is a Jew, and "uncle" is a Jew. The fact is the Jews, in regard to usury, are like the Jersey criminals who were solemnly banished the island and sentenced to live in the rest of the world. The Jew may not take interest from a Jew, but the chosen people only number 7,000,000, and there are 1,500,000,000 Gentiles to exploit. Similarly a Jew may not sell bad meat to a Jew, though he may sell any quantity to a Gentile, according to the beautiful Law of Moses.

We decline to follow Mr. Hastings any farther, except to say that he expatiates on the sacred number *seven* in a manner which betrays the grossest ignorance and ineptitude.

G. W. FOOTE.

SOCRATES AND JESUS.

ROUSSEAU, the prince of sentimentalists, never sentimentalised with less sense than when he wrote the words so often quoted by our Christian friends: "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." The words upon which our friends the enemy lay stress are absolutely unmeaning. How does a god live? How could a god die? All the pathos, all the interest even, that circles around the story of Jesus is there because, whatever the theological dogma may be, in point of fact he is regarded as a man. It is this alone which gives any point to his being offered as an example to man. Any infinite and omnipotent being could never be any example for a limited one. To compare any man with God would be absurdity—in the eyes of a believer, blasphemy. All that is praiseworthy in a man becomes paltry when attributed to a god; and thus Jesus is really lowered by those who seek to elevate him above all other men.

I have little faith in the historic parallels with which so many, since Plutarch, have sought to make history and biography interesting. No two men, no two events are exactly alike; and drawing a parallel often means simply pointing out items of resemblance and omitting the points of difference.

A comparison of Christ and Socrates has often been made, some of the early Christian fathers themselves tracing a parallel between the idol of their reverence and the man most generally looked up to by the Pagans of antiquity. It is easy to point to certain features common to their stories. Both were moral reformers. Both taught openly. Both inculcated righteousness. Both aimed at an ideal perfection, and taught that it was better to suffer than to do wrong. Both were accused of impiety and put to death, and though neither of them wrote personally, this was done for them by disciples who vastly extended their influence after their lifetime.*

Some have sought to point out more particular resemblances. They have compared the calling of Peter with that of Alciabades, and the conversation with Theodota the *heteira* with that of Jesus and the woman of Samaria,† the arraignment of Socrates before the Dicastery with that of Christ before the Sanhedrim, and the scene in the prison between the Athenian sage and his disciples and that said to have taken place in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. Such comparisons are more ingenious than edifying. Racial diversity alone would suffice to make any real comparison of Socrates and Christ a contrast. The one was a Greek the other a Jew; the one primarily a moralist, the other primarily a religionist—the one an educator the other a dogmatist. Socrates too, as we find him in the pages of Xenophon and Plato, was an old man, a married man, with that strong test of philosophy a shrewish wife, and a humorist withal. Socrates was blest with that fine faculty of humor of which there is no sign in the gospel Jesus. He had a kindly appreciation of the incongruities of life and the absurdities of the human mind and conduct, which led to his accustomed good-natured irony, never degenerating into cynicism. Socrates had irony, Jesus invective. Of the Athenian it had been well said, "He made himself a fool that others by his folly might be made wise; he humbled himself to the level of those among whom his work lay that he might raise some among them to his own level."

Socrates has been accused of neglecting his wife. But in this he must be judged by the customs of his time. At least he bore her nagging good humoredly. His asking that she should be led away when she came weeping to his dungeon, was no more unkind than the saying of Jesus when his mother and brethren wished to speak with him. "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" and pointing to his disciples saying "Behold my mother and my brethren." Socrates was accused of detaching youths from their parents, but Jesus emphatically said he had come to set children against their parents; and when one asked permission to bury his father, replied "Let the dead bury their dead."

Socrates was essentially a sensible practical teacher. All his conversations had a bearing on practice. His conviction that ignorance of the good and evil human life was the source of all practical error, made him insist on obtaining real knowledge.

Jesus was a religionist, Socrates was a philosopher. He gave us the word philosophy.‡ Emerson says of his disciple: "Plato is philosophy and philosophy Plato." The methods of the two teachers are dissimilar. The one dogmatises, "I am the way, the truth and the life." The other gives out no doctrines, but he questions, probes to the core and seeks to elicit from all he meets what it is they really know and what they do not know, what they really mean and what they fancy they mean, and thus destroy all false conceit of knowledge. It is safe to say the Socratic method of education by dialectic, question and answers has done far more good than all the dogmatism in the world. Knowledge was the watchword of Socrates, Faith that of Christ. Know yourself, and in consequence govern yourself, taught the poor polytheist and benighted idolator, as even

* "Socrates was put to death, but the Socratic philosophy rose like a sun in heaven, and spread its illumination over the whole intellectual firmament" (J. S. Mill on *Liberty*, pp. 18-19, People's Edition).

† The odious charge against Socrates mentioned in Lucian has also been hinted at in regard to Christ by Marlowe, Bentham, Marechal, Schoebel and Proudhon.

‡ "*La Philosophie* a donc trouvé son nom, en même temps qu'elle établissait son empire. Je salue ce nom avec respect, car il a été longtemps aussi grand parmi les peuples que celui de la religion l'a été depuis; et il restera seul un jour quand l'autre ne sera plus compris des hommes."—Ernest Havet, *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, tom. i., p. 144.

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Priestley regarded him. Seek the kingdom of God, taught the prophet of Nazareth, whom his worshippers believe to be very God of very God.

It may be said Socrates despised natural science.* So did Jesus, who was so ignorant of the inviolability of natural law that he taught that faith could remove mountains and cast them into the sea. If Socrates did not run directly counter to the Greek mythologies, so also Jesus endorsed the fabulous stories of Lot's wife and Jonah and the whale. Jesus accepted his ancestral religion as much as Socrates, though each thought himself commissioned to reform it. Both were prosecuted for the attempt, and deemed impious blasphemers by the orthodox of their time.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

CLEANNESS OF LIFE.

IT is commonly said that Atheism, Materialism or any other theory that destroys belief in a personal God and the hope of immortality, tends to weaken the idea of moral responsibibity and thus lead us into impurity. And to preach against what is called "law and order," by which is meant government by physical force, is commonly supposed to still further invite personal license and social chaos. Hence Atheists, Socialists, Anarchists and Communists—the radical religious and political heretics of the day—are looked upon as those who wish to escape the wholesome restraints of the Church and State in order that they may be free to gratify their unbridled desires without the fear of an angry God or the dread of an offended policeman.

There are a few who know, if dependence may be placed upon reasonable conclusions, that there can be no God but an immoral one, and no government by physical force but an unjust one. The idea of substitutionary atonement, and the forgiveness of sins, which are the central ideas of the Christian religion, are highly immoral. That the innocent should suffer for the guilty is absurdly unjust. And that we may enjoy a heaven that we do not deserve and for which we are not morally prepared, is equally immoral. If the Christian scheme is true, bad people are in heaven because they believed something that is unreasonable or asked to have their sins blotted out by forgiveness, which is impossible, and good people are in hell because they could not believe absurdities and would not ask an unknown God to do what should not be done.

Our Christian religion is immoral and our Republican Government unjust. But most persons do not know this. Most persons are so morally obtuse as to think that the innocent should die for the guilty, and that the minority should be forcibly ruled by the majority. And such persons think that to doubt or deny the truth of the Christian religion or the injustice of "law and order"—statute law and enforced order—is to encourage immorality.

It cannot be denied that the general abandonment of the current religious and political faith would destroy our current moral code. But it would result in the general acceptance of a better one.

To cease to believe in God is to do away with the idea that conscience is the voice of God. To cease to believe in the supernatural origin of man is to abandon the notion that conscience is innate. To cease to believe in God is to cease to believe ourselves accountable to God for what we do or fail to do. To cease to believe that a vote of the majority is the decision of God, and that a statute law is right because it is the law, is to destroy allegiance to the politicians in power whose collective doings we call the State. In short, to abandon our religious and political beliefs is to arrive at the conclusion that there is no such thing as abstract right and wrong; is to adopt the idea that we have to learn what is right and wrong just as we learn to talk and walk—by observation and experience.

It is commonly believed that right is what is in accordance with, and wrong is what is contrary to, the will of God. But if you cease to believe in God, manifestly the idea of right and wrong is destroyed. It is commonly believed that, in our social relations, right is what statute law says we should, and wrong is what such law says we should not, do. But if you cease to believe in government by physical force the idea of social morality must be given up. So that Atheism, Agnosticism, Secularism and the various social heresies I have named, actually do destroy our current standard of morality. But they set up another standard far more correct and satisfactory. They necessarily result in the idea that whatever is for the happiness—the highest happiness, the happiness that feels no regret—of the individual in social relations with other individuals is right, and whatever is against that happiness is wrong.

In a large measure this idea will, indeed, lead to what the average Christian and the average American citizen would call terrible immorality, because it will decide that many doings that are now considered right are wrong, and many that are now considered wrong are right.

For example, all that round of conduct that goes by the name of piety—duties to God—will eventually be seen to be not only useless but wrong.

It is now commonly thought right to entomb the results of industry in great buildings devoted to the worship of an unknown God for an hour or two on Sunday, and forcibly tax everybody for the support of this worship by exempting those buildings and the land on which they stand from taxation. It is now thought right to attend this worship and spend valuable time listening to baseless speculations, in singing meaningless hymns and in humiliating prayers and prostrations. It is now thought right to chloroform the mind by faith in things that cannot be proven and that contradict reason. But some day all this will seem to be wrong. It will seem to be wrong to devote time and industry to useless purposes: wrong to believe anything that is contrary to human observation and experience unless it can be proved true.

It is now thought right to forcibly close places of amusement, instruction and useful labor on Sunday because it is God's day, and should be given up to indolence and worship. Some day it will seem right that people should rest, work or play on Sunday just as on other days, because one day cannot be morally different from another day, and because all this piety is for the injury of the people, physically, mentally and morally, as could be easily shown.

It is now thought right to forcibly tax some persons for the education of other persons' children in a way of which they do not approve, and for the advantage of others in business life. And it is considered criminal to refuse to pay or in some way avoid paying such taxes. But some day it will be considered a virtue to disregard a statute law which one believes to be unjust. The time will come when a man will be looked upon as a hero who refuses to pay an unjust school tax, or smuggles foreign goods into the country if he does not believe in our infamous custom laws, which rob one man for the financial benefit of another; or goes upon vacant land wherever he finds it; just as we now look upon Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, James and Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison, Parker Pillsbury, or whoever else violated our one-time laws against helping a slave to escape; or upon the revolutionary fathers who refused to pay the tea tax and threw the tea into the bay.

And it is for us to help destroy the current moral standard and establish the new one. It is for us to help, break down the idea that the people should

* Grote thinks that Socrates excluded physics only provisionally, and that he contemplated such studies as an ultimate portion of his scheme. This is very questionable.

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worship an immoral God or obey an unjust State. It is for us to help people to understand that the priest is an injurious parasite and the politician a very dangerous kind of burglar, because the more he robs the people by physical force, the more they shout for him and add to his powers of plunder.

But in trying to break up the theoretic foundation of current morals we must be particularly careful to let people see that we mean to set up a better one, and we can do this in no way but by personal example, by cleanness of living. If a Christian goes wrong, almost every one says: "That does not prove that Christianity is not good." But if an unbeliever goes wrong they say: "There; you see the results of abandoning the faith of our fathers." If our form of government produces men like Jay Gould and "Old Hutch" and the Spring Valley mine owners, everybody says: "That only goes to show that under the most glorious possible government there will be greedy and wicked men." But if a social "reformer" drinks too much beer and reglects to blacken his boots they say: "That is what comes of trying to destroy 'law and order.' He is an Anarchist."

I do not in the least object to this severity of judgment against us of the new thought. I think it is just as it should be. And I think we will not be worthy of the world's esteem until we can triumphantly meet the world's criticism. For my part I cheerfully accept the situation, and frankly say that if my present views of religion do not make me a better and purer man than I was, personally, that is one reason why you should not accept them. But I ask to be judged by the new moral standard and not the old.

HUGH O. PENETCOST.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

(To be concluded.)

THE OLD MAN AND THE PREACHER.

As the parson to church was winding his way,
The service to hold one cold Sabbath day,
An elderly man he met on the sleet
Which happened to cover that part of the street.
"You go the wrong way," spoke the parson quite bold.
"How so?" said the other as he cautiously strolled.
"Know you not," said the preacher, "'tis God's holy day,
When all at the church should assemble and pray?"

The old man replied, as he leaned on his cane,
"Good parson, perhaps you will deem me profane,
But truly to me all days are the same,
All sacred alike by whatever name.
How one more holy than another can be,
Except as we take it, is quite hard to see.
If God is all-wise and all-good as you preach,
What need can there be to pray and beseech?
Will not Infinite Goodness do what is best,
Without our advice or urgent request?
Does God love to be told what he already knows,
And be flattered and praised for the good he bestows?
Must we bow like fear-stricken slaves at his throne,
And his mercy implore with vociferous tone
For sin we committed when Adam was young,
And Eve was deceived by the serpent's tongue?
Must we send our sobbings and groanings above,
To appease the anger of Infinite Love?
Can we change by our prayers the unchangeable God,
And coax him to suspend his wrath and his rod?
I cannot, good parson, accord with such views;
Hence my absence from church you will please to excuse.
I bow in no temple of wood or of stone
To a man-made God on a creed-contrived throne;
But ever beneath the blue sky above
I worship in Nature's great temple of love."

As the old man ceased he slipped from his feet,
And backward he fell on the treacherous sleet.
"O infidel lost!" cried the parson, quite loud,
Still standing erect in attitude proud:
"Most truly 'tis writ by the psalmist's own hand—
'On slippery places the wicked stand.'"
"I see that they do," said the prostrate old man;
"But then, as for me, I'll be switched if I can!"

ABEL FLETCHER.

ACID DROPS.

Peter Laing, the Elgin "centenarian," is dead. His 105th birthday was publicly celebrated some time ago. Peter believed he was that age, and so did many of his fellow townsmen, although it was proved by a local antiquary that Peter was only ninety. What a capital illustration of that weakness of human nature on which religion has always traded! People like a spice of the wonderful and prefer an exciting lie to the sober truth.

Dr. Philpott is resigning the bishopric of Worcester, which he has held for thirty years. He has clung to the well-paid post as long as possible, and only resigns when his age and infirmities are too patent.

The *Star* has been giving an account, real or fictitious, of the correspondence of the editor of the *Matrimonial News*, from which it appears that "clergymen all want money, and a good lot of it." But there is little novelty in the information. Universal history proves that no body of men have a keener eye for the main chance.

The London *Globe* has been troubled about the growth of Atheism in London. Our pious contemporary deplores the evil, and is apparently willing to see it put down by the arm of the law. Poor old *Globe*! It forgets the prosecution of this journal for "blasphemy," and the remarkable success (from a Christian point of view) with which it was attended. Persecution only strengthens a cause that cannot be extinguished.

General Booth utters a few commonplaces about servants and masters, and the papers give them wide publicity. Nothing succeeds like success. By and bye we shall read that Booth has declared that twice two make four.

None of the Christian critics attempt to refute the argument of Count Tolstoi respecting Christianity and marriage. The reception of the *Kreutzer Sonata* proves the utter hypocrisy of Christendom. The Bishop of Odessa has issued a pamphlet denouncing Tolstoi's views as subversive of the sacred character of the orthodox marriage law. Perhaps it is, but the only *real* question at issue is this—Is Tolstoi's teaching the teaching of Jesus Christ? Let the clergy tackle that problem if they dare.

Two wife-murderers were hung on Tuesday morning. One of them, Frederick Davis, of Birmingham, rose early, put away a chop and some eggs, and smoked a pipe of tobacco; then he had an hour's interview with the chaplain, after which he walked firmly to the scaffold. Between them, the material and spiritual refreshments had a most fortifying effect. It is to be presumed that Davis is now twanging his harp.

At Crewe, John Russell, an old man of 70, went down into his cellar, and began deliberately breaking open his own skull with an axe. The old man had too much religion in it, and is described as suffering from religious mania.

Here you are again, Mr. Talmage; two suicides in one day's paper, and both *not* Atheists. Charles Elliman, 71 years old, cut his throat at Warwick. In a letter to his daughters he wrote, "Good bye, God bless you both." Mrs. Coates, of Brixton, hung herself. In a letter to her husband she wrote, "God bless you, and help you out of your difficulties."

A serious "clerical scandal" is disturbing the serenity of Glasgow Church people. The well-known "minister" of a large parish died a few weeks ago, and nearly all his reverend brethren in and around the city preached elaborate funeral discourses, in which they deplored his loss and descanted upon his virtues. It now turns out, however, that this pious pastor was something of a whited sepulchure, for he has bequeathed the bulk of his property to a Glasgow barmaid, while his widow is left nearly destitute.—*Truth.*

Two colored churches in Toronto, Canada, the African Episcopal Methodist church of the United States and the British Methodist Episcopal church of Canada, are struggling over the possession of a church building. One party arrives

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early and bars and bolts the doors and windows, when the other party arrives and, smashing them in, enters and joins in the services.

Rev. W. H. Boone, a colored preacher of Gordon county, Georgia put rat poison in the food of a family of ten, to get possession of their crops. Three are dead.

The republic of Equador is governed by priests. No book can be imported without approval from the Jesuits. The national receipts and expenditures are never published. Quito, the capital, with two hundred thousand people, is just as it was three hundred years ago No railroads or telegraphs are allowed, and there are no schools except the few taught by monks, where beads take the place of reading. Four-fifths of the people can neither read nor write.

A Berlin telegram says:—Martha Nix, a domestic servant, has become affected with religious mania through constant attendance at the meetings of the Salvationists. A three-months-old child which had been left in her care she placed near a secluded portion of the river, regarding the baby as a new Moses. The child was miraculously saved from death. The woman has now been put into a strait-jacket, and the feeling against the army is so strong that efforts will be made to drive it from Berlin.

"Mont Thomas," in that dreadful *Sunday Chronicle*, says: "There is, according to the *Christian Leader*, a farmer in Leith who has an unguarded well in front of his house, and the farmer's wife prays every morning that no one may fall into it. The farmer has been advised by a clergyman to let his wife continue praying, but to put a lid on his well. This seems to be bad advice. If the praying is effectual, let the lady continue and never mind a lid. If not, put on a lid, and never mind the praying. Why waste a good lid if it's not wanted, and why waste good praying if it's no use? I fear no quantity of praying would prevent some people from falling into a well, and that the whole bench of bishops would not be able to pray 'em out again when they *were* in. I fear not. The farmer seems to be of a different opinion, however—any way, he acts on the old adage, which says 'let well alone.'"

The Mahommedans at the London Docks have been holding a seven days' feast at the close of their Lent. Their proceedings, consisting of processions, with the clanging of cymbals, beating of tom-toms and religious shouting, were strikingly similar to those of the Salvation Army.

Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten states in *Two Worlds* that George Francis Train was committed to prison for sending obscene literature through the United States mails, when he only sent a hundred quotations from the Bible, without a word of comment. We do not doubt Mrs. Britten's statement. Indeed we have read some reference to the matter in American papers, but we should like to have some exact particulars for our own use.

Among items of "Religious Intelligence," the *Ironclad Age* gives the following:—"Religious and society circles are all undone by the event of the past few hours. The Rev. Joel S. Kelsey, pastor of the congregational church of McCook, Nebreska, was forced by the brother of the wronged girl to confess that he had seduced her. Kelsey has a wife and several children, and has occupied the pulpit in the congregational church in this city for about four years, while his victim is one of the most accomplished young ladies in the city." The rascals eve-dropped a vacant house (so they allege) and caught the good man playing David, and they, under duress, forced him to confess. He owned up to four more young Bathshebas in his flock. But he gave his persecutors the slip (the Lord helping) and got over into Kansas, where the Lord yet reigns.

Among other items of religious intelligence are—the Rev. W. R. Dale, convicted at Atlanta of bigamy; the Rev. Abner Verson, of Parkersburg, eloped with the wife of an elder in his church; the Rev. G. Powles, of Argostown, accused of seducing one of his pupils; the Rev. J. Campbell, near Columbus, Indiana, who seduced one of his flock and procured abortion; and the Rev. J. W. Jones, of Charles City, Iowa, who committed adultery with Mrs. F. B. Southwood. "Yes," comments the tender-hearted editor of the *I. A.*, "and who wouldn't fall under the arts of wicked woman! Didn't Adam? Didn't David? Didn't Lot? Didn't Father Judah?"

The *Jewish World* complains of the tactics of the Christian soul-snatchers at Jerusalem. It says: "Almost daily some young men or women are entrapped by false representations into the training homes of the Protestant or Catholic denominations, and the demoralisation caused through the community is very serious."

Those good people who have fondly considered that enormous moral benefits would be conferred upon the inhabitants of India by missionary work among them will receive a severe shock by a perusal of the statistics published as to the religion of the occupants of the Bombay gaols. Last year 362 prisoners were admitted; of these 44 were Europeans, 16 were Eurasians, and 252 native Christians. There were, therefore, in the Bombay gaols in the course of last year 312 Christian prisoners, and only 50 natives of all denominations. A more startling commentary upon the result of missionary effort was never before published. The opinions of civilians and officers who have been resident in India are always treated with contempt by those who subscribe their money for religious purposes in that country, they being perfectly satisfied with the glowing accounts of progress furnished by the missionaries. Here, however, we have figures which are beyond dispute. The native population of Bombay is not short of half a million, and of these the proportion of Christians is absolutely insignificant, and yet, while but 50 of the half million Hindoos and Mahometans were committed to gaol, 252 native Christians were incarcerated there. This is a remarkable proof that the allegations of the vast majority of persons who know India are perfectly well founded, and that most of the natives who embrace Christianity, or who pretend to do so, are the very refuse of the population, whose pretended conversion is due simply to the benefits which they expect to gain by their change of religion.—*Standard* (Aug. 22)

Sir John Lawrence gave his opinion that when a Hindu embraced Christianity, he retained all his old prejudices and superadds only the liberty of the new faith. Sir John would on no account take one of these converts into his service. His testimony is confirmed by many others who have had to do with Christian converts in India.

Archdeacon Denison is among the prophets. He says the publication of *Lux Mundi* "has become a standpoint from whence will date a perpetual accumulation of ever-multiplying doubts and difficulties touching the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament." The good old Tory's vaticination does not go far enough. The New Testament must be equally affected, and those of his own school will help to forward that consummation by their pointing out how Moses and the prophets were endorsed by Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Mr. Gore has written a preface to the tenth edition of *Lux Mundi*, in which he regrets that he has been supposed to suggest "our Lord's fallibility as a teacher." But since he gives up Old Testament stories which were endorsed by J. C., our Lord's infallibility can be no better than that of the Pope. In the same preface he compares the story of the Flood with that of Dives and Lazarus, suggesting it was not a true history, but a "representative narrative"—representative of the efficacy of baptism, we presume. Yet there is no evidence that Jesus did not mean the story of Dives and Lazarus to be taken literally, and he speaks of the people in the days of Noah being cut off by the Flood.

The Dean of St. Asaph and the Church papers generally speak of the anti-tithe war in Wales as though the Welsh were all either rogues or fools, either trying to swindle their creditors or unaware that remission of tithes would mean increase of rent. This only shows that Churchmen with their own interests at stake cannot understand the standpoint of other people. The Welsh Dissenters' refusal to pay tithes as a protest against the application of national money to a sectarian Church, which they not only dispense with but disapprove. Let the tithes be devoted to a national object, and they would be paid as regularly as the poor rate.

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The Church has done little but denounce the Stage, and and now it seems the stage is going to educate the Church. Last week Mr. Willard secured a good advertisement and attempted the conversion of the clergy by offering them free tickets to a *matinée* of "Judah"—with a view, we presume, of impressing them with a much-needed lesson against hypocrisy. It is said that nearly all who were invited responded. Mr. Willard should have got the Bishop of London to share the same box with Mr. Headlam, and General Booth to sit beside Cardinal Manning. They might all have derived some benefit from Mr. Willard's ministrations.

Credulity dies hard. A new *Astrologer's Magazine* is published at fourpence, and professes among other things to give the true "Horoscope of the Lord Jesus Christ." He seems to have been born under an inauspicious planet.

The *Southern Cross*, a religious paper published at Port Elizabeth, speaking of the difficulties of the missionaries with the heathen, says "It is not an infrequent reply to the preacher's appeal. We do not know which God to believe in; the Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Moravian, or Church God—there are so many of them."

In noticing the death of T. Subba Row, a Hindu, originally announced as one of the authors with Madame Blavatsky of the *Secret Doctrine*, *Lucifer* says "May his next birth be speedy, and his life-span longer." But if the state of Devachan is so blissful as represented, why should Theosophists wish any one to speedily come from it and re-enter this world of trouble. They seem no more consistent than Christians who grieve when their friends depart to heaven.

Another Theosophist, Mr. Bertram Keightley, at whose house Madame Blavatsky was staying previous to her residence with Mrs. Besant, has brought actions for libel against Captain Pfoundes. It would seem that Theosophists do not always disdain the law. We fancy something depends upon whether they feel sure of a verdict.

It is complained of the Rev. S. B. Thorp, curate of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, who has recently been received in the Romish Church, that he was in the habit of giving Roman Catholic books to boys. His vicar, the Rev. G. C. Ommanney, says that "Mr. Thorp had shown that loss of moral tone and gentlemanly feeling which was nearly always to be seen in converts to Romanism."

In the American *Gospel News*, which claims a total circulation of 74,000 weekly, occurs this precious bit of puerility: "In one of my meetings a woman was brightly converted whose husband persisted in impenitence. He stoutly refused to yield. A few weeks after the meeting closed when all was still and the sky seemed almost clear, the people were startled by a terrific peal of thunder, the only one that was heard that day. The bolt of lightning struck the house of the stubborn father, and the spirit of his precious child was summoned to Paradise. This was sanctified to the conviction of the father and he soon after professed conversion. I officiated at the funeral of the stricken child, and know this to be true. Many like this man have been led with the Psalmist to say, 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.'" That is, a "god," claimed by his worshippers to be infinite in power and goodness, could think of no way in which to convert the father except by the cowardly murder of his helpless and innocent child. No wonder our lunatic asylums are swarming with the victims of "religious excitement."—*Fair Play.*

A fire at the monastery at Mount Athos, has resulted in the death of twenty-four monks. These monks are interesting survivals of early Christian asceticism, perhaps derived from India. They seek absorption from worldly cares and union with the deity by contemplating their own stomachs.

Church ushers in Boston have apparently got the business down pretty fine. One of them the other Sunday remarked to a pretty woman who had asked him for a seat: "If you will allow me, madam, I should like to give you a seat on the broad aisle. We put the handsomest ones there to decorate the church."—*Truthseeker.*

A correspondent of the *Christian Register* (U.S.) relates an incident that occurred while he was visiting a quaint old sailor in London, who had a sort of private museum: "In another corner of the room I saw a bell-glass placed over a small book. 'That book saved my life,' said he. 'A short time before we went into action, a lady gave each of our men a Bible. I put mine under my tunic in a breast pocket. Not long after, in the midst of a skirmish, a bullet pierced my tunic and passed three parts of the way through the volume. But for that book, the bullet would have gone straight to my heart.' This story moved me to say, 'Ah! the grand old book has saved many a person from that which is worse than death.' But the old warrior did not relish my remark. He replied that he had no belief about such matters, for he was a Secularist and attended the Hall of Science."

God's mercies during the past week have consisted of numerous destructive cyclones and thunderstorms, and an extension of the potato blight in Ireland.

On August 3, a storm dilapidated Sioux Falls, South Dacota. The cathedral just built by Mrs. John Jacob Astor, of New York, presented a sorry spectacle when the lightning had finished with it.

The new volume of Leslie Stephen's *Dictionary of National Biography* (vol. xxiii.) gives an account of Valentine Greatrakes, a supposed miracle-worker of the seventeenth century, who was said to have cured many diseases by simple laying-on of hands. Greatrakes, however, rejected cases which were manifestly incurable. He was called to court at Whitehall, and failed before the king and court, notwithstanding that he had testimonials to his extraordinary powers from Ralph Cudworth, John Wilkins (afterwards Bishop of Chester) and others.

Catholics and Protestants have been displaying the fervor of their religion at Stewardstown, Ulster, where there has been a free fight between the rival religionists, and thirty houses of Catholics wrecked by the Orangemen.

Don't wash on Sunday, says Mr. Allan Bayne, of Renton. That is the day for godliness, and cleanliness should take a back seat. Mr. Bayne is a sort of Scotch dodo, one of the last relics of a nearly extinct species. At one time they had it all their own way, and the result may be read in the pages of Buckle.

Seven years ago Mr. Strachan, music-seller, of Galashiels, missed a concertina. Apparently it was stolen, for he has recently received the following letter:—"Sir,—Seven years ago I stole a concertina from your workshop which was getting repaired. Sometime ago I joined the Salvation Army, and Christ has pardoned all my sins. I think it right I should let you know. May God bless you, and meet me in heaven." Here endeth the penitent's epistle. He gives no name or address, and does not remit the price of the concertina. Perhaps, as Christ has pardoned all his sins, *he* will forward the amount by P.O.O.

This little incident throws light upon Salvation principles. The thief makes no effort at restitution. On the contrary, he seems to think the man he stole from is slightly in his debt. He does, indeed, condescend to hope his victim will meet him in heaven; but perhaps Mr. Strachan would hardly care to join the party.

THE BISHOPS.

If we beheld a shekinah, or divine presence, like the flame of a taper, on the heads of those who receive the imposition of hands, we might believe that they receive the Holy Ghost at the same time. But as we have no reason to believe what superstitious, credulous, or lying men (such as Cyprian himself was) reported formerly, that they might establish the proud pretensions of the clergy, so we have no reason to believe that men of this order have any more of the Divine Spirit in our time, after they are ordained, than they had before. It would be a farce to provoke laughter, if there was no suspicion of profanation in it, to see them gravely lay hands on one another, and bid one another receive the Holy Ghost.—*Lord Bolingbroke.*

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 31, Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham; at 11, "Should Parliament Regulate the Hours of Labor?"; at 7, "Did the Miracles of the New Testament Happen?" Afternoon at 3, in the Town Hall, "The Gospel of Death and the Gospel of Life." Admission to this lecture free.

Monday, September 1, Hackney Radical Club, The Grove, Mare Street, Hackney, at 8, "The Future of Labor." Admission free.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

H. J. HUDD.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. SPENCER.—Are you in your right senses?

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec. North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, begs to acknowledge the following:—Mr. Johnson, 5s.; Mr. Looney, 5s.; R. Young, 2s. 6d.; Bedlington Branch, 12s.; Chester-le-Street Branch, 8s.; a parcel of pamphlets from Mr. J. M. Wheeler.

JAMES SMITH.—The photograph has arrived, and it strikes us as a good one. The faces of A. B. Moss, Joseph Brown, Captain Duncan, John Sanderson, Michael Stitt, and many others are easily discernible.

A. N. B.—Correspondents do us a service by sending us a marked copy of any paper relating to Freethought.

E. J. BREEZE.—The tract you send us is the composition of a scoundrel. A man who declares that Atheists teach the lawfulness of lust and drunkenness is a deliberate liar. With respect to the other side of the Tract, it is absolutely false that the National Secular Society had any connection with the Leeds scandal. The hall in question was hired by outsiders, all of them doubtless Christians by profession. It was let in the ordinary way of business for a ball, and the Secular Branch which used the hall on Sundays were as ignorant of what was going to take place as the other inhabitants of Leeds. No wonder the writer of this wretched Tract conceals his name.

A. MANSON.—Tastes differ you know. You will never find a paper edited to please a single reader.

J. J. TAYLOR.—We never heard of any such statement by Austin Holyoake. You should ask for chapter and verse. Austin Holyoake has been dead sixteen years. Also ask the Christian opponent to explain *the fact* that over ninety per cent. of the prisoners in jails in England and the United States have been Sunday-school scholars.

FREETHINKER.—Thanks for the jokes and cutting. Your letter to the *Globe* should do good.

J. LUBBOCK.—We don't care to be hard on a mere press blunder.

G. H. HALLIFAX.—We intend to do something of the kind when we can find time. It is certainly required.

S. A. GRIMSON.—Too late for this week. Shall be noticed in our next.

SIDNEY CREWS.—Mr. Headlam can hardly require you to defend him. If he thinks himself misrepresented we shall be happy to find space for his correction.

W. T. LEKKEY has removed to 20 Cazenove Road, Stoke Newington, in which district he will carry on his Freethought work. For seventeen years he has been supporting the cause in North-West London.

P. F.—Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was supposed to have been born like Jesus Christ. Pagan mythology had several god-men, such as Hercules. See any Classical Dictionary.

J. KRAST.—The matter must wait until the early part of the winter.

H. CALASCA.—Thanks, but Ground is too dry a subject for a second paragraph.

W. J. LEWIS.—(1) Messrs. Bell and Daldy. (2) James Thomson's poems are published by Reeves and Turner, Fleet Street.

T. THURLOW.—Hardly worth re-opening, unless Mr. Headlam wishes to supplement his letter.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CENTRAL FUND.—From *Maidstone*:—W. Bunyar, 2s. 6d.; J. Martin, 2s. 6d.; W. Finn, 2s. 6d.; A. Cheeseman, 2s. 6d.; W. Mann, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Mann, 2s. 6d.; R. Hearnden, 2s. 6d.; S. Price, 2s. 6d.; A. Hickmott, 2s. 6d.; F. J. Knight, 2s. 6d.; H. Larking, 2s. 6d.; E. Avery, 2s. 6d.

J. G. FISHER.—We have received the bill of your debate at Stockton. You are described as "*from* the Yorkshire Secular Federation," but we can hardly suppose you are authorised to commit that body *for* or *against* "total abstinence." Surely you must be advocating your individual opinion, and we cannot see how such a debate can advance the Freethought cause. Our party does not undertake to stand sponsor for your private views. Some Secularists are teetotallers. If you think they are wrong you should discuss it *with them*, and not with a teetotal lecturer, who is also a rabid Christian, and anxious for any opportunity of misrepresenting Secularism.

H. GEE.—No doubt this paragraph will bring the Woolwich Branch support at Beresford Square at 6.30 this evening (Aug. 31). The bigots are acting after their kind.

W. HERON.—(1) Mr. Carnegie's letter evades the point at issue. Churches are sectarian buildings, and if they are exempted from taxation they are practically subventioned. Hospitals are *not* sectarian; at least, they are not supposed to be. (2) Mr. Gladstone is not responsible for his father's deeds. If his father owned slaves, and was compensated for them (we have heard so, but are not sure of it), it must be remembered that slave-holding was legal and respectable then. George Washington himself was a slave-holder.

BATTERSEA WOMAN.—Hardly up to the mark.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star——Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—People's Press—Chat—Tocsin—Liberty—Eastern Post—Der Lichtfreund—Sunday Chronicle—Southern Cross—Market Rasen Mail—Essex Weekly News.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had a heavy day at Portsmouth. Three lectures on a Sunday in August, delivered in a very large hall, are a tax on one man's strength, but the labor is considerably increased when there is a lengthy debate after each lecture. Mr. Foote's opponents during the day included Major-General Synge, a minister named Watts, and the two shining lights of Christian Evidence, Messrs. Millett and Tomlins. Mr. Millett spent some time in telling the audience what a good man he was, but he did not explain or regret his fraudulent quotation from Mill on the occasion of Mr. Foote's last visit to Portsmouth. At the mention of this little affair, the noble Millett rose in a huff, and walked off the platform, the lecturer remarking that, if it were not for the policeman, any prisoner in the dock could establish his innocence in the same way.

Mr. Tomlins has been quiet for a good while, owing to his being mixed up in a certain transaction about boots, which brought on him the vigorous denunciation of an English judge. When this worthy mounted the platform the audience was astonished at his audacity. Then there arose loud cries of "Boots!" But Tomlins was not abashed. He went on speaking in oily accents, and his talk was all about truth and goodness and God. The chairman allowed him to occupy ten minutes, but one prominent Secularist left the platform when he began to preach.

Major-General Synge spoke like a gentleman, and was listened to with perfect courtesy. We cannot help wondering why he associates with men like Millett and Tomlins.

Mr. Foote lectures three times at Birmingham to-day (Aug. 31). The morning and evening lectures will be delivered in Baskerville Hall, with the usual charges for admission. The afternoon lecture will be delivered in the Town Hall, and the admission will be free. Secularists in the district should try to bring their Christian friends to this

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meeting. At five o'clock tea for country friends will be provided at Baskerville Hall.

Mr. Heaford has been lecturing to large open-air audiences at Grimsby. He was listened to with great attention, and the experiment is considered a great success. It was not conducted by the Branch, but by a few old friends of the cause in conjunction with Mr. J. W. Wittering, the secretary, who will be glad to receive any financial assistance from Freethinkers in the district. His address is 244 Freeman Street.

Mr. Toleman-Garner's lecture on "Man's Soul" drew a large audience on the Brighton Level last Sunday. Opposition was invited, but not one of the representative Christians who were present ventured to defend the faith. A good collection was made for the Benevolent Fund.

The London Secular Federation's next course of Free Lectures will be given at the Hall of Science on Thursdays, Sep. 18 and 25, and Oct. 2 and 9. Mr. Foote opens and closes, and the two intermediate lectures will be delivered by Mr. G. Standring and Mr. R Forder.

To-day (August 31) the Hull Branch will hold its first Annual Excursion to Cleethorpes, Lincolnshire, in conjunction with some members of the Manchester N. S. S. and Sheffield Secular Society. The Hull train will leave the Corporation Pier at 8.15 a.m. Tea will be provided by Mr. R. Jackson, Victor and Aucland Colonade Dining Rooms, Cleethorpes (close to the station), about 5 o'clock, at 1s. per head. It is hoped that this first trip of the Hull Branch of the N. S. S. will be a perfect success.

On Sunday the South Shields Branch holds its third Annual Pic-nic in Holywell Dene. The South Shields members and friends leave by 12.45 ferry from Market Place. Trains for Monkseaton leave Newcastle at 1 and 2.5 p.m. Fares: single 8d, return 1s. 2d; North Shields, 1.26 and 2.31; fares 3d. and 6d. Hot water can be obtained at the cottages at 3d. per head, and teas at the rooms near the Water Mill at 1s. each. If the weather is favorable a pleasant afternoon may be expected. Return trains leave Monkseaton at 7.30, 8.45, and 9.50. All members and friends living at a convenient distance are cordially invited.

A review of *The First Three Gospels* by J. E. Carpenter, written by R. B. Drummond, in last week's *Academy*, refutes the hackneyed argument that Christ's disciples could not have invented his saying by instancing Luke's parables of the Good Samaritan and of the Prodigal Son as "evidently due to the Evangelist." Mr. Drummond holds that the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke was founded on the story of the two sons in Matthew.

Mr. Drummond quotes as a parallel to the story of Peter sinking in the water, one found in the Buddhist books of a Buddhist disciple going to Jetavana (where Buddha was) and who coming to a river and seeing no boat went down in faith into the stream. He did not sink. "Walking as on the ground by the time he got into the middle he saw waves. Then his confidence in the Buddha became slack, he began to sink. But he made his joyful confidence in the Buddha firm, and proceeding on the surface of the water came to Jetavana."

Dr. Garnett, in his notice of William Rathbone Greg, in the new volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, speaks of Greg's *Creed of Christendom* as "the outcome of long study and thought." "No work hostile to received opinions," says the learned Keeper of Books in the British Museum, "was ever so little of a polemic against them, or more distinguished by candor and urbanity." We would add that the work is almost as well worth reading now as when first issued nearly forty years ago.

The notice of Grote, in the same volume, is done by Prof. Croom Robertson. He mentions the *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion*, issued by Carlile, and made by Grote from Bentham's notes. Prof. Robertson says: "A comparison of them with the printed volume shows the enormous amount of labor required to bring them into form. Grote had practically to write the essay, leaving aside the greater part of the materials before him, and giving to the remnants a shape that was his rather than Bentham's." This is perfectly correct. Mr. Wheeler hopes some day to put into shape some of the MS. materials left by Bentham and undealt with by Grote.

In the account of Nell Gwyn, the mistress of Charles II., a good old story is told. At Oxford she was mobbed in mistake for her rival in the king's favor, the Duchess of Portsmouth, who was a Catholic. She put her head out of the window of the carriage, and said, "Pray, good people, be civil; I am the Protestant whore."

The Belgian Freethinkers have, under Dr. Cesar de Paepe, organised a corps of lay nurses for hospitals to prevent the often unwished-for ministration of Catholic nuns. They now claim that there is no just reason against the complete secularisation of hospitals and infirmaries.

Miss Maitland, of the London School Board, gives her opinion strongly in favor of Free Education to avoid the great difficulty of fairly remitting the fees and relieve teachers from the onerous duty of collecting them.

Battersea leads the way for Liberal views in London. The Library Commissioners of that borough have decided to open the public libraries on and after the first Sunday in October, from three o'clock in the afternoon until nine in the evening. Mr. John Burns, at a meeting held in Battersea Park to consider the question, pointed out that at present public libraries were mainly used by the middle classes, and therefore it was highly desirable that skilled artisans and laborers should have the opportunity of using them.

Fritankaren reports the third annual Conference of the Utilistiska Samfundet, held at Stockholm. Mr. Lennstrand presided, and delegates were present from Orebro, Malmo, Sodertelge, Vesteras, Eskilstuna, Gefle, Norrkoping, Skutskar, and Markim. The past year has been a stirring one for our Swedish friends, and they mean to press forward and make the coming years yet more successful.

The Swedish Utilistiska Samfundet sends us their annual report, which, as it commences with our representation of Sweden at the International Conference at Paris last September and ends with our services during Mr. Lennstrand's imprisonment, is highly complimentary to ourselves. We are pleased to note the activity of Messrs. Berghell, Mentzer, Captain Thomson, and others. Freethought is now fairly started in Sweden. It has its enthusiasts and its martyrs. All that is now necessary is to keep the ball rolling.

Axel Lundberg, a Swedish Freethought lecturer in the States, has published a pamphlet on the Devil. Hell and the Day of Judgment, in which he shows the savage nature of these doctrines. Mr. N. S. Johnson is a Dane in America, who has also put forward a little book, entitled *Is the Bible the Word of God?*

The Hull *Critic* gives insertion to a long and able letter on Sabbath Desecration from the pen of that active worker, Mr. G. E. Conrad Naewiger.

Mr. Watts, who sailed on the 23rd, will spend a short time in New York, and reach Toronto about Sept. 3. On Sunday, Sept. 7, he opens the lecturing season at Science Hall with an address on "The Secular Gospel: its Necessity in Canada."

Colonel Ingersoll and family are taking their holiday at Elberon, New Jersey, where their recently married daughter, Mrs. Eva Ingersoll Brown, has a beautiful cottage by the sea.

La Verité Philosophique, edited by our Anglo-French friend, M. Clemetshaw Cilwa, is going to give a series of Freethought biographies in its columns, commencing with Dr. Albert Regnard and the Central Commission of the French Freethought Federation.

De Dageraad for August has a long article by J. van der Ende, with the same title as Mr. Foote's pamphlet, "Was Jesus Insane?"

Colonel G. B. Malleson has contributed a concise account of Akbar the Freethinking Emperor to the series entitled "Rulers of India." Akbar, though brought up as a Mohammedan came to reject all dogmas but the unity of God. He

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encouraged discussions on religion between Brahmins, Parsees, Christians and those of his native sect, showing tolerance to all, Col. Malleson says he discourages the practice of praying, fasts and pilgrimages, knowing that in the majority of instances professions of religion were cloaks for hypocrisy and that "there were many ways in which a man's life could be utilised other than by putting on an austere appearance and making long prayers." Akbar sought to unite India on the basis of religious equality. To find his superior we must travel back to Pagan times. Dr. L. Büchner has treated of Akbar and Frederick the Great in his recent work *Zwei Gekrönte Freidenker*.

The annual convention of the Secularists and Freethinkers of Canada will be held under the auspices of the Canadian Secular Union, on Saturday and Sunday Sept. 13 and 14 in Science Hall, Toronto.

The State of New York has passed a law empowering the arrest of smokers "apparently under the age of sixteen years." The New York *Evening Telegram* lays stress on the word "apparently," and argues that it will not be safe for a man like Col. Ingersoll, with his apparently juvenile countenance to be seen with a cigar in his mouth.

THE ELEPHANT-UNDER-THE-EARTH.

(From a Chicago Paper.)

[CONCLUDED].

I HAVE no doubt, however, that the ultimate analysis of what is called matter, will show that it consists of the same element as what is called mind; and that, therefore, the ultimate constituent of the universe of matter and mind is not two but one element, call it force, spirit, matter, mind, consciousness, or whatever you please. In my "New Theory of Consciousness" (see *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, July, 1880), by a process of speculative reasoning I found myself driven to the conclusion that the atom of matter is an ultimate of consciousness, after having, in the same article, identified force with consciousness and hence also with matter. And as I now look at it, it would not be a difficult undertaking to prove the same thing about matter, not by speculative reasoning merely, but by an appeal to facts which are in the possession of everyone.

One more example and I am done. We look out upon the vast and wonderful visible and tangible phenomena of the universe of matter—its boundless sea of stars, some of which seem held by invisible hands in the same relative positions for ages, while others revolve in such well-defined, mathematical curves and times round our sun, that their exact places in the heavens can be predicted with certainty; its crystallizations in mathematical forms around mathematically determined axes; its chemical relations of atoms that can be definitely expressed in numercial formulas; its curious microscopic vegetable and animal germs which, though containing nothing that bears the slightest resemblance to either an animal or a vegetable, yet when placed under suitable conditions, are steadily urged forward through a regular series of changes in their outward form and their internal structure until, in one case, a lily, a fern, or an oak, perhaps is the final outcome, and, in the other, a fly, an elephant, or a man, mind and all, is the ultimate result. Now, it is said, how can unaided matter do all these things and the ten thousands of others which are equally as wonderful but which are all beyond its capacity? We must look to some other element to do them, some other principle that shall take matter as the potter takes the clay and mould it into all the various forms which we see around us, at the same time imparting to them motion, heat, chemical affinity, life, and mind. We must, in imagination, make that principle vast enough, strong enough, skilful enough, thoughtful enough, wise enough, and in every way competent to do all those things. We will call it God, Lord, Jehovah, almighty. Nevertheless, call it by all the exalted names you please, and endow it with all the ineffable attributes in the vocabulary of human language, and mystify and hide it behind the thick and impenetrable veil of all the deaf, and dumb, blind, and impotent infinitudes that the human mind can conjure up, you can never succeed in disguising it beyond recognition. It still has all the specific characteristics of the elephant under-the-earth, and should be, and ultimately will be rejected by all thoughtful men.

The watchword of science is genesis. The watchword of philosophy is causality. Genesis and causality are substantially one and the same thing; the different names being simply expressive of different ways of looking at the universe. Science looks from below, through the procedure or genesis of one thing from another, up to the final ultimate or element from which they have all proceeded; while philosophy looks down from that ultimate, through its causal relations, and thus embraces all things and their genetic procedures. Hence, philosophy must begin with monism, or a theory of one final ultimate or element; and science must, in the end, demonstrate the truth of monism; for, in a universe of two or more ultimates, there could be neither a universal causality nor a universal genesis. Different ultimates and their procedures could have no genesis from each other; for by that very genesis they would cease to be different ultimates, and the one from which they all proceeded would be the one final ultimate. Nor could different ultimates be causally and efficiently related to each other. Therefore, on a cosmical theory of two or more ultimates, there being neither genetic nor causal and efficient relations between them, each ultimate and its procedures would constitute a universe by itself; and we would thus have, instead of one universe, as many universes as there are ultimates, all independent of, and forever isolated from, each other. Hence the endless trouble and perplexities which philosophers in all ages have had in their efforts to explain our universe on the supposition that it is composed of two ultimate constituents, matter and mind. The gulf between them has never been bridged, and never can be.

From this difficulty sprang that curiosity of philosophical literature, Leibnitz's explanation of the relation between matter and mind. Admitting that matter and mind are different ultimates, he was obliged to admit that the one could not act upon the other. Hence he contended that there is no real causal and efficient relation between them, but only a seeming relation, which he explained by his theory of "Pre-established Harmony," substantially as follows: I make two clocks so exactly alike in their works that they shall always keep pace with each other, the hands of both always pointing to the same hour and minute. The one being perfectly independent of and isolated from the other, neither one causes the other to register the same time as itself; but they register the same time because I pre-established such a harmony between them. In the same way, as Leibnitz supposed, God made a universe of matter and also a universe of minds, perfectly independent of, and isolated from each other; yet he established such a harmony in their movements that where one shows up a certain phenomenon, the other shows up its corresponding phenomenon. Thus, I will my arm to move. My will does not move the arm, however; because the will and the arm have no causal and efficient relation to each other; but, nevertheless, my arm moves simultaneously with my will that it shall move, because my body, in the cause of its own independent actions, has just reached that point where my arm moves simultaneously with the equally independent action of my mind which just then wills that my arm shall move.

Berkeley attempted to solve the difficulty now under consideration by annihilating the external world, the world of matter, considered as something separate and apart from, and outside of, each individual mind. So ingeniously did he do this, that Hume considers his arguments "unanswerable, although they convince nobody." And, in more recent time, Bain declares that, "all the ingenuity of a century and a half has failed to see a way out of the contradictions exposed by Berkeley." But Berkeley simply evades the difficulty by ignoring a fact which is a persistent part of it, and which, therefore, must be admitted and explained by any adequate cosmical theory. Berkeley, as a monist, admitted but one ultimate, namely mind; but he denied the real external existence of what is called matter, which everyone knows has a real existence, external to, outside of, and different from, every individual mind and all its sensations or other states of consciousness. We know this by an actual demonstration, as valid as an intuition, as I have explained in my "Facts about External Perception," published in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, October, 1885. The question here is, not what those things called matter are made of, for, as we have already seen, monism is the only philosophical cosmical theory; and, on any monistic theory, matter must be made of the same stuff that mind is made of, call that stuff spirit, force, mind, consciousness, matter, or what not. But the question to each individual now is, whether the things which he perceives around him, and which are called matter, are outside of his own mind and

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have a permanent existence outside of his own mind and of all other minds, so that they abide when stripped of those sensations in his own mind which are related to them—and still endure when he is asleep or unconscious, so that when he awakens or comes to consciousness, he may again perceive those very same outside things. Berkeley answers this question in the negative, and thus annihilates the external world, ignoring the very first lesson which nature demonstrated to him, as to Hume and to everyone else, so irresistibly, that (as Hume was honest enough to admit) it dominates and controls the sceptic even while he is repudiating it. Berkeley even goes so far as to assert that it is impossible to conceive of an external object, such as a house or a tree, existing independent of and outside of all minds whatsoever. Now, to each individual, external objects are objects which now exist, but are not in his consciousness. Such objects can never be got into his consciousness, and can never be known to him by intuition, but only by demonstration. But according to Berkeley's principles, what are called external objects are, to each individual, objects which seem external although they are really in his consciousness. Such objects do not exist at all when not in his consciousness (for they are simply his sensations, which, of course, are his own and nobody else's; nor can anybody else's be, or become, his), and can never be known to him by demonstration, but only by intuition.

Berkeley's external world is, to each individual, only a seeming, fictitious external world, all of whose constituents are really internal, in consciousness subjective. And the same is true of Kant's external world; it is subjective internal, and is only seemingly fictitiously external. With both of these philosophers the conversion of the really internal things into seemingly external things is brought about by a kind of hocus-pocus—divine hocus-pocus with Berkeley, and the hocus-pocus of categories with Kant—for nothing but actual hocus-pocus (a trick which "no fellow can find out," and which it was never intended that any fellow should find out) can ever convert the internal, the subjective into the external, the objective; nor even into a seeming external unless there be a real perceived external object to aid in the work as a foundation of the whole process. The very idea of externality or of seeming externality could never have been suspected, conceived of, dreamed of, or in any way got into our heads, without a real external object to develop that idea in our minds, not by intuition (for it can never come to us in that way) but by demonstration. But a further discussion of this subject would require that I should enter more fully than would be justifiable here, upon a consideration of external perception, a mental process of which Berkeley had not the faintest idea, and Kant only the most bewildering, lumbering and confused one.

PAYTON SPENCE.

GENESIS I.—II.

In purging the Bible of all divine inspiration, I am under an obligation to the Bishop of Carlisle, who lately advised us to put aside Genesis i.-ii., as "a childish thing,"—only intended for mankind in its infancy. That stage has fortunately been passed, and the clergy know it. Yet the majority go on preaching the childish thing, because it pûts money in pnrses. They have been duped, and learnt to—dupe. "On commence par être dupe et finit par être fripon."

In your able leader, "Is the Bible Inspired?" you quote one of the big blunders of Bible translators, viz.: "And man became a living soul" (*sic*) Genesis ii., 7. The word "soul" does not occur in the vernacular at all. The Hebrew words are "Nepesh Hayah,"—LIVING ANIMAL, or creature; for they occur in Genesis i., 20, 21, 24, as well, and NO distinction is made between man and the lower animals;—all are daubed with the same paint. I have corrected this passage in Luther's version: "Und also ward der Mensch ein lebendiges Thier," striking out "lebendige Seele." The correct English translation runs thus: "And man became a living (breathing) animal (or creature.)"—*Absit omen!* To designate man as a living soul, when the Elohistic writer treats him as an ordinary animal, savors very much of an impudent fraud.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

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Minister: "I understand that you do not believe that a person is sufficiently punished on the earth for his misdeeds." Neighbor: "Oh, yes, I do now; but I didn't until I heard you preach."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Hunt, "The Labor Question" Monday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Forgiveness of Sins."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, "The Sorrows of God."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Some Ancient Views of God."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. Hunt, "We all have a Revelation."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. J. Fagan, "Is the Bible a True Book."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Crucifixion of God."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. E. T. Garner, "Life's best Guide: Christianity or Secularism?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "God and his Book."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Miracles and Prayer. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Holy Matrimony." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Bible a Good Book?"

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "What is a Christian?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian's Creed": 6, a lecture.

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Sinful Saints."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Morality of the Messiah."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite Arsenal gates) at 6.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 11, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Should Parliament Regulate the Hours of Labor?"; 3 (Town Hall), "The Gospel of Death and the Gospel of Life"; 7 (Baskerville Hall), "Did the Miracles of the New Testament Happen?"

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—Mr. R. Forder, 3, "How I became a Freethinker, and why I remain one"; 7, "Did Jesus ever Live?"

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Lawrence Small, "Right and Wrong."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, all members are requested to attend to consider alteration of rules, etc.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. J. Proctor, "Secularism and Social Progress."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, a meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Excursion of members and friends to Grimsby and Cleethorpes; meet at Victoria Station 8.30, train starts 8.45.

South Shields Branch, Excursion to Holywell Dene; see special notice.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield—Market Place, Mr. J. Greevz Fisher, 3, "Science and Secularism"; 7, "The Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws."

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Lawrence Small, "The Immortality of Bible Teaching." Friends are earnestly requested to support us at these open air lectures.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—August 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 10, Hyde Park; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool—Sept. 7., Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 31 (morning), Kingsland Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell. 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow; 28 (morning), outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning), Hyde Park; 19 (morning), Battersea Park, (evening), Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Aug. 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct 5, Woolwich.

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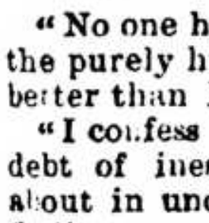

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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BOOTH AND HIS TAIL.

WE had occasion to remark, a few weeks ago, that there were Freethinkers who regarded the Salvation Army as a vulgar copy of the Order of Jesus. Allowing for the difference in doctrine, the Booth organisation is modelled on that of Ignatius Loyola. Even the "social" successes (real or delusive) of the Salvation Army are more than paralleled by those of the Jesuits, who managed to drill anarchic savages into order and decency in several parts of the world. What "the Army" lacks, and is ever likely to lack, is the learning of the Jesuits. Voltaire himself, to say nothing of other great heretics, was educated in one of their schools; and although he afterwards fought their creed with matchless skill, he never failed to praise the superior education they imparted to their pupils.

For a striking proof of our estimate of the Salvation Army, we refer the reader to the "Orders and Regulations" issued by Booth in the form of a penny pamphlet. This singular publication will convince any one open to conviction that the "General" feels he has his cattle well in hand, and can not only drive them where he pleases, but flick them smartly on any part from ears to hoof with his long-reaching whip. His aim is to subject them absolutely to his personal despotism. Every part of their lives is to be regulated. Not only the public but the private—not only the religious, but the political, social and domestic—conduct of his followers is to be rigorously and minutely determined for them. He is to be the head, and they are to be the tail.

First of all, as with the Jesuits, the Army is to be everything to its soldiers. They must court and marry within the ranks. "No soldier," says Booth, "should commence courting with any one who is not already a soldier, or unwilling [he means *willing*] to become one." He goes to the length of dictating: "Should a soldier become engaged to an officer who afterwards gives up or forfeits his or her commission, the soldier would be justified in breaking off the engagement." Personal honor and plighted troth are to be trampled under foot for the good of the Army. The dearest affections are to be governed, or even killed, by "orders and regulations." It is evidently the purpose of General Booth to *breed* Salvationists from Salvation fathers and mothers, and he zealously guards against any cross-breeding.

According to the Apostle the faithful are to "salute one another with a holy kiss." But Booth is superior to the inspired writer, and the Bible, like everything else, must give way to his requirements. No Salvationist is to "kiss anyone of the opposite sex unless it is a relative or some person to whom he is engaged." And perhaps the order is a wise one. The General may know the inflammability of his soldiers, and remember the liveliness of the "all-night meetings" they once indulged in. Religious and sexual excitement are very closely related; and a kiss, which to a sober person may be a mere salutation, is apt with others to be the gate of concupiscence. Given a Salvationist all aflame with love for Jesus, and a kiss may send him God knows where.

Salvationists are to wear "wool or merino next the skin all the year round." This is sensible advice, but the soldiers must be very ignorant if they require it. They are also to eat "brown bread and good vegetables" to keep their blood cool, but this is largely nullified by the recommendation of "eggs."

Cardinal Newman, even in his unregenerate Protestant days, preached that the Christian was only a passenger through the world. Booth inculcates the same idea. "Though still living in the world," he says, the Salvationist "is not of it, and he has, in this respect, no more business with its politics—that is, the public management of affairs—than he has with its pleasures." The Salvationist is not a citizen of this world. He is not to trouble his head about its business. But the General has his own notions, and when he wants them carried out he will issue his manifesto, and every soldier is then expected to "act in harmony with the rules and regulations laid down for him by his superior officers."

This charming aspect of the Salvation Army may partially account for its subvention by wealthy Christians. If half-a-million of working people, who might otherwise be Radicals, are to hold aloof from politics except when Booth orders them to vote solid, their support might be very valuable on particular occasions, and meanwhile they are subtracted from the popular side in the great battle between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Every rich Conservative is a fool if he does not send a yearly cheque to General Booth.

The Boothites are told to "surrender themselves to the guidance" of their officers, who are all appointed, shifted, and cashiered by the General. They are bidden to "rely on the wisdom and goodness" of these Booth-appointed officers, and to believe that "they have the Spirit of God, and will only command what is right." That is, Booth has the Spirit of God, and will only command what is right; and as "'tis he himself who says it," who on earth will entertain a doubt?

It appears that the soldiers held meetings for the consideration of business affairs, but this led to "discussions and disputes," and such meetings are henceforth prohibited. "There is no room in the Army," Booth says, "for people who want to vote or argue or get their own way." This is on the face of it despotic, but in Booth's eyes it is "compatible with the largest amount of personal freedom." His soldiers have "the fullest liberty to be good," and the judge of what *is* good is William Booth, who is inspired by "the Spirit of God." This Spirit also inspires him what to do with all the cash.

Lest the Boothites should take to thinking, the wily General prescribes what they should read. They may "read with profit" the following:—"The Bible, *The War Cry*, and our own publications." These contain all the necessary pabulum for Salvationist minds, and as all except the Bible are published by

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Booth they may be "read with profit" to the General as well as his troops.

Such are the "Orders and Regulations" of this pious despotism, as far as they interest outsiders. Booth is more than the Pope of the Salvation Army. The Vicar of Christ at Rome is infallible, but is after all unable to do anything without his Holy Council of cardinals. The Vicar of Christ, whose headquarters are at the back of our own office, is far more potent within his more limited scope. He is absolute. The elective principle is unknown in his Army. He is self-appointed and he appoints everyone else. He holds all the power, all the income, and all the property. Beside him there is none. He is the *head* of the Army in every sense of the word; he thinks for it and wills for it, down to the smallest details of the battle, the bivouac, and the barracks. His followers are his *tail*. They are all wagged, and by keeping his personal clutch on the property he prevents them from wagging *him*. The whole thing is a splendid tribute to his power of organisation. But after all he does not organise independent men and women, and it is comparatively easy to organise *sheep*.

G. W. FOOTE.

SOCRATES AND JESUS.

[CONCLUDED.]

THE great, the essential contrast between Socrates and Christ is that the one character is real, the other ideal.* I do not say that all that is told of the Athenian "cross-examining missionary," as Grote calls him, is true, or that all that is told of the prophet of Nazareth is false. But the records concerning Socrates are untainted with that legendary supernaturalism attributed to Jesus. We know not one brief year out of thirty, but something like thirty years out of double the number. We have, moreover, the witness of adversaries, or at any rate caricaturists, in Aristophanes and other comic writers. It has been doubted how far the merit of the Platonic Dialogues are due to Socrates himself, and how far to Plato. What is certain is that their impulse came from Socrates. The pictures given by Plato and Xenophon of their common master are, in the main, in accordance, differing only as drawings from the same original by two authors radically different in spirit and in character. The Athenian is pictured before us, not as a supernatural wonder-worker, but as a man with human virtues and human frailties. We see the grotesque Silenic features, the snub nose, thick jesting lips, prominent eyes, round stomach, and sturdy frame of the Athenian cross-examiner; we see him shoeless, shirtless and ragged, yet unmistakably a man; we know him as a citizen, a husband, a patriot, a prisoner, a hard drinker, a droll, and a martyr. If we reverence him, it is because we know his defects and reverence him in spite of them. Who can say we have any such portrait of Jesus? The numerous contradictory lives of Christ are sufficient to refute any such contention. On their own showing the gospels give but scanty incidents in the short career of one who is never seen in the essential positions, for an example, of husband and father. Moreover, Xenophon and Plato substantially agree, despite the fact that the former, a man of the world, regards Socrates from the practical side, while Plato, a contemplator, regarded him rather from the theoretic side. Yet both testify from personal knowledge to his contented poverty, his integrity, his good-natured irony, and his unremitting interest for the improvement of man and society, and his serenity and playful equanimity to the last. Xenophon and Plato were extremely diverse authors, while the gospels, although said to be inspired by the same divine being, abound in manifold contradictions.

Jesus in some respects looks superior to Socrates just because he is an ideal. It is evident, for example, from St. Matthew, that the earliest conception of him was as sent "only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To the Syrophœnician woman he says it is not mete the children's bread should be cast to dogs. Yet in the appendix to Mark, added after Christianity had been spread by Paul among the Gentiles, he is idealised and made to say "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Evidently the earlier Jesus was a Jew of the Jews as much as Socrates was a Greek of the Greeks.

Of the Gospel of John it may truly be said "The trail of the serpent is over it all." What critic who has compared the discourses attributed to Jesus in John's Gospel with the Johannine epistles, can for a moment think Jesus ever used such phrases as "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." "Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." "I am the way, the truth and the life." Such phrases bear in themselves a token of being the beliefs of after ages. They are as much inventions as the speeches attributed by Livy to the Roman generals. If Plato Platonised Socrates, still more did the writers of the fourth gospel Johannise Jesus.

The ideal character of Christ is well seen in Justin Martyr, a Christian father, who lived before the compilation of the gospels, and who is the first of many who has drawn a comparison between Socrates and Christ. The tenth chapter of his Second Apology is entitled "Christ compared with Socrates," and he therein distinctly says "that Christ was partially known by Socrates" "for he was and is the *Word* [Logos] who is in every man." Only philosophers could be expected to worship the abstract and ideal Logos, hence it was identified with "the man Christ Jesus," a man of whom strictly speaking nothing whatever is known. If however we take the Gospel narrative of Jesus as having a historic basis, we must allow that the character of Socrates is more natural, more human. The difference between the son of Sophroniscus and the Carpenter's wife's son is the difference between a humorous philosopher and a fanatic.

One word in conclusion. The task of pointing out flaws in a character held in veneration is an ungracious one. It is only because Jesus is set up as an idol and placed on a preposterous pre-eminence above all others, that justice demands a scrutiny of his claims. To single out one man as the sole Savior of the world is to do injustice to all its benefactors. Before him men like Buddha, Confucius, Laotse, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus contributed to the world's welfare. Since his time to many of his own followers, to many too who rejected his claims, humanity owes a deeper debt of gratitude. To place one man, and that a bachelor of whose life so little is known, above all the rest, as a perfect example, is to stultify human morality and sap the springs of self-reliance and progress.

J. M. WHEELER.

* "En un mot, ceux qui nous vacontent Socrates sont des témoins; ceux qui nous parlent de Jésus ne le connaissent pas, ils s'imaginent."—E. Havet, *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, tom. i., p. 168.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's recent papers in the *Freethinker's Magazine*, entitled "What would Follow on the Effacement of Christianity?" has been published in pamphlet form by Mr. H. L. Green, of Buffalo, New York.

The *Guardian* holds that "School Board religion is usually endowed Nonconformity." The *Church Reformer* draws the proper lesson that the remedy is a movement in favor of secular education.

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CLEANNESS OF LIFE.

[CONCLUDED].

A STRONG necessity is laid upon us of the new thought that we should lead clean lives. And I mean by that, in the first place, physical cleanness. I believe profoundly in the bath tub. A daily bath is better than morning prayers. I think that one of the greatest needs of the world to-day is for the preaching of the gospel of water, towels, combs, toothbrushes and shoe-blacking. The moral influence of clean linen is somewhat tremendous. If a man of cleanly habits were attacked by a gang of roughs, he would need no firearms. It would only be necessary for him to open his coat and show a clean shirt front. No ruffian can stand his ground before a white shirt bosom. He fears it more than the Devil dreads holy water.

No matter how much truer certain doctrines may be than others, the world will never accept them at the hands of men and women who do not keep their finger-nails clean. No matter how just the claims of the working people are, they never will be regarded until they are pressed by persons who wear clean collars and blacken their shoes. An unwashed people will always be oppressed by those who overpower them with the mighty moral potency of soap.

If a man is an utter hermit he may be as filthy as he likes, because there is no such thing as right and wrong for a person who lives alone. But it is wicked for one who comes in contact with others, in horse-cars, railroad trains, places of assembly, and above all in home life, not to be clean. The difficulties in the way of personal cleanliness among the poor are very great, but they must be overcome before the industrial world can be redeemed.

But the necessity for cleanness of living in our moral relations is greater. What can be hoped from persons who get drunk. A Secularist and social regenerator is the last person in the world who should disgrace his opinions and his mission in life by allowing it to be said of him that he was under the influence of liquor. Robinson Crusoe had a perfect right to get drunk, if he wished to, before he found Friday; because for a man alone on an island there is no moral code. But a man with a wife and children, friends and neighbors, has no right to drink too much liquor, because he thus fights against the fitness of things; he violates the rights of others, by making himself troublesome and in every way offensive. And now in these struggling days of the new thought that is better than the old, Secularists should feel a peculiar and especial obligation to avoid doing anything that could justly bring Secularism into reproach. It is quite certain that each man must decide for himself how much or how little liquor he will use, because no one else has the right to decide for him and force that decision upon him, but it is equally certain that the inspiration, the wisdom, the good judgment, and self-control that are needed to redeem this world from the horrid dominion of the priest and politician will never be found flowing from the bung-hole of a beer-keg. And the counsel of men whose brains are fuddled with liquor cannot be good. I do not wish anyone who gets drunk to tell people that he agrees with me in opinion, because he does not. If he did he would stay sober. I may pity a person who drinks too much, but if that person calls himself a Freethinker I have a grudge against him as one who stands in the way of progress, whose apostles should be above reproach. A man who abandons the worship of Jehovah only to bow before the shrine of Gambrinus can have no real part nor lot in the great effort for human emancipation that is now going rapidly forward.

So, too, no Secularist should allow it to be said of him that he has not the moral courage to live within his income or that he does not pay his debts; or that he in any way robs his neighbor. Let those who "praise God from whom all blessings flow" and look forward to streets of gold and gates of pearl, be guilty of all the business dishonesty they please, by way of illustrating the purifying influences of religious beliefs. Leave plutocracy to the pious, burglary to the believing and cheating to the churchmen, if they like. If doctrines have any influence on character, the word of a Secularist should be better than the bond of a Christian.

And perhaps more important than all, our home life should be like the odor of flowers on the summer air. The new morality looks with abhorrence upon women who go forth with bags of gold to buy counts and earls and dukes, and despise men who buy women who do not love them. The new moralists believe that marriages contracted for any reason but because the man and woman want each other are against the happiness of the world. They believe that children should grow up in an atmosphere of love, gentleness and politeness. They believe that where love and respect are not, a family in the true sense of the word cannot be. They look upon the immoral and lewd practices of many religious persons and believers in things as they are, with abhorrence. They regard many of the deceptions, brutalities, and humiliations that are put upon wives owing to the slavish position in which the priests and politicians have placed women, as hateful beyond compare. They look upon the home life of many persons who believe they will go to heaven when they die as beneath the contempt of persons with an enlightened idea of right and wrong. They abhor many of the practices of persons who have family prayers, and even of some ministers' practices which do not cost these offenders their place among decent people. They believe in the utmost purity between men and women. And for any Secularist to violate any of these beliefs by personal uncleanness of life in any way is to become an enemy of that desired development of home life that is to make the hearthstone the noblest altar and the family circle the dearest church.

It is difficult to make people understand that the idea of God makes morality impossible, that religion degrades the human race, and that the arbitrary enactments of the Church and State fill every home with a miasma, except in those rare cases where love laughs at enactments; but it is true, and some day people will understand it as they now know their A B C's.

It is difficult to make people understand that when we seek to destroy religious faith we are not trying to destroy restraints meant to keep men from doing wrong, but that we are trying to knock off handcuffs and balls and chains that forbid them to do right. It is difficult to make people understand that when we try to break the authoritative power of the Church and State we are not seeking to make a way for vice to flourish, but to give virtue a chance to grow. But so it is. And the only way we can ever hope to make them understand it is by living in the presence of our neighbors clean and blameless lives.

It is said that Jesus was so good that when they were about to stone him he said to them, "For what wicked work do you stone me?" and they could not answer him. It is said that Garrison's life was so free from blemish that though they called him Infidel and disturber of the peace, no charge of immorality could be brought against him. Would Bruno have a monument to-day if he had been a bad man as well as an unbeliever? These men should be examples for us, and in these days, when saints spend oceans of money to corrupt elections and legislators, when Church members control almost all the monopolies, when grinding employers live and die in faith, when some of the flower of the English Church, as far as influence and position go, are guilty of nameless crimes, when priests and clergy are not always stain-

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less, when burglars are worshippers and murderers are devout, it should not be difficult for us to show that without God and without the fear of hell or the hope of heaven we know how to deal justly and to love mercy, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

It ought to be that if one should say of you, "He is a Secularist and social regenerator," it would be said again: "Is it so? Then mark him well. He is a thinker. You may trust him in business. You may introduce him to your daughter, your sister, your wife. Follow him to his home and you will find it glowing with goodness. He is a clean man."

OMNIPRESENCE.

LISPING Blue-eyes went to church,
For she'd pretty things to wear,
And she listened, as she ought,
While the preacher did declare,
In his most Talmagic style,
"God, our Lord, is everywhere!"

Blue-eyes had a roguish bent,
Sweet and harmless, but she thought,
"I don't want him watching me;
In some mischief I'll be caught,
For nobody's little girl
Can do *always* as she ought."

She was worried, and next day
Sought her mother's sympathy.
"Mamma," said the little one,
"Is God in this room with me?"
"Yes, my dear." "And on the lawn?"
"Yes, in every place there be."

Blue-eyes dropped her flossy head
On her dog in earnest thought.
No philosopher could have been
More provokingly distraught,—
Such a bothering thing to know
Had the preacher's sermon taught

Half in pretty petulance
Out among the flowers she ran.
Dash ran after her, but she stamped,
"Dog, go back, and leave me be!
It is bad enough to know
God is always 'tagging' me!"

—*Freethinker's Magazine.* EMMA ROOD TUTTLE.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, August 27th, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, E. Anderson, Gordon, Heath, Hunt, Killick, Larkin, Reynolds, Roger, Smith, Stranding, Truelove, Warren, J. M. Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. Mr. A. Wheeler attended to represent the Finsbury Branch, but as he had not the authority of the Branch the President ruled that he could not vote. Delegates are requested to note that in the event of their being unable to attend, a written authority from the Branch must be sent with the substitute. The cash atatement showed an increase on the General Fund of £26 7s. 2d., and a decrease in the Benevolent Fund of £10 15s. 6d. A letter was read from Mr. Gorrisen (of Brussels) relating to the appointment of a delegate at Brussels to represent England on the Council of the International Federation of Freethinkers, Mr. James having retired. The further consideration of the sale of the shares presented to the Society by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant or of their transfer to trustees was then proceeded with. Mr. Hunt moved and Mr. Smith seconded that Mr. Foote be requested to interview Mr. Bradlaugh, and report to Executive at their next meeting; carried. Letters were then read by the secretary from nine gentlemen applying for the post of secretary; these were Messrs. S. Standring, C. Griggs, J. Clarke, C. J. Hunt. T. Thurlow, and C Watts of London; C. Naewiger and J. Hart of Hull, and Mr. E. Stanley Jones of Liverpool. Mrs. Thornton Smith moved and Mr. Hunt seconded, that the applications for the secretaryship be remitted to the Organisation Committee, to be dealt with at a special meeting; carried.

ACID DROPS.

The Eastbourne Town Council has decided by a majority of 19 to 9 to prosecute the Salvation Army for "proceshing" and playing a band through the streets on Sunday in violation of the bye-laws. So far as freedom of meeting is involved we should stand up even for the Salvation Army, but we never could understand why these fanatics should be allowed to make as much gratuitous noise as they please in the public streets, especially at a time when the inhabitants want to be quiet. The other afternoon their band could be heard all over Finsbury Park, and as they were playing on the space set aside for public speaking they were simply preventing all other bodies from being heard. This is not freedom, but impudent outrage, and should be put a stop to.

According to the *Christian World*, though probably from a Boothic source, a rich infidel at Jorkum (Holland) was so much taken with a couple of hallelujah lasses, and their primitive Christianity, that he built them a hall for their work there. For our part, we should like a little more precise information. What is the rich infidel's name, what is his address, and in what sense was he an "infidel"?

The recent fire at Tokay destroyed places of worship with great impartiality. Catholics, Protestants, and Jews all suffered alike. "Men, women, and children," says the *Daily News*, "rushed about the streets wringing their hands and crying to heaven for help." The only answer was a blast of wind that threw the flames on many of the unfortunates and set fire to their clothes. Let us pray.

The Rev. W. Rose, minister of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Mansfield, died suddenly on Sunday morning. He was attacked with a sudden stroke of paralysis while engaged in prayer on Saturday. A curious answer to prayer from an all-loving Father.

In Turkey the liquor selling shops are known as "Christian drinking places." No self-respecting Mohammedan would be seen in a Christian drinking place.

George Shortland died at 180 Moselle Avenue amid an odor of sanctity and a good deal of dirt. He was found lying on the hearth an emaciated corpse black for the want of washing. A small parcel and a book were found tied round his neck; in the centre of the parcel, consisting of rags and brown paper, money to the value of about a couple of pounds was found. Texts and religious books were about the place, "but cleanliness wasn't next to godliness in this case (says the *Star*) for the house was so filthy that it took a deal of disinfecting." Perhaps George Shortland is now reposing in Abraham's bosom.

The *Ironclad Age* gives an account of the American Messiah, George Jacob Schweinfurth. Schweinfurth was a Methodist minister until several years ago, when he made the discovery that he was the veritable Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, returned to earth after an absence of upwards of eighteen hundred years to look after his followers. Christ Schweinfurth has a number of believers, especially among the women. He is a genteel-looking blonde of about forty, and has a palatial residence some six miles south of Rockford, Illinois. Here he is surrounded by a number of wingless angels, who minister unto him, and a few males, who, says the *I. A.*, "it is greatly to be deplored have not become eunuchs." In consequence of various virgins who have visited the Christ becoming mothers, the Rev. Mr. Condie, a fanatical Presbyterian, called a religious meeting at Rockford, where it was proposed that Christ Schweinfurth should be treated according to the directions in Matt. xix., 12.

Our heavenly Father is still in his tantrums. He blights the potatoes in Ireland, and threatens the harvest in Hungary. Floods submerging villas, destroying bridges, and stopping trains are among his other little eccentricities.

God's mercies are manifold. A new form of influenza is spreading on the Continent. This latest development comes with a swollen tongue, covered with blisters, which fester. The suffering they cause is extreme, and eating, drinking, or speaking is very painful, if not impossible.

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Helsingfors, Finland, has been visited with a terrible hurricane. Many houses have been demolished and bridges swept away. Is this on account of Freethought, which we know is spreading in Finland?

The following has just come to our notice. Some time ago, Mr. H. L. Hastings, the Yankee infidel-slayer, was lecturing at Leicester, and in the course of a rambling speech he remarked that Freethinkers were all ill-looking. This silly observation induced a very wholesome-looking Freethinker to get up and ask the audience if he was any worse-looking than Mr. Hastings; and the contrast was so great, that the Christians themselves laughed at the lecturer's expense. Mr. Hastings tried to extricate himself by saying "Oh, there are exceptions to every rule; this gentleman has been picked out by the infidels and sent here on purpose." Thereupon another very good-looking Freethinker jumped up and exclaimed "But what about me?" It was really too funny, and the whole audience, including the Christians, roared again with laughter.

"Mr. Bradlaugh," said the *Daily News* on Monday, "was excluded from a House which contained dozens of notorious Freethinkers." We are glad to note the admission. It is better late than never. Every honest man now sees that the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh was a disgusting exhibition of authority.

Mr. William Rossiter, who debated with Mr. Foote, is once more on the war path. On Sunday evening he lectured at 207 Camberwell Road on "Gladstone and Genesis." We believe his object was to address Secularists, but we have not heard of any converts. Mr. Rossiter is a well-meaning man, though of egotistical temper, and we fully appreciate his efforts in connexion with the South London Art Gallery; but we are quite unable to understand why his friends do not remonstrate against his ludicrous defence of Bible Christianity.

Newman's "Lead kindly Light" is a beautiful hymn, and the "heretics," as Rome calls them, are boasting that it was written while he was a Protestant. But if they examine it a little more closely they will find that the hymn is neither Catholic nor Protestant. It contains absolutely nothing which is distinctively Christian, and might have been written by a Theist; indeed, except for the line about "angel faces," it might almost have been written by an Atheist. True poety is always *human*, transcending all sectional differences of creed.

Who wishes to join the literary world, through the medium of a religious weekly? One of the choicest "ads" I have seen for a long while, I have just cut out from a religious organ, published in an Australian capital. Knowing what a number of "good young men" there are on the Barrier field, I reprint it for their benefit. It appeared under the heading of "Wanted," and is as follows:—"A godly young man to assist in the increasing clerical work of the office. One to whom salary will not be the first consideration, but who will seek the advancement of the Savior's kingdom. Accommodation and small salary." It's a fortunate thing the office of the paper which issued this magnanimous offer was not located in Adelaide, or there would have been such a rush of applicants as to render it impossible to get near it. The contents of so-called religious papers are, as a rule, of the most 'wishy-washy' character, but after this exposé, is it to be wondered at?"—*The Silver Age* (Broken Hill, Australia).

The Northern Miner, a smart South African paper, is severe on "Mr. Missionary Stewart" who tried to stop a balloon on Sunday. It declares that such an exhibition of the triumphs of science would be more edifying than "listening to a sky-pilot hashing up the Queen's English, and keeping one's mind morbid and melancholy by the everlasting parading in our eyes the fact that we shall some day be turned to (h)ashes and dust."

It appears that New Orleans is the only city in the United States which makes no distinction between Sunday and other days of the week in opening its public parks, gymnasiums, etc. Washington and Richmond furnish no means of recreation, and permit no amusements whatever in their parks on Sunday

The New York *Sun* says the Sunday closing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art is more and more of a farce, for there is a constant increase in the number of Sunday passes issued to artists and their friends.

Mr. A. B. Curtis uses a column and a half of *Unity* to explain "why men do not believe the Bible to-day." He might have cut his essay short by writing that men do not believe the Bible because they have found that its statements are untrue.—*Truthseeker*.

Judge North seems to have a relative out in South Africa. According to the Johannesburg *Star*, Mr. Justice Turnbull in sentencing Peter O'Neil, a soldier, to two years' imprisonment for stabbing a constable, remarks that O'Niel was evidently instigated by the Devil. Surely the Devil ought to have shared in the punishment.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," said Jesus Christ. Eighteen hundred and sixty years have elapsed, and according to the *Christian Commonwealth* "not one in 10,000" of the Chinese "ever heard of the religion of Jesus Christ." No wonder that Mr. Gore, the editor of *Lux Mundi*, talks about "the gradualness of God's methods."

By the way, the *Christian Commonwealth* should try to be consistent, or at least not to contradict itself flatly in a single number. On one page it tells how the Chinese despise and degrade women, and on another it tells of Lin, the Governor of Chinese Turkestan, who begs the Emperor to relieve him of his official duties (and the salary too, of course), in order that he may go home and give his undivided attention to the care of his aged grandmother. The *C. C.* is bound to admit that the Heathen Chinee "in some respects at least in no wise suffer by comparison with so-called Christian lands." By the way, again, that "so-called" is simply delicious.

By some mistake, or perhaps by some subtle irony, the vicar of Sedgley, near Wolverhampton, has been giving his parishioners vinegar instead of wine in the Holy Communion. The communicants, it seems, were much disgusted at finding their blessed Savior had turned so sour. If the Lord's Supper had actually been dry bread and vinegar it would have made a good test of devotion to those who present themselves at the Lord's table.

Dr. Maclagan, Bishop of Lichfield, endeavors to promote Christian Reunion by inviting one hundred Nonconformist ministers to partake of Michaelmas goose with him. Perhaps he hopes the geese may save the Church Establishment as they once saved Rome. But the Dissenters who do not dine with him will hardly be brought any nearer to Christian Reunion.

It is said the views of Archbishop Benson on the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln are contested by the Bishop of London, but supported by the Bishop of Oxford and Salisbury. This seems to indicate it will show High Church leanings.

There are many arguments against the legal eight hours, but the *Church Times* must take the cake for discovering the decisive one. It is this—the same cook would then no longer be able to prepare her master's breakfast at 9 and his dinner at 7 o'clock. After this all agitation must cease.

England is a Christian country, and you are liable to twelve months' imprisonment for bringing Christianity into "disbelief and contempt." But for the same amount of punishment you may half kill a dozen persons, especially if they happen to be women. Mr. Bros, the North London magistrate, a few days ago sentenced George Boyce to a fine of forty shillings or a month for an aggravated assault on Elizabeth Ankers, a woman with whom he was living. This gentleman's supper was not ready when he came home, and he proceeded to teach her a lesson. He punched her face, kicked her about the body, and finally beat her with a poker. Had not the police come to her assistance the poor creature might have been killed. She had twenty-nine bruises on her body, and she was exhausted from loss of blood, the bed being quite saturated. The worthy magistrate, himself a man and a Christian, had so much

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sympathy with the assaulter that he made allowance for "provocation." and inflicted a trifling penalty; and surely no one, after this, will be able to deny that Christianity is the friend of woman.

The *St. Pancras Guardian* waxes facetious, cruelly facetious, over the vicar of Camden Town parish church, who had an "up-and-downer" with his churchwarden, Mr. Vears. The vicar began the Homeric combat but was miserably defeated. Even this does not fill the church, for one morning last week the reverend gentleman had a congregation of *one*.

Mr. E. B. Lanin has a paper in this month's *Fortnightly Review* on "Sexual Morality in Russia." If Mr. Lanin's view is correct the subject might be treated as briefly as the famous chapter "On Snakes in Ireland," and simply record "There is no sexual morality in Russia." Yet that country is pre-eminently pious and Christian.

The Rev. A. Sayce, writing in the *Contemporary Review* on Excavations in Judæa, corroborates an opinion recently expressed in the *Freethinker*. He says: "The recurrence of an ancient name in the mouths of the modern inhabitants of Palestine by no means inplies that the place to which it is given is the representative of an ancient locality of the same name."

At an International Congress at Rome, the Academy of Bologna will propose Jerusalem as the universal meridian from which longitude shall be calculated in order that all nations shall have a common hour. As, however, England and America are the most maritime nations, and they are content with Greenwich, it is doubtful if the proposition will take effect. Many people think we have taken our time from Jerusalem too much already.

"May you never die!" said Annie Mooney to Mr. Marsham, the Southwark magistrate, as he discharged her from the dock. But we should hardly think the worthy "beak" would like the wish to be realised. The Wandering Jew is said to have had enough of that blessing, and "never" is a good deal longer than eighteen hundred years.

Superstition dies hard. Here is the *Young People's Weekly* writing up the Bible giants, and pointing out that the grave of Abel, near Damascus, is thirty feet long, and that of Noah seventy yards. But why not add that Noah's tomb is really the remnant of an old aqueduct? Instead of lending any support to Bible mythology, this bogus tomb of Noah might furnish materials for a picture of Christian superstition maundering over the relics of ancient science, which it had neither the genius to equal nor even the sense to understand.

The *West Sussex Gazette* had the following all very fine and large on its placard—"Violent death of an Atheist." According to its report, John Henry Dixon a retired optician 65 years of age, hung himself at Shalford. Nothing seems to have been disclosed at the inquest as to his religious opinions, but the reporter volunteers the information that the deceased "was never slow in pronouncing himself an unyielding Atheist." We print the statement for what it is worth But why does the *Gazette* come out with "Violent Death of an Atheist?" Why not come out in other cases with "Violent death of a Christian?" Probably for two reasons; first, because Atheists and Christians are not treated alike; secondly, because the suicide of a Christian is too common to excite attention.

A writer in last Tuesday's *Times* describes the "sport" of pigeon-shooting as practised in Christian England. Birds are let out of traps by a string, and immediately peppered with small shots, spreading out like a fan, and bound to maim or kill. The writer says "It was seldom that a bird was killed at the first shot." Many of the poor birds escape to a lingering death. The "gentlemen" who call this revolting cruelty "sport" would probably show much indignation if the orthodoxy of their Christianity was called in question.

Major von Wissman has published a pamphlet to substantiate his contention that Catholic missionaries do more effective work in Africa than Protestants. He says the Scotch missionaries at Lake Nyassa act as political agents to advance British interests at the expense of Germany and Portugal.

According to *Vanity Fair* a disconsolate widow threatened to bring an action for defamation of character against an editor who in writing an obituary notice of her late husband, stated that he had "gone to a happier home."

Preaching at Sunderland Dr. Parker, according to the report in the *Newcastle Chronicle*, said addressing Agnostics: "You acknowledge that the universe must have had a maker or a making; and you say you do not know who made it." Surely Dr. Parker knows that Atheists at any rate do not acknowledge that the universe must have had a maker. On the contrary they cannot conceive of anything outside and beyond "the universe." Something in addition to All is a contradiction in terms.

Dr. Joseph Parker, who is staying at Sunderland, has been interviewed by a correspondent of the *Newcastle Leader*. Asked if he thought there was such a thing as orthodoxy, he said, "I do, but I do not believe we have yet found it." Pretty good after 1800 years of Christianity.

Dr. Parker said one sensible thing. He remarked that "I consider that 200 preachers would be an abundant supply for England." No doubt he would expect to be one of the 200.

Dr. Parker also thinks the pulpit is dying of cowardice. There we differ. When the ordinary sky-pilot gets up and pours out his prosy incapacity with a solemn, superior air, he shows tremendous courage, though some people, perhaps, would give it a different name.

According to a writer in the *Star*, the vicar of Laindon in Essex, has a nice billet. The living is worth £800 a year, and he treats the parishioners to a morning service every other Sunday.

MacPherson's goat is dead. He lived at Findhorn N.B., and was a terror to the place, but he enjoyed a certain respect, or rather immunity, on account of his belonging to the Free Kirk minister. But one day he butted a retired New Zealand merchant, who drew his shooting iron and laid his aggressor low. MacPherson prosecuted on behalf of his pet, but the court found it a case of justifiable goaticide. Puir MacPherson! What is the world coming to when a man of God may not so much as keep a goat to butt his neighbors?

What on earth has Lord Halsbury, late Sir Hardinge Giffard, ever done in the world except badgering Mr. Bradlaugh and sending Mr. Foote to prison? Why, he has done this. He has climbed to the woolsack, where he sits and is paid £10,000 a year, with a prospect of a £5,000 pension as soon as he is kicked off by a general election. The wily old fellow has feathered his nest beautifully, and now he turns up the whites of his ill-looking eyes at a missionary meeting, and deplores that "the great efforts of the world are directed more to trade and commerce and conquest than to the propagation of those truths which were intended to produce the greatest happiness." Capital! most excellent Lord Chancellor Pecksniff. But why did you plead for right or wrong, just as you were paid, except for cash? How was it you did not go into the pulpit? At this question we can fancy we see the old lawyer's wintry face all a-grin, the smile playing on it like moonlight on a muddy pool.

"E. S.," who hails from 5 Charlotte Street, Edgbaston, protests in the Birmingham *Daily Post* against the Town Hall being "desecrated" by Mr. Foote's "infidel" lecture. This indignant gentleman insinuates that the lecture was a surprise, but what kind of a lecture did he expect from a Freethought leader? Certainly Mr. Foote advocated the Gospel of Secularism, but we defy any one to indicate a single sentence in his discourse which could (in itself) be regarded as offensive to his opponents. The concluding remark of "E. S.," that Mr. Foote is a "stranger" and "contributes nothing to the maintenance" of the Town Hall is beneath contempt. The Society he lectured for are ratepayers, and so (directly or indirectly) were the audience.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 7, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town; at 7.30, "A World Without God."

September 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.
October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

V. V.—Glad to hear the *Freethinker* has readers in the "loyal" borough of Kingston-on-Thames.

C. H. KELF.—We find room for the Federation acknowledgments of subscriptions, but it is impossible to do so for all the individual Branches.

ICONOCLAST.—Thanks for the cuttings.

A. M.—There will be a chapter on Christianity and Slavery in the next volume of *Crimes of Christianity*. Both Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler have written on the subject in this journal.

F. WESTERN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. GEE.—Glad to hear of continued success at Woolwich. Continue the present policy. Keep cool, and leave all intemperance to the bigots.

S. CREWS.—Our view is unchanged. The intervention of a third person in such a case is unnecessary. We don't deny your right to an opinion. The point at issue is the use of our space.

J. ROBINSON, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunniside, Tow Law, Durham, R.S.O., says the meeting called there to-day (Sept. 7) to form a Branch of the N.S.S. will take place at 6 p.m. The hour was previously omitted.

W. J. LEWIS.—Bell and Daldy, York Street, Covent Garden. A new and cheaper edition is now announced, beginning with Rossetti's *Blake*. Mr. Foote will doubtless be visiting Cardiff again. We should like to see a good Branch at Swansea.

H. RICHARDSON, 43 Seaton Street, King's Road, Chelsea, will distribute any Freethought literature sent him for that purpose.

M. CAMPBELL.—Hardly up to the mark.

J. G. FISHER.—Thanks for the explanation, but the wording of the bill is certainly unfortunate.

T. RYAN.—Sorry you found the vermin so irritating. Like you, we think it is a great pity that the Vegetarian Rooms at Portsmouth are not open on Sunday. Even divine worship must be unsatisfactory on a craving stomach.

S. STAUGHTON.—It is rather late for a report of what happened on August 17.

J. D.—See "Acid Drops."

REX REGES.—Jokes are always welcome.

JOHN RICHARDSON.—Mr. Wheeler's statement that Socrates gave us the word philosophy is taken from M. Ernest Havet. It is quite possible the word philosopher was used before this by Pythagoras, but we have none of his writings, and those which are extant of Pythagoreans are later than the time of Socrates.

A. J. FIELD.—As President of the N. S. S. Mr. Foote is *bound* to care for the welfare of your Branch. We are glad to receive your excellent report, and we feel convinced that the recent success is chiefly due to your own tact and energy.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CENTRAL FUND.—W. H. Whitney, 2s. 6d.; J. De Lord, 5s.; J. Hicks, 1s.; H. Strong, 6d.; P. Gibson, 2s. 6d.; "Adams," 1s.; T. Campbell, 2s 6d.; Mrs. Holloway, 3s. 6d.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Per V. Rogers, 3s.; Bethnal Green Branch (Victoria Park), 4s. 9d.; ditto, "Salmon and Ball," 1s. 6d., Brighton Branch, 10s.; Ball's Pond Excursion, 4s. 3d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sountags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star——Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—People's Press—Chat—Tocsin—Liberty—Mansfield Reporter—Church Reformer—Johannesburg Star—Marlborough Times—South-Eastern Herald—La Verite—Newcastle Daily Leader—Newcastle Chronicle—Magazine and Book Review—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Sunday Chronicle—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Lancashire Evening Post.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Our next number will contain the first part of an article by Mr. Foote entitled "Gladstone on Moses," dealing with the Liberal leader's latest essay in *Good Words*. We venture to ask as many of our readers as can afford to do so to take extra copies of that number and circulate them among their friends and acquaintances. We shall print a larger edition than usual.

Mr. Foote paid a very successful visit to Birmingham on Sunday. Despite the very fine weather, there was a good audience at Baskerville Hall in the morning, and in the evening the hall was crowded. The afternoon free lecture in the Town Hall was well attended. The floor and the side galleries were fully occupied, and there must have been nearly two thousand persons present. One old lady bustled out when she found the lecture was not an orthodox one, but with this exception the lecture was listened to throughout with great attention and heartily applauded.

Nearly two hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold at Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday, to say nothing of other publications; and as many of these must have found their way into the hands of strangers, we may expect an increase in our circulation at Birmingham.

Before and after the Town Hall lecture, a full band—most, if not all Freethinkers—played some good selections. The chair was taken by the venerable Mr. Daniel Baker, who presided also at Baskerville Hall. At the close of the meeting, a vote of thanks was passed to the Mayor for granting the use of the municipal building.

Freethinkers came over from Dudley, Wolverhampton, and other towns. Some came all the way from Redditch. Mr. Foote had a chat with many of these visitors, and we believe an effort at organisation and propaganda will now be made in several places. A Branch will certainly be started at Wolverhampton, and lectures will be arranged for at Dudley. The Redditch friends are moving forward discreetly. Before commencing more decided operations they are pushing the sale of Freethought literature. Already there are fifty copies of this journal sold weekly there.

North and North-West London Freethinkers are requested to note that Mr. Foote will open the winter course of lectures for the Branch at the Milton Hall. This evening (Sept. 7) he will deliver his new lecture on "A World Without God." On the following Sunday evening his subject will be "Mr. Gladstone on Moses." It is to be hoped that the Freethinkers of the district will attend and bring some of their more orthodox friends, so that the Branch may be encouraged by a good start in reopening the Hall after the summer vacation.

The Secularists are still "holding the fort" in Beresford Square, Woolwich, the bigots being unable to dislodge them by argument, calumny, or violence. We congratulate the Branch on its courage and perseverance.

Mr. Moss lectured at Woolwich on Sunday evening to a very large meeting. His opponents seem to have been of the scurrilous type. Some ruffian flung a large stone at the van, but it passed over the heads of the lecturer and those around him, and fell harmlessly where no one was standing. This was not a civil argument, but it was the strongest employed by the orthodox party.

The South Shields Branch's annual pic-nic to Holywell Dene was a great success. The weather was very fine, and the members of the party were all delighted.

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The Hull Branch held its first annual excursion on Sunday, in conjunction with the Sheffield Secular Society. Cleethorpes was the *rendezvous*, and the party took tea at the Colonnade Dining Rooms. A hearty vote of thanks was given to Messrs. Billany and Naewiger for organising the excursion.

In connection with the West Riding of Yorkshire Freethought Federation two open-air meetings were held last Sunday in Farsley. Considering the various attractions (it being Feast Sunday) in different parts of the village, the gatherings were fairly successful. Two addresses were delivered: that in the afternoon by A. B. Wakefield, of Hipperholme, subject, "The Historic Struggle of Freethought"; the evening's by Mr. Henry Smith, of Farsley (President of the Federation), subject, "Evolution *versus* Devolution." No discussion followed either meeting, but a quantity of Freethought Tracts were distributed by several friends.

We are informed that the West-Riding Freethought Federation intend extending its activity and influence as far as the sands of Morecambe. A resident of that sea-side resort having promised to arrange for two gatherings (at an early date) some Sunday—several well-known provincial speakers will deliver addresses.

On Sunday evening a meeting of several hundred persons in the Market Place, Huddersfield, resolved that the Blasphemy Laws were opposed to religious liberty and should be immediately repealed.

The late Mr. Josiah Gimson, of Leicester, left £100 a year for ten years to the local Secular Society. The last annual payment will be received in 1893, and the Committee are naturally anxious about the future. Mr. T. Allsop, of London, has suggested the raising of £500 by the end of the year, and promised to contribute £100 himself if the remainder be subscribed. Promises to the extent of £280 have already been received, and it is hoped that the full amount will be raised before Christmas. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the honorary secretary, will be glad to hear from all persons who are willing to assist in any degree. Letters will find him at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. It is calculated that the £500 will place the Society in a financially safe and sound position to the end of the century, by which time it may be possible to make a similar or a more permanent provision.

Mr. Heaford's recent lectures at Grimsby has provoked a correspondence in the local *News*. Mr. Wittering and "Homo" well reply to Mr. Heaford's assailants.

The Finsbury Park Branch, notwithstanding the occasional rowdyism of its Christian opponents, is making good progress. Lectures are now delivered in the park in the morning as well as in the afternoon. Mr. Teleman-Garner had a very large audience on Sunday, and in consequence of his special appeal a few persons joined the Branch on the spot.

Mr. A. J. Field, the energetic Finsbury Park secretary, has been endeavoring to obtain a room for indoor meetings during winter. Up to the present time he has met with no success. Proprietors of rooms will have nothing to do with such "wicked" people as Secularists. Apparently the only resource will be to buy out the Young Men's Christian Association.

By an order of the London Secular Federation the lecture notices of all the Branches will be sent to the weekly papers (not including the Freethought journals) by Mr. Pownceby, the Federation secretary. As he will use the monthly programme for this purpose, the secretaries of Branches should give him due notice of any change in their lecture lists.

In the French Chamber of Deputies, M. Forcioli has brought forward a bill modifying the French form of oath. M. Forcioli proposes to emit the words "Before God and before men," and substitute "On my honor and conscience I swear." He also proposes that all religious emblems shall be removed from the tribunals.

The heartsease or pansy (French, "La pensée") is used in France as the symbol of Freethought. It was used as the sign of reunion at the International Conference at Paris last September. We see from *La Vérité* that it will be proposed to the International Federation of Freethinkers, by the French Federation, that this flower shall become the universal emblem of Freethought.

Captain Otto Thomson, in sending a vote of thanks from the annual meeting of the Utilistiska Samfundet, desires us to thank all the English Freethinkers who have helped to sustain the cause in Sweden. We can assure Captain Thomson we are always proud and happy to be of assistance to Freethought comrades in any part of the world.

We see from the *Fritankaren* that Mr. Victor E. Lennstrand is once more actively resuming work, and has been engaged in a debate with a Christian named Loftman. We trust his health is now established beyond all danger of a relapse.

Open Court of Aug. 21 has a discussion on "Monism" between Dr. E. Montgomery and Paul Carus, the editor.

R. C. D'Ablaing van Giessenburg, an eminent Dutch Freethinker, has issued the first volume of a large work in three volumes, entitled, *De L'Evolution des Idées Religieuses dans la Palestine.* We have seen the first part in the hands of a Dutch friend, and it is of a nature to make us wish to see the whole.

A Buddhist Catechism by Subharda Bhikshu has been published by Trubner.

The call for the Convention of Secularists of Canada at Toronto, Sept. 13 and 14, states that: "During the past year the efforts of Mr. Charles Watts in lecturing have produced marked results, and have occasioned the manifestation of a growing interest in Rationalism in many places. The government censorship has been defeated, and Paine's *Age of Reason* has been imported into the country where it was lately prohibited. An Oaths Bill has been prepared, which has fair prospects of being passed at the next session of the dominion Parliament. By this measure oath or affirmation will be optional with the person testifying, and all official inquiry into religious opinions will be prohibited. Canada will thus be made the freest country in the world as to tolerance."

Readers of the September *Fortnightly* will turn first of all to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's article on "Human Selection." Dr. Wallace holds that in the future the superiority in numbers of males at birth will not be diminished, as formerly, by war and accident, but continue throughout life. This will greatly increase the influence of women in the improvement of the race. Being a minority instead of, as in the past, redundant, they will be sought for and have a real choice in marriage, which, as the silly season correspondence on "Matrimonial Agencies" in the *Daily Telegraph* shows, is too rarely the case now.

Professor Dowden gives, in the *Fortnightly Review* for September, an interesting account of "Goethe's Last Days," with an hitherto unpublished letter. It appears that the famous last words, "Light! more light!" were really "Raise the bed-room blinds so that more light may enter." As explained in *Infidel Death-Beds*, the great poet's demand was purely physical.

Curiously enough *Macmillan* for September also has an article on the "Last Days of Heine," translated from the German of Dr. G. Karpeles. After lying eight years on his mattress grave, it is little wonder that the exhausted poet's mind returned to the creed of his youth. He said, "I am a poor Jew, sick unto death," and when it was told him he was said to have returned to Judaism, he said, "I make no secret of my Jewish proclivities, to which I have not returned, simply because I have never renounced them." One of his last sayings—"Dieu me pardonnera—c'est son métier" (God will pardon me—it is his trade)—showed he retained till the end some spice of profanity.

Prince Kropotkin contributes to the September number of the *Nineteenth Century*, a paper on Mutual Aid Among Animals, of which he gives numerous instances among bees, ants, and birds. He contends that mutual aid is no less a law of nature than mutual struggle.

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Mr. Judge, one of the business committee elected by the Trade Congress, used to deliver Freethought lectures in Leeds and elsewhere. We knew him pretty intimately at one time, but we have not met him of late. We understand, however, that his religious views are unchanged. We are also informed that the secretary of the N. S. S. Branch at Liverpool is a delegate to the Congress. One of the two delegates of the London Compositors is Mr. Marks, the foreman of Mr. Bradlaugh's printing-office.

The National Secular Society's Benevolent Fund has been considerably drained of late, and there are sure to be heavier demands during the approaching winter. We therefore venture to call the attention of Freethinkers to this Fund, in the hope that it will be liberally supported. Subscriptions should be forwarded as early as possible to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, or to the Editor of the *Freethinker*. All sums will be acknowledged in these columns.

Our reprint of Shelley's *A Refutation of Deism* is now ready. Mr. Foote provides a brief Introduction, containing all that is necessary for the ordinary reader's information. Every admirer of Shelley—and what Freethinker does not admire him?—will be glad to have a copy of this remarkable pamphlet. The young poet of *Queen Mab* handles the speakers in the Dialogue very adroitly. The Deist demolishes the Christian, and the Christian demolishes the Deist. Indeed it is remarked by Mr. J. C. Jeafferson that the pamphlet should have been entitled "A Dialogue for the Fuller Demonstration of the Necessity of Atheism." This week's *Freethinker* contains an extract from the Christian's assault on Deism. The Deist's assault on Christianity is, if possible, still more vigorous and incisive.

Two fresh numbers of "Bible Romances" are now ready—*The Tower of Babel* and *Lot's Wife*. Both have been much altered and largely rewritten.

SHELLEY ON DESIGN.

DESIGN must be proved before a designer can be inferred The matter in controversy is the existence of design in the Universe, and it is not permitted to assume the contested premises and thence infer the matter in dispute. Insidiously to employ the words contrivance, design and adaptation before these circumstances are made apparent in the Universe, thence justly inferring a contriver, is a popular sophism against which it behoves us to be watchful.

To assert that motion is an attribute of mind, that matter is inert, that every combination is the result of intelligence, is also an assumption of the matter in dispute.

Why do we admit design in any machine of human contrivance? Simply because innumerable instances of machines having been contrived by human art are present to our mind, because we are acquainted with persons who could construct such machines; but if, having no previous knowledge of any artificial contrivance, we had accidentally found a watch upon the ground, we should have been justified in concluding that it was a thing of Nature, that it was a combination of matter with whose cause we were unacquainted, and that any attempt to account for the origin of its existence would be equally presumptuous and unsatisfactory.

The analogy which you attempt to establish between the contrivances of human art and the various existences of the Universe, is inadmissible. We attribute these effects to human intelligence, because we know beforehand that human intelligence is capable of producing them. Take away this knowledge, and the grounds of our reasoning will be destroyed. Our entire ignorance, therefore, of the Divine Nature leaves this analogy defective in its most essential point of comparison.

What consideration remains to be urged in support of the creation of the Universe by a supreme Being? Its admirable fitness for the production of certain effects, that wonderful consent of all its parts, that universal harmony by whose changeless laws innumerable systems of worlds perform their stated revolutions, and the blood is driven through the veins of the minutest animalcule that sports in the corruption of an insect's lymph: on this account did the Universe require an intelligent Creator, because it exists producing invariable effects, and inasmuch as it is admirably organised for the production of these effects, so the more did it require a creative intelligence.

Thus have we arrived at the substance of your assertion, "That whatever exists, producing certain effects, stands in need of a Creator, and the more conspicuous is its fitness for the production of these effects, the more certain will be our conclusion that it would not have existed from eternity, but must have derived its origin from an intelligent Creator."

In what respect, then, do these arguments apply to the Universe, and not apply to God? From the fitness of the Universe to its end you infer the necessity of an intelligent Creator. But if the fitness of the Universe to produce certain effects be thus conspicuous and evident, how much more exquisite fitness to his end must exist in the Author of this Universe? If we find great difficulty from its admirable arrangement in conceiving that the Universe has existed from all eternity, and to resolve this difficulty suppose a Creator, how much more clearly must we perceive the necessity of this very Creator's creation whose perfections comprehend an arrangement far more accurate and just.

The belief of an infinity of creative and created gods, each more eminently requiring an intelligent author of his being than the foregoing, is a direct consequence of the premises which you have stated. The assumption that the Universe is a design leads to a conclusion that there are [an] infinity of creative and created gods, which is absurd. It is impossible indeed to prescribe limits to learned error, when philosophy relinquishes experience and feeling for speculation.

Until it is clearly proved that the Universe was created, we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is less incomprehensible: it is easier to suppose that the Universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive an eternal being capable of creating it. If the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

A man knows, not only that he now is, but that there was a time when he did not exist; consequently there must have been a cause. But we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. There certainly is a generative power which is effected by particular instruments; we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments, nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration. We admit that the generative power is incomprehensible, but to suppose that the same effects are produced by an eternal Omnipotent and Omniscient Being, leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible. . . . . .

We can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. An infinite number of effects demand an infinite number of causes, nor is the philosopher justified in supposing a greater connection or unity in the latter than is perceptible in the former. The same energy cannot be at once the cause of the serpent and the sheep; of the blight by which the harvest is destroyed, and the sunshine by which it is matured; of the ferocious propensities by which man becomes a victim to himself, and of the accurate judgment by which his institutions are improved. The spirit of our accurate and exact philosophy is outraged by conclusions which contradict each other so glaringly.

You assert that the construction of the animal machine, the fitness of certain animals to certain situations, the connection between the organs of perception and that which is perceived; the relation between everything which exists, and that which tends to preserve it in its existence, imply design. It is manifest that if the eye could not see, nor the stomach digest, the human frame could not preserve its present mode of existence. It is equally certain, however, that the elements of its composition, if they did not exist in one form, must exist in another; and that the combinations which they would form, must so long as they endured, derive support for their peculiar mode of being from their fitness to the circumstances of their situation.

It by no means follows that because a being exists, performing certain functions, he was fitted by another being to the performance of these functions. So rash a conclusion would conduct, as I have before shown, to an absurdity; and it becomes infinitely more unwarrantable from the consideration that the known laws of matter and motion, suffice to unravel, even in the present imperfect state of moral and physical science, the majority of those difficulties which the hypothesis of a Deity was invented to explain.

Doubtless no disposition of inert matter, or matter deprived of qualities, could ever have composed an animal, a tree, or even a stone. But matter deprived of qualities, is an abstraction, concerning which it is impossible to form an idea. Matter, such as we behold it, is not inert. It is infinitely

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active and subtile. Light, electricity and magnetism are fluids not surpassed by thought itself in tenuity and activity: like thought they are sometimes the cause and sometimes the effect of motion; and, distinct as they are from every other class of substances with which we are acquainted, seem to possess equal claims with thought to the unmeaning distinction of immateriality.

The laws of motion and the properties of matter suffice to account for every phenomena or combination of phenomena exhibited in the Universe. That certain animals exist in certain climates, results from the consentaneity of their frames to the circumstances of their situation: let these circumstances be altered to a sufficient degree, and the elements of their composition must exist in some new combination no less resulting than the former from those inevitable laws by which the Universe is governed.

—*From Shelley's "Refutation of Deism."*

PROPHETS AND PROFIT.

Now this prophet is unlike Daniel or Jeremiah in several ways, but we will only mention one. Prophet Baxter earns £7,000 a year; we have seen no record that Daniel or Jeremiah earned such a respectable sum. Mr. Baxter is owner and editor of a very valuable property in the shape of two newspapers. They are newspapers that pay him well, and it is not difficult to see why they pay. Applying his imagination to dark and ambiguous passages of Holy Scripture, he foretells and fixes the date for terrible events. His lucubrations are read by hundreds of thousands, who are thrilled by painful pictures of trouble to come; and the newspapers in which these prophecies are written are a good investment. People like to be frightened. They have read these melancholy and mystic manifestoes to such purpose that the newspapers which bear them to the world are certified by respectable accountants to earn more than £7,000 a year!

Wondrous to say, Mr. Baxter seems to have an inclination to dwell on debentures and interest. The public have been invited by advertisement to purchase these prophetic papers. Mr. Baxter is to be chairman of a limited company, and is to receive £25,000 in cash and £66,000 in shares for the commercial value of his comments on Holy Writ. The £25 seven per cent. debentures are highly recommended. After all his talk Mr. Baxter has a keen eye to business. One would think he would be satisfied with £7,000 a year for the five or six years during which he is to remain on earth. But the pen which has drawn such fearful pictures is equally good in drafting a prospectus. Mr. Baxter proposes to hold on to the editor's chair until January 1, 1896, but asks no salary. This £25,000 cash and £66,000 in shares will keep him until that date, when he will be free to join the other 143,999 living Christians who are to ascend later in the year. Will not quite a number of these be subscribers to the paper, the debentures of which are to be repaid on June 24 1897, a year after the holders will have disappeared? Mr. Baxter sells his paper on the eve of an era of chaos, in which money can be of no service. Let those who are bewitched by him ponder these things.—*Christian Commonwealth.*

OBITUARY.—We regret to notice the death at the advanced age of 73 of Mr. Wathen Mark Wilks Call. Mr. Call was for ten years (1847-57) a clergyman of the Church of England, but he thought himself out of the Christian Creed and resigned his position. He became a regular contributor to the *Westminster Review*, doing the notices of theological books as well as contributing many articles of a most advanced character. Mr. Call was a decided Freethinker, inclining to the Positivist school. In addition to numerous essays he has left two volumes of poems entitled *Reverberations* and *Golden Histories*, and was engaged up till the last on a book on *Final Causes*.

Sunday-school teacher: "I have brought you some odd sayings of the children in my class. I thought perhaps you'd like to print them." Religious editor (looking them over): "They are hardly blasphemous enough to be funny."

Mr. Kirke Depew (Sunday morning): "I see the Rev. Mr. Alban Cope is going to preach at our church this morning." Mrs. Depew: "Why, isn't he awfully High Church?" Mr. Depew: "Awfully. He carries his ritualistic notions so far, that he wears stained glass spectacles."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr J. Hunt "Design in Nature."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation." Monday, at 8, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 9, meeting of members to form a committee for two debates in a hall.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christ and Civilisation."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Bible as a Guide in History."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Milton Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr G. W. Foote, "A World Without God."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Eternal Torment."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Christ: Was he God, Man, or Myth?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Heaford, "What must I Do to be Saved?"

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. Standring, "Christ's Followers."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christ and Christianity."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 11 15, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Exodus"; 3.30. Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 6.30, Mr. A B. Moss, "Inspired Nonsense."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Prayer." Monday, at 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Who or What is God?" Wednesday, at 3, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Creed of a Man." Thursday, at 8, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Veracity."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. M. Smith, "God so Loved the World."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "The Jews in Egypt."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Doctrine of the Atonement"; 6, Mr. C. Cohen, "Morality"

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Evolution."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 5, tea; 7, entertainment for the benefit of Piano Fund.

Bradford—Laycock's Temperence Hotel, Kirkgate, meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, an important business meeting, all members requested to attend.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, "Reply to Mr. Anyan's Law, by which we have storm earthquake, pain and death."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30 (and Wednesday, at 7.30), general meeting of Sunday Music League.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A. R. Atkey, "The History of Religion in England I."

Plymouth — 100 Union Street, 7, an adjourned debate on Hugh O. Pentecost's Article. Subscriptions now due.

Portsmouth - Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. G. Pinhorne, "An Hour in Utopia."

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street. — Music and recitations by several friends.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 7 (morning) Pimlico, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 10, Hyde Park; 14 (morning) Bethnal Green, (afternoon) Victoria Park; 21 (morning) Midland Arches, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Sept. 7, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Sept. 14 (morning) Camberwell 21 (morning out-door and evening in the hall) Plaistow; 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening) Woolwich; 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 19, Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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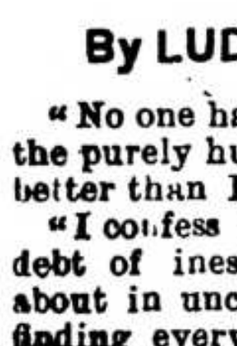

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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GLADSTONE ON MOSES.

MR. GLADSTONE's article in the September number of *Good Words* on "The Mosaic Legislation" is a dreary performance. All its substance might have been expressed clearly and fully in a couple of pages; but to fill his space and earn his cheque, or else to gratify his inordinate love of verbiage, he spins out his material to the edge of garrulity. This may be considered a hard criticism, and we shall therefore justify it by a single illustration. Mr. Gladstone takes all the following lines to state a simple truth.

> "In the year 1853, it was my duty for the first time to submit to Parliament one of the large and complex statements of the public accounts for the year, which are associated in our country with the familiar name of Budgets. The speeches, in which these statements were contained, were made known to the country by reporting in the usual manner. But the art of the reporters could not be trusted to convey the figures with accuracy by the ear, and a practice had consequently grown up of supplying them from the official source in carefully written statements for their guidance, which were sent to them during the delivery of the speech. It has now been found more convenient not to trust at all to the ear, and the minister is understood to speak from printed figures."

Now all this rigmarole only means that it is difficult to report a lot of figures accurately, and that a reporter who knows his business will get hold of a written or printed statement. And the cream of the joke is that this rigmarole has absolutely no bearing on any part of Mr. Gladstone's argument; for, if the figures of the Pentateuch are wrong, it cannot be contended that the writer's *ear* deceived him; in fact, if errors crept in while the manuscripts were being copied or edited, it was in spite of the figures being before the very eyes of the scribes.

For a penny-a-liner, or a pound-a-liner, such a phrase as "associated in our country with the familiar name of Budgets" is very serviceable. In the same way he might speak of "an agricultural implement associated in our country with the familiar name of a Spade." But a busy reader is apt to resent such diffuseness.

Let us now deal with the substance of Mr. Gladstone's article. His object is to show that the Pentateuch is older than the "negative" critics allow, and that in any case the hand of Moses is obvious in the Law which is called by his name.

Incidently he makes some very questionable statements. For instance, he speaks of Moses as the person by whom the books of the Pentateuch "profess to have been written." If he means that this authorship is asserted in the very texture of the books we think he is mistaken, and if he means that the name of Moses is affixed to them he is guilty of triviality. "We are not told," says Professor Max Müller, who is not a destructive critic, "that Moses consigned the Old Testament to writing." Again, he declares that "no scholar would suppose that Moses was even the author of the Pentateuch. 'The Books of Moses' were to the more orthodox Jews the books telling of Moses, not the books written by Moses, just as 'the Book of Job' was the book containing the story of Job, not a book written by Job" (*Natural Religion*, p. 556).

Mr. Gladstone also asserts that "the existence of Moses is even better and far better established than that of Lycurgus." Whether that be so or not is of little consequence. "With regard to Lycurgus, the lawgiver," says Plutarch, "there is nothing whatever that is undisputed." Surely Mr. Gladstone does not think the "negative" critics have agreed to stand sponsors for this ancient Spartan; and if he does not, what is the meaning of his reference? We should also like him to explain the statement that "in the case of Moses we have much evidence independent of, and anterior to, the institutions in their historic form." Where is this "much evidence" to be found? Certainly not in profane history; as certainly not in the Jewish historical books, which ignore Moses and all his works.

There seems no limit to the license of affirmation on the orthodox side. Let a Christian write for orthodox readers, in a magazine where he cannot be replied to, and he will apparently invent as much as he can palm off, or restate without the slightest qualification any number of time-honored falsehoods, however frequently they have been challenged and exposed.

We must also say that Mr. Gladstone is playing to the gallery in his remarks on the differences among the "negative" critics. "Speaking at large," he says, "every imaginable difference has prevailed among the critics themselves as to the source, date, and authorship of the books." This is like the objection that the Bible chronology must be true because the geologists are not agreed as to the precise age of the earth's strata, although to a sensible man it is quite enough that they *do* agree on an immense antiquity. Similarly, the "negative" critics of the Pentateuch are not agreed as to the date and authorship of every part; for it is one thing to produce a forgery, and quite another to unravel it, more than two thousand years afterwards, so as to be able to say this was written by such a hand, and that was written at such a time. But there *is* a point of agreement among these critics, and it is a very important one. As Mr. Gladstone says they have brought the Books of Moses "gradually towards later epochs: to Samuel, to the age of David, to the severance of the Kingdoms, to Josiah, to the Captivity, and those who followed it." How absurd, then, is the statement that it is "difficult to learn whether there is any real standing ground which the present negative writers mean not only to occupy but to hold." They occupy and hold *this* ground—that the Pentateuch is not the work of Moses. This is established by a thousand reasons, linguistic, historical, and sociological. *Who* wrote the various parts, *when* they were written, and *where* they were written, are different and difficult questions. They are partially answered; but even if they should never be answered completely, it is certain that Moses was not and could not have been the author.

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Suppose we take the case of the forged Parnell letters. Reasonable men might have been perfectly satisfied that Mr. Parnell did not write them without discovering who did. The negative evidence might have been overwhelming. The positive evidence was furnished, under pressure, by the forger himself. But suppose Pigott had died before he could be cross-examined, instead of blowing his brains out afterwards; it might never have been possible to ascertain all the details of the forgery, yet the forgery itself might still have been incontestible. In the same way we may satisfy ourselves that the Pentateuch was the work of many hands in many generations, without being able to put the forgers in the witness-box and wring from them a full confession.

There is one point, however, on which Mr. Gladstone is entitled to praise. Contending, as he does, that "the heart and substance" of the Mosaic Law is authentic, he repudiates all sympathy with temporisers like Mr. Gore, the clever editor of *Lux Mundi*. These writers plead for a possible "Mosaic germ" of Jewish legislation, but allow that it was developed through centuries by the priesthood, which ascribed its own work to the ancient Jewish leader. Now Mr. Gladstone remarks that "Those are doubtless perfectly sincere who represent this as a method of progressive revelation. But there are also those who think that such a progressive revelation as this would for over two thousand years have palmed upon the whole Jewish and Christian world a heartless imposture." On another page Mr. Gladstone urges the impossibility of regarding such an imposture as harmless. "If the use of his [Moses's] name was a fiction," he declares, "it was one of those fictions which are falsehoods, for it altered essentially the character of the writings to which it was attached."

This explicit statement is very much to Mr. Gladstone's credit. Yet it would not be difficult for Mr. Gore to show that Mr. Gladstone has his own way of evading the hardest task of his position. Mr. Gore puts forward a comprehensive theory, which, if accepted, provides for all difficulties. He works on wholesale principles. Mr. Gladstone employs another theory, which is open to as grave objections. He would have us believe that "it is the legislation, for which in the sacred text itself the claim is constantly made of being due to direct communication from above, while no corresponding assertion in general accompanies the historical recitals." This, he appears to think, enables him to ascribe any quantity of Bible blunders to the "probable imperfection of the text." But if imperfections crept into one part of the text, is it impossible that they crept into the other? If the historical text is corrupt, may not the legislative text be also corrupt? Is it conceivable, Mr. Gore might urge, that a God of infinite wisdom and power would make a positive and exact revelation of his will, without taking the precaution to preserve it in its original purity; or would he allow it to be associated, nay interwoven, with human writings, and thus inevitably to share the suspicion and discredit of such productions in future ages of scientific criticism? And if, Mr. Gore might continue, you abandon the plenary inspiration of the text, as you obviously do, you are bound to formulate another theory of inspiration or let the text go altogether. To pick and choose at your own pleasure is arbitrary. Formulate your theory, and let us see whether it differs essentially from mine.

Such a challenge Mr. Gladstone would be bound to accept; and if he did so he would probably discover that Mr. Gore's theory—which, by the way, is not original—is the only one that will leave a Protestant any hold on the Pentateuch as inspired; a slender hold, it is true, but the only one possible in the circumstances.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

A POLISH MARTYR.

Casimir Liszinski, or Lyszczynski, was the last person known to have been judicially put to death in Europe on a charge of Atheism. About his case there has been some controversy, and still remains some little mystery. Certain it is that he was cited for Atheism by the Bishops of Kioff and Posen, found guilty of that charge, excommunicated, and condemned to be burnt alive. By grace of the king he was decapitated before being burnt. His execution took place at Grodno, March 30, 1689. After being burnt, his ashes were placed into a cannon and scattered to the four winds, an emblem, shall we say, of the spread of Atheistic doctrines. Whether Liszinski was really an Atheistic martyr or merely a victim of religious intolerance there is some doubt. Count Valerian Krasinski, in his *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, Edinburgh, 1851, pp. 224 and 225, thus relates the occurrence:—

"The other crime which disgraced that period was the judicial murder of Casimir Lyszczynski, a respectable landowner, perpetrated by the clergy in spite of Sobieski's efforts to save that innocent victim of fanaticism; an event which is described by all the historians of John Sobieski, and deserves a particular notice. Lyszczynski was perusing a book entitled *Theologia Naturalis*, by Henry Alsted, a Protestant divine; and finding that the arguments which the author employed to prove the existence of the Deity were so confused that it was possible to deduce from them quite contrary consequences, he added on the margin the following words:—*Ergo, non est Deus*,—evidently ridiculing the arguments of the author. This circumstance was found out by a debtor of Lyszczynski, called Brzoska, who denounced him as an Atheist, delivering, as the evidence of his accusation, a copy of the work, with the abovementioned annotation, to Witwicki, bishop of Posen, who took up the affair with the greatest keenness. He was zealously seconded by Zaluski, bishop of Kioff, a prelate known for his great learning, and not devoid of merit in other respects, which however proved no check against religious fanaticism. The king, who was very far from countenancing such enormities, attempted to save Lyszczynski, by ordering that, being a Lithuanian, he should be judged at Vilna; but nothing could shelter the unfortunate man against the fanatical rage of the two bishops; and the great privilege of a Polish noble, that he could not be imprisoned before his condemnation, and which heretofore was sacredly observed, even with great criminals—was violated. On the simple accusation of his debtor, supported by two bishops, the affair was brought before the Diet of 1689 before which the clergy, but particularly Bishop Zaluski, accused Lyszczynski of having denied the existence of God, and uttered blasphemies against the holy virgin and the saints. The unfortunate victim, horrified by his perilous position, acknowledged all that was imputed to him, made a full recantation of what he might have said or written against the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and declared his entire submission to its authority. This was, however, of no avail to him; and the Diet, instigated by the blasphemous representations of the clergy, decreed that Lyszczynski should have his tongue pulled out, be beheaded, and then burnt. This atrocious sentence was executed; and Zaluski himself gives a relation of what he considered an act of piety and justice. The king was horror-struck at this news, and exclaimed that the Inquisition could not do any thing worse."

It must, however, be borne in mind that Count Krasinski was a Protestant, anxious to show the abuse made of their power by the Roman clergy in Poland, and to minimise the offences of their victims. It appears, moreover, from Bayle that he has by no means given the full particulars of the charge against Liszinski. According to his own defence, his only crime was having made a compilation of arguments for Atheism in order to refute them, and having written in the margin of a theological work that the arguments were inconclusive. Unfortunately for Liszinski, he had compiled the arguments for Atheism without proceeding with the second part of the work, in which they were to be confuted. Moreover, definite statements were cited against him from his own writings as that "Man is the creator of God, whom he had formed out of nothing." This statement, going as it does to the core of the question, certainly looks more like a confutation of the usual theistic position, than something set down in order to be answered.

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It is easy to see how any man when such compromising and, in the eyes of bigots, dangerous statements were found among his papers, in an age when the penalty for Atheism was an agonising death, would endeavor to give such a turn to them as that they were simply noted down in order to be confuted. But in that case, in such an age, it was a most dangerous practice to compile arguments for Atheism and not at the very same time set down their confutation, or at least a personal disclaimer of holding them. Nor is it easy to see that the Polish Diet would, even if the Bishops took up the case on such flimsy evidence as Krasinski alleges, have proceeded to pass so cruel a sentence, in opposition to the known wishes of the king, if they had any faith whatever in Liszinski's defence; or that Bishop Zaluski would have triumphed in the execution as "an act of piety and justice" unless he had really believed that Liszinski was an Atheist, for whom of course no punishment could be too bad. It is, perhaps, true that Liszinski may have drawn religious bigotry on himself as being connected with a family which had not only supported Protestantism, but Anti-Trinitarianism in Poland; but I think this will not alone account for the judicial horror of his execution. Taking all things into consideration, I see no reason to regret the insertion of the name of Casimir Liszinski in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. His history forms a striking comment on Christian toleration and has a separate place as the last case of capital punishment for Atheism.

J. M. Wheeler.

HOLY MATRIMONY.

A Curious Legal Argument.

In the year 1715 a singular case was determined by the House of Peers, involving the question of the validity of a certain marriage. The details of the matter are, perhaps, hardly suitable for general publication; but one curious feature in the pleadings may interest the readers of the *Freethinker*.

Dr. Fleetwood appeared as the advocate for the dissolution of the marriage, and in the course of his address he traced the history of matrimony from the time of Adam and Eve! "The first marriage that ever was made," he said, "was made without any words at all, that we know of, expressing their consent; and it was so clandestine that there was not so much as a mortal man by, no not a priest, to join them together." The distinction between "a mortal man" and a "priest," by the way, is not at all clear.

But Dr. Fleetwood's "great argument" turned upon the relationship of Joseph to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and into this abstruse subject he entered very fully. "Joseph and the Blessed Virgin," he said, "were certainly espoused and betrothed each to the other; and he thereby became so much her husband, that he thought of putting her away, which shows he thought she was his wife; and he is called her husband by the Evangelist St. Matthew; and she herself calls Joseph the father of her Son, 'Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing:' and a little before they are called his parents. There is not a word of all this that I do, or dare deny. . . . My Lords," he continued, "I have taken some pains to understand this matter . . . for it is something out of the way of my profession. It was absolutely necessary, by God's appointment, that the Savior of the world should be born of a woman: and it was, by the same appointment, full as necessary that he should not be the son of man in the common way. To reconcile these difficulties, therefore, he was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost,' and 'born of the Virgin Mary.' But because the Savior of the world was to be, in especial manner, the Messiah of the Jews, he was to be born a Jew; to descend from Abraham. . . . This Messiah the Jews expected should be born as other men were born; and they would never have received him as such, or heard him as a prophet and teacher sent from God, unless they had believed him to be born in lawful wedlock; as they certainly did, or you would have heard of it over and over again in the gospels, which conceal none of the slanders, contumelies and reproaches which the Jews, upon all occasions, did so plentifully pour upon our Savior. Had the blessed Mary not been married, what would the people have said of her? What would they not have said of her son? It was therefore absolutely necessary to the Jews receiving Christ for the Messiah, and hearkening to him, that he should be born under the reputation of marriage; which could not be unless she took a husband in the usual manner. You see what entertainment both his person and doctrine found, although he was supposed to be born in wedlock, and of honest parents, only because of their mean and low condition; but what had been his fortune, had they thought him spurious [illegitimate]?"

In continuing his argument, Dr. Fleetwood contended that "the marriage of Joseph with the Blessed Virgin was all (as I am told the ancient Christian writers call it) according to œconomy. It was to save appearances; to cover both the mother and the son from the reproaches of ignorant malicious people, till it should please God, in his own good time, to manifest the truth more clearly to the world."

In preparing this remarkable plea Dr. Fleetwood seems to have sought—and obtained—the assistance of certain persons very well "up" in the counsels of the Almighty. His argument has for this generation a purely antiquarian interest. One can hardly imagine a speech of that kind being delivered by an eminent barrister before the judicial tribunal of the House of Lords to-day! Blackburn or Bramwell would certainly soon stop the theological disquisition—"Have done with that: what are the *facts?*" But in 1715 society was more pious than it is to-day.

G. Standring.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

Council Meeting held at Hall of Science, September 4. The President, Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the Secretary reported as to arrangements for courses of Free Lectures. On the motion of Mr. A. B. Moss it was agreed that a course be given at the Hall of the Tower Hamlets' Radical Club, the use of which had been offered on favorable terms; and it was also decided to deliver lectures either at Milton Hall or other place in the North Western District. Various other places were suggested, and the secretary was instructed to make further inquiries. The President reported that owing to pressure of work the proposed Christian Evidence class must for the present remain in abeyance. Reports were read from Hammersmith and Midland Arches. The Treasurer made a statement as to the financial position of the Federation; and applications for grants were referred to committee. Miss Vance, as secretary of the N. W. London Branch, complained of the indiscreet action of a member of another Branch, with respect to the lectures at Regent's Park; but after some discussion the matter was allowed to drop. A suggestion as to collections at Free Lectures was adopted; and it was thought advisable to alter the charge for reserved seats to sixpence, instead of one shilling as announced. The Council then adjourned till first Thursday in October.—Edmund Pownceby, secretary.

"Ma, I've an idea that some of the folks in this graveyard haven't gone to heaven." "You don't say! What makes you think that they haven't?" "Because I read it on the tombstones." "No!" "Yes, I did, though. It was carved on ever so many, 'Peace to his ashes.' Now, there ain't any ashes 'cept where it is very hot, is there, ma?"

Young man (to sexton, at church door) "Isn't the sermon nearly done?" Sexton: "About an hour yet. He is only on his 'Lastly.'" Young man: "Will it take him an hour to get through his 'Lastly?'" Sexton: "No, but there's the 'One word more and I am done,' and the 'Finally,' and the 'In conclusion' to come yet. Don't get impatient, young man. Your girl won't spoil."

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PERNICIOUS PRIESTS.

Yu Chi-Kai, Provincial Treasurer and acting Governor of Kuantung, will stand no nonsense in the matter of priestly extortions. He has issued a proclamation setting forth some of the tricks practised in the temples of the Tutelary Gods of the various cities of that province, from which is appears that the priest in charge of the temple at Canton pays as much as from 7000 to 10,000 taels (the silver tael is equal to rather more than six shillings) for his post, recouping himself afterwards by a variety of extortions from the worshippers. They are, for example, not allowed to bring in their incense-sticks or candles, but must buy these from the priest inside at ten times their value. They must also pay an exorbitant hire for space on the mats on which they perform their prostrations; and women are persuaded by the priest that a night's sleep on the mats in the temple, for which they pay a heavy hotel bill to the priest, will ensure them male progeny. In the precincts of the temple, moreover, quack doctors, astrologers, and charlatans of all kinds are, it is said, permitted to erect booths on payment of a fee. The Governor sternly announces his intention of sweeping away all these abuses, hitherto winked at by the city officials, who have each in succession received large bribes for their complaisance.

ACID DROPS.

Mr. Ben Tillett has done a good work for the London dockers, but he does not shine as an amateur preacher. On Sunday afternoon he held forth in a Methodist chapel in Camberwell. It was a thanksgiving service, and Benjamin talked unctuously of the bounties of Providence. He appears to have forgotten the potato blight in Ireland. Mr. Tillett also expressed his opinion that a man could not be a good Christian on an empty stomach. This would be laughed at by every Catholic. Half the saints on record kept empty stomachs on purpose to heighten their spiritual faculties. Our own opinion is that men are very unlikely to be good Christians on *full* stomachs. Mr. Tillett should remember the words of Jesus Christ, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and *fasting*."

Mr. Tillett remarked that "poverty had shot more souls out of their chance of heaven than Atheism." This was not the teaching of Jesus Christ either. The Prophet of Nazareth said "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich" He also said it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Why, then, does Mr. Tillett call himself a Christian, when he flies in the very face of Christ?

Has Mr. Tillett reflected seriously on the meaning of his own words? Is it possible that men have lost their chance of heaven through being poor? If so, was their poverty their fault or their misfortune? Mr. Tillett would undoubtedly reply "their misfortune," especially at a dockers' meeting. His statement therefore comes to this, that men have gone to hell, or at least lost heaven, through the misfortune of poverty. Yet in the same breath he talks of the bounty of Providence! If this is the best logic and morality he is able to muster on a religious platform, we need not fear the crusade against Atheism which he seems to contemplate.

The floods in Hungary have washed away the harvest from the granaries and ruined at least a hundred thousand people, so that the Austrian Government has been forced to take measures for their succor, and thus counteract the visitation of Providence. The hospitals are filling with the sick, and over fifty funerals of persons who have died through their sufferings, caused by the floods, have already taken place.

The fire at Salonica has rendered some 20,000 persons homeless. Most of them are of God's chosen people, so perhaps he is still paying them out because his unfortunate son "suffered under Pontius Pilate."

William Radcliff, formerly a clerk in holy orders, has been arrested in London and charged at Margate with appropriating three rings valued at £52 10s.

Some wicked fellow got into a church vestry after the deacons and clergy had held a meeting there, and left four beer bottles, a whisky flask, all empty, and two packs of cards under the table. When the sewing society met an hour later and discovered the articles, they held a long and whispered conversation.

The Rev. R Morgan's hay has been distrained for tithes by a brother in God belonging to the Established Church. Surely it is time that J. C. came again to settle the disputes among his consecrated servants. Each thinks he is acting for Christ. But the parson has the best of it, for he has collared the hay.

Jesus is set before children as a perfect example. Sometimes the application is of an unexpected character. The other week a boy, only five years of age, was seen in the Halifax Canal by a passing boatman, who at once got him out in an unconscious condition, with his boat-hook, and he was conveyed home. On coming round he was asked how he got into the Canal, when he said that his teacher at school had told them about Jesus walking on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus was a man, while he was only a little boy

"Hotspur" in the *Bolton Weekly Guardian* complains of the conduct of the Rev. T. Lancaster, who kept a funeral party waiting a scandalous time while he was shooting on the moors. Many of the parishioners are highly incensed, but they might ask themselves whether a parson's life is worth living if he must leave his sport to do his duty.

The quarrels and extortions of the Christian sects at Jerusalem have led to the expulsion of some of the Franciscan monks from the city by the Turkish soldiery, notwithstanding the protests of the French Consul.

The Rev. Albert Vedder has been arrested in New York for abducting a little girl. This man of God has served a term in prison before for ruining a young woman of West Melton.

According to Dr. A. Bosco, an Italian statistician, the greatest number of murders occur in Italy, Spain and Hungary. These countries are pre-eminently religious.

Judge Abdy has granted an interim injunction against the Rev. Alfred Waller, curate to Bishop Gregg, of the Reformed Church of England, for causing a nuisance on the foreshore at Southend.

One month's hard labor is the lot of Jane Brittain for telling some girls their fortune at Leicester. Instead of promising them handsome husbands, Jane should have assurred them of mansions in the sky, and she would have remained unmolested.

The Rev. George Rogers is the oldest Congregational minister in the world. He is in his ninety-second year. Naturally he finds the world is growing heterodox. He watches the "down-grade" controversy with feelings akin to those of Mr. Spurgeon. He began to preach at the age of seventeen, and he holds the same opinions still. In orthodox circles this is regarded as a merit, but to others it will savor of stupidity. A short time ago Mr. Rogers composed a hymn containing this verse:

> The music of heaven I hear
> From voices unnumbered and sweet,
> And feel that I too must be there
> To render the chorus complete.

Those who appreciate the quality of this verse will no doubt understand why Mr. Rogers retains the opinions he started with.

When the *Pall Mall Gazette* plays the Philistine it "goes the whole hog" Nothing could be more inexpressibly vulgar than its Monday's paragraphs on Booth and Comte. It positively revelled in the notion that while a single car might convey Comte's followers to his tomb, it would take ever so many to convey the Salvation Army. What a sublime test! At this rate Martin Tupper would lord it over Shakespeare, and the *Pall Mall* would sink immeasurably below the *Police News*. General Booth is a clever man, but what new idea has he contributed to the world? On the other hand, the genius of Comte, with all its aberrations, has left an indelible impression on the human mind,

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and his influence is seen in much of the forward work of civilisation.

Happily the really great men have never cared for what Cardinal Newman called "canonisation in the periodical press." They have only valued the praise of competent judges. The time comes when distance gives a proper perspective; then the great figures stand out saliently, while the gods of the hour sink into nothingness.

That valiant defender of the faith, Archdeacon Denison, will bring *Lux Mundi* before the House of Convocation, and ask that a committee of examination shall sit upon it. If the House of Convocation knows its own interests it will leave it severely alone. Heresy cannot be sat upon without being advertised.

The correspondent of the New York *World*, who is now travelling through Russia, says that the priests encourage the people in drunkenness. He says: "Curious as it may sound to American ears, the Russian priests are notorious boozers. A village priest may get drunk as often as he pleases, and by so doing not forfeit the respect of his parishioners. It is no uncommon thing, so I am told, for a priest to drink himself into a state of beastly intoxication. And the 'black clergy,' the monks who spin out an indolent existence in the five hundred monasteries of the empire, drink brandy out of beer glasses."

The Rev. G. T. Allpress, of Greengate Church, Barking Road, Plaistow, avails himself of his privilege of giving letters of recommendation to the London Hospital and West Ham Dispensary, in order to extend the circulation of his paper, *The Monthly Evangel*. He promises to give letters of recommendation, "providing any remain on hand," to those producing coupons showing they have purchased the paper for six months.

Dr. Munro has been utilising the death of Cardinal Newman. His lectures in the Cathedral Church, Clydesdale, are reported in the Glasgow *Evening News*. He points out all the Protestant sects grow more and more heretical, and that liberty of conscience leads to the dissolution of faith—an admission which we are glad to acknowledge. If the faith is to be preserved, it must be by the Catholic Church. Dr. Munro denounces the private interpretation of the Bible by laymen. That is the function of the Church—or, in other words, the priests—and the layman's duty is to open his mouth and shut his eyes and swallow what they give him. A beautiful system—for priests.

Cardinal Taschereau, Archbishop of Quebec, overreached himself. He would not attend the banquet to Prince George of Wales unless he sat next to the Prince, but Admiral Watson and General Ross threatened to retire if this impudent demand were conceded, and the tables were accordingly re-arranged, the Archbishop being left out in the cold altogether.

The festival of St. Giles was celebrated with high mass in St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, and Canon Donlevy preached an appropriate sermon, in the course of which he mentioned St. Giles's arm-bone, a most precious relic, which was brought to Edinburgh by William of Preston. But the Canon forgot, apparently, to say what became of that bone. We hope it was not sold to a marine-store dealer, for poor old St. Giles will want it on the resurrection morning.

Pious people will adopt any means for the laudable end of raising the wind for God. At Matticuck (U.S.), the church, being in need of funds, set up a fancy fair, with a kissing booth. Twelve of the prettiest girls in the church were induced to play the part of kissers at twenty-five cents each. It took tremendously. In less than a quarter of an hour there was a line outside the kissing booth extending to the end of the church, and many of the kissed, on emerging from the tent, ran round and got in the line again, ready to pay a second time for another kiss. The receipts of the booth brought in a good round sum to the Lord. But all the other church and chapel people were very angry. The girls were publicly denounced by the pious people who were not in it as "bold hussies" and a disgrace to the town.

At the meeting of the Christian Colportage Association at Penzance the secretary mentioned the case of a woman who said she wanted "a good old lie," and to whom the colporteur sold a copy of the Bible. The woman might find a good selection from the talking serpent, Lot's wife, Bealam's ass, Samson and the foxes and Elisha's bears, to Christ's walking on water and ascending into heaven.

Mr. M. Bramston, in a letter to the *Spectator*, tells how the performers in the Oberammergau Passion Play put themselves back; the men into their not very well-fitting coats and trousers, and the girls into their cotton bodices and stuff skirts. The Madonna goes to her father's office, and there adjudges lodgings and tickets; St. Peter sits at his window carving Schnitzen; Pilate's attendant, who is also Tobias's angel, and has four other parts besides, goes to his carpenter's bench; the Apostle Simon opens the cow-house door to the gentle little cream-colored cows, who have brought themselves home for milking, and caresses them before they follow him in to be milked; while Jesus Christ Mayr appears to be at the beck and call of anyone who needs him.

The Bishop of Ripon preached to the British Association at Leeds from the text "Man shall not live by bread alone," and of course sought to show that the Word of God was necessary. The occasion, however, suggests that it is science by which men live, while theology could be entirely dispensed with and nobody except bishops and other parasites of commonwealths would be a penny the worse.

Says Colonel Ingersoll: "With the single exception of Cornell, there is not a college in the United States where truth has ever been a welcome guest. The moment one of the teachers denies the inspiration of the Bible he is discharged. If he discovers a fact inconsistent with that book, so much the worse for the fact, and especially for the discoverer of the fact. He must not corrupt the minds of his pupils with demonstrations. He must beware of every truth that cannot, in some way, be made to harmonise with the superstitions of the Jews."

The *Times* correspondent at Odessa states, that notwithstanding official denials, the stringent laws against the Jews are being put into force with great severity in South Russia. He himself knows many Jewish families who have received notice to quit the country in seven days. Six hundred Jewish families have been expelled from Odessa in the past three weeks. From Breditscheff more than 3,000 have left the country either for England or America, and the same expulsion is going on in many other towns.

The Nonconformist papers complain that the information ordered by Parliament to be set forth by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as to the ecclesiastical revenues of the country, is very inadequate. The Commissioners have interpreted the words "to be shown in counties" as meaning to be shown only in counties. They have set down the familiar fact of the Archbishop of Canterbury receiving £15,000 a year, instead of giving the value of the whole estate of his see, and in short it will be necessary to get a more stringent Parliamentary inquiry before the full value of ecclesiastical property will be made known.

The *Herald* continues to urge the suppression of Secular meetings in Beresford Square, Woolwich, and calls upon the Board of Health to act immediately. According to this bigoted journal, the Secularists infringe the bye-law against trading because they make a collection. But the same thing is done by the Salvation Army, and what is sauce for the Freethought gander is sauce for the Christian goose. Anyhow, if the worst come to the worst, the Secularists could easily outwit the *Herald* by dropping the collection. What would the bigots do then?

One of the old toasts will have to be altered when the Duke of Clarence visits Cardiff. It has been usual at public banquets to propose "The Bishop and the Clergy of the Diocese," but another formula must now be found to include the Dissenters. "Our Spiritual Forces" has been adopted, and it is really excellent. The red-coats fight the enemy, and the black-coats fight the Devil—although of them as Fox said, he standeth not afraid. Our Military Forces run

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the risk of meeting a *bullet*. Our Spiritual Forces only run the risk of a bad *billet*.

A stream of pilgrims have again been resorting to the "sacred grotto" at Lourdes in the South of France. The Paris *Univers* and other Catholic papers report many miraculous cures. The miracles, it need scarcely be stated, are of the character always found to accompany excitement and faith. In such cases apparent temporary benefit is often followed by a worse relapse. But the report of the cures suffices to attract crowds of well-to-do invalids who support the priests and also to bring many poor pilgrims who can ill-afford the expenses of the journey.

If we may trust Dr. Laffin, an African missionary, the negro makes the best orthodox Christian. "With the native African," he says, "God's Word settles any point of dispute." Here in England it is God's Word that the Christians are all disputing about.

Even ministers have to be very careful not to offend public sentiment in Kansas City. According to a Dalziel telegram, a divine named Smith, sixty-eight years of age, proposed to a widow of forty-five; and the "White-caps," a secret vigilance society, put his head in a sack, tied him to a horse, dragged him for a mile, and then stripped him naked and flogged him with willows till nearly dead. It is a very disgusting story, and shows what will happen when "good" people mind their neighbors' business.

The founder of the Russian Flagellants was Ivan Souslof. His father is supposed to have descended from heaven, whither he ascended after acknowledging his son to be the Christ. Ivan chose twelve apostles. He was arrested and crucified outside the sacred gate of Kremlin at Moscow, but he rose from the dead, and repeated the performance after a second crucifixion. His followers must neither drink nor marry. Their religious exercises are like those of the Salvation Army in the heel-kicking days of its youth.

The Rev. J. P. Hopps, of Leicester, is starting a new journal. The first number will contain a letter from Mr. Gladstone on revealed religion. Considering the views of Mr. Hopps, who is an "advanced" Unitarian, the letter may be looked upon as merely an advertisement. The G.O.M. is easily had in such matters.

Spurgeon is bent on being the Abdiel of Christianity. Some weeks ago the play of "Judah" was performed to an audience of ministers, who were let in "free, gratis, for nothing." The sky-pilots thought it a nice play, especially at the price. But Mr. Spurgeon is shocked at their impiety, and this is how he let out at them the other evening in his Tabernacle:—"There are no amusements too vile for her [the Christian Church]. Her pastors had filled a theatre of late, and have set their mark by their clamors on the labors of play-actors. To this we had come at last to which we had never come before—no, not in Rome's darkest hour. And if you do not love Christ enough to be indignant about it, the Lord have mercy upon you."

Some people will think Spurgeon needs a blue pill. Others would like to see a discussion between him and Stewart Headlam, with a ballet girl in the chair.

Spurgeon denies that he does not dream of a long sea voyage. He is going to work until the November fogs warn him his time for a holiday is come. Some of us would like the same "warning," but Freethought does not pay like superstition It is astonishing what salaries are paid to men for preaching "Blessed be ye poor."

The humbug of ordinary Christianity has just been displayed at Worcester. The magistrates of that city fined three poor boys half-a-crown each for selling the *Umpire* and the *Sunday Chronicle* on Sunday. Thereupon some lovers of impartiality prosecuted a man for selling the *War Cry*. But the magistrates dismissed the case, and they remarked, with a curious mixture of impudence and illegality, that the Act was only useful in *some cases*. Apparently, therefore, the law may be broken in Worcester, and the magistrates, of all men, are the persons to decide when it may be done. Would it not simplify matters to pass a new Act, enforcing the Sabbath on unbelievers, and giving the sole right of breaking it to Christians?

A twaddling sermon by Dr. Parker is reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The subject is Agnosticism. Before the sermon comes the prayer, which is printed in small type. No doubt it might pass in church, when Parker and his congregation had their eyes screwed up; but printed in cold blood it is cant and silliness. If there be a God—and Parker knows as much about that as we do—he must be infinitely sick of the stuff addressed to him by sky-pilots.

Parker's sermon has only one point in it. All the rest is verbiage. He replies to the argument that the universe made itself, but as this argument is not used by Freethinkers, the preacher is merely wasting his time. It would be well for Parker to remember, or to learn, that the opponents of Theism do not believe the universe was made at all; and that, before he can discuss with them *who* made it, he must show that it *was* made. But he will draw his last year's salary before he does that.

The Rev. Dr. Hiles Hitchins, of Eccleston Square Church, talks rot to the Almighty as easily as Parker. The other Sunday morning he was good enough to tell God of his "infinite, superabounding, kingly glory." If the Lord heard it he must have laughed at the anti-climax. It was like the French gentleman's, who exclaimed "*Magnificent, grand, vera goot.*"

W. T. Stead took William Booth to see Lord Wolesley. After a long conversation, the Queen's general said to the Lord's general that if he had been a soldier he would have been the greatest general of this century. We are not told what Booth said in reply. No doubt it was something handsome. For our part, we think one of these worthies is the equal of the other. Both are pious and splendid self-advertisers.

Why a Christian minister should dress like a crow is agitating the minds of correspondents of the *Christian World*. This, we take it, is a fresh sign of the dissolution of Christianity. Its doctrines are dissolving, its Bible is dissolving, and the ministers themselves are beginning to dissolve into the general population.

After spending £30,000 on their temple at Chatham, which is to house the 144,000 elect when J. C. appears in the clouds, the Jezreelites are in financial difficulties. A Chancery suit is pending, and meanwhile, if the work is to go on, £2,000 will be required to roof the building. So solidly is the structure built that it will be very costly to pull down, and perhaps it will stand as a monument of religious folly.

Mr. Foote's lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall is still causing a stir. Another anonymous Christian complains in the *Daily Post*, but R. S. Bransley, a Freethinker, who gives his name and address like an honest man, contributes a very excellent letter on the Secularist side. The *Daily Mail* devotes an editorial to the subject, to which Mr Foote has written a reply. The *Mail* pretends to be in favor of fair play, and would not deprive the Freethinkers of their rights, but it objects to Mr. Foote and his "methods of discussion," and appear to think that the Secularists forfeit their right to the use of the Town Hall by inviting their President to speak there. This is a very transparent pretence, especially as the *Mail* has no fault to find with the particular lecture in question. On the whole it is pretty plain that Liberal as well as Conservative pressure will be put upon the Mayor to refuse the annual use of the Town Hall to the Secularists when they make their next application. We can only hope that the Mayor, whoever he should be, will be true to the principles of civil and religious freedom.

Since the preceding paragraph was written we have received a copy of the Birmingham *Daily Post* containing two further well written letters by Secularists. It is gratifying to see that the local Freethinkers are so well able to defend their cause.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 14, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town; at 7.30, "Gladstone on Moses."

September 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

IGNORAMUS.—Received with thanks.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Thanks for the cutting. Your report is well done, but it is not verbatim. You have succeeded better with the chairman's speech than with the lecture. Reporters have always found Mr. Foote difficult to take down accurately. He seems to speak very deliberately, but he often speaks with great rapidity.

A. HINDLEY.—Always pleased to hear from recent recruits. We hope, as you do, that the Secularists will have fair-play in Birmingham.

T. BROMLEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

A. A. A.—(1) We have no knowledge of the concern. You would be very foolish to entrust your money to any Stock-broking firm. It is only licensed gambling. If you want to invest in any kind of stock, see for yourself, and purchase in the regular way. (2) Glad to hear you are so pleased with the *Freethinker*.

J. DAVIES.—Mrs. Besant's *Law of Population* might suit you. Malthus's volume is more expensive.

H. JUSTICE.—In the language of Scripture, "inquire of the Lord."

REX REGES writes: "I am more than pleased with this week's *Freethinker* (Sep. 7), and have taken six copies for distribution."

A. CRAIG (Belfast)—No attack, scurrilous or otherwise, on the Rev. John Waddell has appeared in the *Freethinker*. The letter he sent us was a reply to Mr. Knox's article on Sunday Observance in the North of Ireland. The reverend gentleman "demanded" its insertion, and partly for this reason, but more because of its inordinate length (it would have filled three columns), the letter was not inserted. Apparently the reverend gentleman is as inventive as he is spiteful. But as he threatened us with what he would do if his letter was not printed *in extenso* we are not in the least surprised. It is time for insolent Christians to learn that Freethought editors are masters of their own columns, and require to be addressed in terms of decent civility.

W. GILMOUR.—The *Bible Handbook* has proved useful to hundreds of Freethinkers. Thanks for the cuttings.

H. G S.—Ask the candidate this question—"Are you in favor of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws, under which Secularists may be sent to prison for opposing Christianity in their own journals, and under which no Secular Society can receive a legacy or hold any kind of property?" Every parliamentary candidate should be asked this question, and pressed for a straightforward reply.

W. M. KNOX.—Thanks for the copy of the *Belfast News Letter*. Mr. Waddell sends that journal "the substance of his reply to the *Freethinker*"—to use his own words. The reply itself was much longer, and even more impolite. We have our own sense of propriety, and our space is limited. Those who send us letters for insertion must write with reasonable brevity and courtesy—otherwise their effusions will go into the waste-basket, even if the writers were Bishops or Cardinals.

YORKSHIRE SECULAR FEDERATION.—The secretary desires to acknowledge the receipt of the following contributions:—W. Kay, 1s.; J. Greevz Fisher, 2s. 6d.; H. Smith, 2s. 6d.; Mr. G. ss, 3s.; H. Hardcastle, 1s.; J. Dobson, 1s.; R Atkinson, 2s.; H. Riley, 1s.; R. Bedford, 6d.; A. Jessop, 6d.; J. Grange, 1s.; H. Rothera, 1s.; Mr. Sunderland, 5s.

JOHN ROBINSON.—Mr. Forder will supply you with any necessary information as to establishing the Branch.

J. R. SYKES.—If you can secure a hall Mr. Foote will visit Southend. See paragraphs.

M. GOLDWORTH.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. LAPPAGE.—The proposal has been under consideration already. The tract is not worth a paragraph.

R. ATKINSON.—The paragraph about Morecambe appeared in our last.

J. S. ROGERS.—Mr. Foote will write.

J. H. BECKER.—It shall have our attention.

J. MOORE.—We see nothing in the bill calling for criticism. Is there something you have not disclosed?

A. M.—We were quite right. The "not" in the first clause would be implied after "or," and "*un*willing" would therefore be a double negative. Of course it is a small matter. We see the *Methodist Times* queries Booth's grammar at the very same point.

F. GOODWIN.—Mr. Foote is in good health though often very tired. The Booth article seems to be generally relished.

S. STANDRING reports that Mr. Sutcliffe, an old Brighton Freethinker, has undertaken to build up a Branch at Tottenham. Mr Standring had a capital outdoor audience on Sunday, and has good hopes of Tottenham.

A. H. B.—The dogma of Papal Infallibility, was only proclaimed in 1870, but it had been asserted by implication before.

T. P.—(1) We are in the habit of acknowledging what we reprint from the *Twentieth Century*. The omission in the case of Clara Davidson's story was owing to our absence from London. The Edgar Fawcett bit of verse came to us as a cutting. We did not remember its having first appeared in Mr. Pentecost's journal. Both pieces were obviously of American origin. By the way, our own paragraphs are often used, and not always with acknowledgment, in various parts of the world. (2) Glad to find the Booth article gives such satisfaction, and that you think this journal improves every week. (3) Celestine Edwards' chief attraction is his color.

W. J. S.—A line is dropped out. The words are—"sufficient for many months afterwards, must have been stored in the ark."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Fulham Chronicle—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Fair Play—Freethinker's Magazine—Yorkshire Post—People's Press—Chat—Liberty—Playgoer—South Eastern Herald—Cornish Telegraph—La Verité—Evening Standard—Birmingham Daily Post—Birmingham Daily Mail—North Middlesex Chronicle—Evening Tidings—Leeds Mercury.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

IMPORTANT.

ON Sunday afternoon the band of Christian, and apparently hired, rowdies who have so frequently disturbed the Secular meetings in Finsbury Park, carried their brutality to the extreme; and Mr. A. B. Moss, after speaking for some time amidst shocking noises, some of which were of a perfectly obscene character, was obliged to desist on seeing that a violent assault was being directed against the platform. The Finsbury Park Branch has appealed to me, and although I am advised to do no open-air speaking this year, I have resolved to go to the Park myself. This afternoon (Sep. 14) at half-past three, I shall be at the Branch station, which is a hundred yards or so from the bandstand. I call on the North London Freethinkers to meet me there and assist me in holding a meeting. I have written to the Commissioner of Police, and pointed out that, as that portion of the Park is set aside for public speaking, the Secularists expect to be protected in the exercise of their legal right; and I have added that if they are obliged to protect that right themselves, the responsibility will rest on those who have neglected their warning.

G. W. FOOTE.

President, National Secular Society.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the paradisiacal weather, a good audience assembled in Milton Hall on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "A World Without God." Among the audience was Mr. Van der Ende, one of the staff of our Dutch contemporary *De Dageraad*. Mr. Van der Ende was delighted to hear a Freethought lecture. The cause is promoted in Holland solely by the pen. The time has not arrived for

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successful public meetings. The editors of *De Dageraad* and all the writers labor gratuitously, and as lectures would have to be carried on in the same way, the double task is beyond their strength. Unfortunately the movement has no rich supporters.

After Mr. Foote's lecture a lady mounted the platform, and as she walked infirmly he gave her his seat, which she occupied, as well as the platform, for ten minutes. She spoke with tolerable fluency and perfect self-possession, and was attentively listened to. In one sense her appearance was very welcome. It is refreshing to listen to a Christian opponent who speaks from personal thought and observation.

This evening (Sep. 14) Mr. Foote lectures at Milton Hall again. His subject will be "Gladstone on Moses." He will deal more fully than is possible in an article with Mr. Gladstone's paper in the current number of *Good Words*.

The London Secular Federation's courses of Free Lectures at the Hall of Science opens next Thursday evening (Sep. 18), when Mr. Foote lectures on "The Miracles of Christ." Some seats are reserved at sixpence (not a shilling, as on the bill), and the usual collection will be made to defray expenses. After the lecture there will be ample opportunity for discussion. All comers will be welcome so long as they speak decently to the point.

Mr. G. Standring takes Thursday, Sep. 25, his subject being "A Defence of Secularism"; Mr. R. Forder Oct. 2, "Gospel Legends"; and Mr. Foote Oct. 9, "Christian and Secular Morality."

Other courses of Free Lectures are being arranged in the East and North-West of London. Of course they involve expense. It is some time since the Federation made any appeal for funds, but subscriptions are now required. Will our London friends please forward cheques, post-office orders, etc., without delay?

We congratulate our sub-editor. His *Letters from Heaven* *Letters from Hell* have been confiscated as "blasphemous" by the Custom House authorities at Melbourne. We regret that the importer has lost his property, but we hope he will bring an action for recovery, and succeed in teaching these impudent bigots a salutary lesson.

The *Independent Pulpit* (Waco, Texas) copies Mr. Wheeler's two recent articles, "When was Christ Born? When did Christ Die?" from our columns. We are pleased to notice that Mr. J. D. Shaw, the editor, proposes to change the name of his Freethought journal and turn it from a monthly into a weekly organ.

R. B. Cunninghame Grahame, M.P., lays his profane finger on the sacred ark in the *People's Press*, edited by Shaw Maxwell. He speaks of chapel as "some dissenting god-box," and says of the Church of England: "It has been in the main the Church of the rich, the orthodox, and those whose chief delight has been to hunt and shoot and fish, cheat on the Stock Exchange, make war on harmless unarmed savages, carry round the plate on Sunday, and repose at last beneath a ton or two of Purbeck marble and rot away, calmly awaiting the never-coming resurrection."

One of the most astonishing things in Stanley's *Darkest Africa* is the statement on the authority of Emin Pasha, that chimpanzees use torches in their night expeditions. Mr. Romanes doubts the statement, but it is scarcely stranger than that recently made in *Nature* that "a large ape is now undoubtedly acting as a signalman (under direction) on one of the railways in Natal."

The *Freethinker's Magazine* (Buffalo, New York) for September, gives a portrait of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, together with an article from that veteran entitled "The Sorrows of God." The editor, Mr. H. L. Green, deals with the orthodox Hell. Mr. T. Bush writes on "Euripides and the Gods," and Lucy N. Colman, an aged Freethought and abolitionist lecturess, concludes her interesting Reminiscences. We trust the *Freethinker's Magazine* receives the support it so well deserves from our friends in America.

"Religion and Recreation" is the title of an outspoken article in the *Cambrian News*, the organ of the Welsh farmers. The sky-pilots complain of the pagan tendencies of the people, and the writer tells them that they are fussy folk who are always "manufacturing wickedness." As to "pure literature" he tells the Churches that they are far from blameless, for "some of the worst offenders are religious papers that advertise impure books alongside of sermons and religious tracts."

Ignatian Difficulties and Historic Doubts, by B. C. Jenkins, is a work attacking Bishop Lightfoot's defence of the alleged epistles of Ignatius. The *Academy*, reviewing the work, says the matter must "be considered settled, not in the sense advocated, but opposed to Bishop Lightfoot's conclusions." Dr Lipsius gives his opinion against the authenticity of the epistles, and the *Academy* adds: "For the future they must be consigned—in company with the forged Decretals and similar hierarchical impostures—into the large limbo of ecclesiastical unveracities whence they ought never to have been permitted to emerge." Bishop Lightfoot defended the Ignatius epistles because they bolster up episcopal pretenses, just as the clergy defend the Bible because it supports their own impostures.

Portsmouth *Chat* gives an editorial report of Mr. Foote's recent lectures in the Alhambra. According to this lively paper, which has outlived its youthful troubles and is now a flourishing concern, the evening audience that listened to the lecture on "*Lux Mundi*" was "a highly intellectual" one. The compliments to the lecturer must remain in the pages of *Chat*. The editor remarks that "three long lectures in one day, and three hours' debate added thereto, is too much for the strongest man." We agree with him, and we have often remonstrated with Mr. Foote, but he says he cannot help himself.

Chat asks "Why can't there be some music at these lectures?" We echo the question. Why not?

Sir Frederick Abel, in his opening address before the British Association, paid a tribute to the name and fame of Joseph Priestley, whose heresy, as he pointed out, hindered his advancement in life, as well as led to direct persecution. Yet the freethinking chemist is remembered while his orthodox persecutors are forgotten.

Mr. Bowmaker, lessee of the Alexandra Theatre, Southend, took a step in the right direction on Sunday, August 31, when he gave a Concert, in which the Rousbey Opera Company took part.

All communications referring to the intended formation of a Branch of the N. S. S. at Wakefield should be directed to the Provincial Secretary, E. Jones-Schofield, Dovecote House, Horbury, near Wakefield.

A meeting was held on Sunday last, at the house of Mr. John Robinson, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunniside, Tow Law, Durham, for the purpose of forming a Branch of the N.S.S. for Crook and neigborhood. Every confidence was expressed by those present that a good society could be established. Taking Crook as a centre, it might include Willington, Sunny Brow, Stanley, Sunniside, Tow Law, and even Wolsingham. It was agreed that the next meeting shall be at Crook on Sunday, Sept. 21st, at 6 p.m., at some place to be hereafter announced, for the purpose of electing officers and transacting other necessary business.

Members of the Finsbury Park Branch are requested to attend a meeting on Friday (Sep. 12) at 8 p.m., at Mr. Rowney's house, 155 Winston Road, Green Lanes. No member should be absent.

Freethinkers should scatter the seed of thought. Sometimes it springs up in unlikely quarters. One of our Bradford subscribers first saw a copy of this journal two years ago. It was dropped into his garden. He picked it up, liked it, and has bought it ever since.

Dr. Allinson orders the weekly insertion of his advertisement as he "finds the *Freethinker* a good medium for advertising." As our circulation is steadily increasing we venture to remind our business readers that they might assist us in this respect with advantage to themselves.

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THE MASTER DREAMER.

THERE was a jolly carpenter,
His name, 'tis said, was Joe,
Who fondly loved a charming maid,
And straightway told her so.

They soon resolved, as one, to share
The sweets and sours of life,
He swore he'd be a faithful hub,
She, an obedient wife.

One night he supped on pork and beans,
Washed down with mugs of "beer,"
And had a very dreadful dream
That troubled him full sore.

He dreamt his sweetheart had been false,
And all that live-long day
He tried to hit upon a plan
To put the girl away.

That night he dreamt he plainly heard
A voice from his bed post
Say, "All right Joe, your sweetheart's babe's
The offspring of a ghost."

This joyful news removed a load
From off his aching heart—
The priest soon hitched them in a knot
That Death alone could part.

Joe had to go and pay his rent,
And as 'twas nice and mild
He took his wife along with him,
Though she was "big with child."

When they arrived the inn was full
And all the host could say
Was, "there's my stable, take a stall,
There's plenty good fresh hay."

As Joe had no alternative
He thanked the worthy host:
And on that hay a boy was born—
The bantling of a ghost.

But soon Joe had another dream
And heard the voice again.—
It told him if he didn't slope,
The baby would be slain.

Poor Joe arose in mortal funk,
Packed up some togs and toke,
And scuttled off Egypt's shores
Well mounted on a moke.

Soon after that another dream
Brought welcome news from home,
That he who sought the youngster's life,
Had gone to Kingdom Come.

Then Joe at once made tracks for home,
Where Matthew drops his quill
And leaves us to decide the point,
If he be dreaming still.

T. CLARK.

FOOLING EACH OTHER; OR, POOR LITTLE ISAAC.

[A SCREAMING FARCE.]

SCENE 1.—*A grove in Beersheba; Abraham's farmhouse in the background.*

JEHOVAH (*entering*). Ha, ha, ha, that's a very good idea of mine. I'll frighten the wits out of my old friend Abraham. I do so love to tantalise my people—in fact I only created them for my own amusement. Ha, he comes this way.

ABRAHAM (*entering*). How does this weather suit you, most mighty Jehovah; but stay, I was forgetting that you made the weather to suit yourself.

JEH. Thou hast spoken truly, my faithful servant Abraham. You cannot suppose that I worked six days making the world for the benefit of others. By the way, I just want you to do me a little favor—I only want you to slaughter your only son Isaac and offer him up to me as a burnt offering.

AB. Is that all you require of me, oh noble and kind-hearted Jah! Your merciful command shall be obeyed. Would that I had fifty sons to offer as sacrifices to one so benevolent as yourself!

JEH. That will do, friend Abe; don't flatter me too much; I know I am all-good. Still, I might observe that Isaac ought to be proud of having such a humane parent as yourself.

AB. When am I to offer up my son?

JEH. Three days from now. It will take you that time to reach the land of Moriah, and you can offer him up on one of the mountains there. But you need not let Isaac know he is to be the sacrifice until the last minute, or the little wretch might skedaddle.

AB. Your command shall be obeyed. Farewell, most wise and generous Lord. (*Exit*)

JEH. Now I wonder whether he will attempt to offer up his only son as a sacrifice. Of course I'm only going to test the old fellow has faith in me. I know I can foresee all that will happen, but still I'm not *quite* sure whether he will obey me. But time will show. (*Exit*)

SCENE 2.—*Country road, mountains in the distance.*

ABRAHAM. Come along Isaac. Don't make such a fuss about carrying that wood. Those two fellows and the donkey we have just left behind carried it quite easily between them. Surely it's not heavy. Besides I've got my share, to carry—this knife and a box of matches; I call that an equal division of labor.

ISAAC. It's all right dad; but how many more miles have we to go?

AB. Only another mile now, my boy. Perhaps we'll see a pub. on the road, and I can have a tankard of ale, and ask them if they can spare you a drop of water.

IS. Thanks, dad. This is rather a dry job. I'll sing to keep my spirits up.

AB. (*some time after*) I can see the spot we want; it's only a little distance now. You'll have to climb up yonder mountain with that wood.

IS. Don't you think I had better carry up one piece at a time?

AB. Certainly not; it will take you all day getting up and down. Carry it all up at once. The Lord will help you.

IS. Well, he hasn't helped me much yet. I am sweating like a bull and tired as a dog.

AB. Don't talk such blasphemy, my boy. It makes my heart bleed to hear you go on like that.

IS. Very sorry. But I say dad, what's the use of carrying all this wood up that mountain when there's plenty of trees up there?

AB. God only knows. The Lord told me to take some wood. Perhaps he didn't know there were any trees on the mountain. You had better throw the whole lot away. I cannot help you with it, for I've got enough to do to scramble up with the knife and matches. Throw the wood away.

IS. Well, this is a rare go after carrying it all this way. It's a regular farce (*throws down wood*).

AB. Don't be so wicked; God won't love you. You had better carry the matches now you haven't got the wood. I'll try to scramble up with the knife (*both climb mountain*).

SCENE 3.—*Top of Mount Moriah. Abraham and Isaac building altar.*

AB. That will do nicely.

IS. I say, dad, you've got the wood and the matches, but I'm blowed if you haven't left the sacrifice behind. You're like the woman who forgot to bring the baby when she went to have it christened.

AB. Oh, I forget to tell you, the Lord wants me to offer *you* up as a sacrifice.

IS. Oh, does he. Ain't he awfully kind. I'm off; good bye dad (*about to go*).

AB. Here, come back, and let me whisper to you so that the Lord won't hear. I'm only going to fool him. Although he pretends to know all that's going to happen he makes me go through all this rigmarole to try my faith in him, therefore I'm only going to pretend to offer you up as a sacrifice.

IS. I don't quite understand you, dad.

AB. Well, I want you to kneel down on that altar, and I'll flourish the knife about as though I were going to stick you. I know Jehovah is only fooling me, and I am almost sure he will stop me at the last minute. Anyhow, if he don't, I'll stop myself. Of course he can't tell whether I was going to kill you or not. Because if he could he wouldn't want me to go through this performance at all.

IS. You'll get something for all this dad, won't you?

AB. Yes, my boy, and you shall share it with me. Now then, jump on that altar and get yourself ready.

IS. Right you are dad, but be careful with that knife.

AB. (*in loud voice*) Farewell Isaac, my only son; it is hard to part with one so young; but I must obey the Lord, so here goes (*pretends to strike*).

VOICE (*from above*). Abraham, Abraham, hold hard; I didn't think you would go so far as that. I am truly pleased with you, and am perfectly satisfied that you have implicit faith in me. There's an old sheep just there in the thicket nearly pegging out; kill it to save its life and offer it up as a sacrifice instead of your only son Isaac. You are a god-fearing man and when you die you shall go to heaven and have Lazarus full of sores in your bosom and you will be happy for ever and ever. Amen.

SCOFFER.

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FREETHOUGHT IN THE COUNTRY.

ALTHOUGH the Secular Society may not be increasing so rapidly as one could wish, there are most evident signs of Freethought progress even in most out-of-the-way districts. It cannot be said that the neighborhood I am now in has ever shown signs of great mental activity, yet two cases there have come to my knowledge of conversion to Freethought. I will take one case. I had been on a day's excursion from my lodgings, when on my arrival home I found a working man had been and was anxious to see me. Shortly after he called again, and as I had gone to the door myself I was therefore able to satisfy him. I shall not soon forget the hearty manner in which he shook my hand. I found that he and another were actually getting the *Freethinker* at one of the local newsagent's each week, in fact it was the channel of information that lead him to me. I found him a man considerably above the average of those parts in intelligence. He informed me he had never heard a lecture; but as we had so many things to talk about I forgot to inquire how he became a Secularist. I am hoping it may be the result of seeds sown at different times by myself in the neighborhood in the shape of old Freethought papers, tracts, etc. The distribution of literature is in my opinion at once a duty and a means of liberation from the coils of priestcraft. Any Freethinker who can afford to take a holiday should always be provided with literature, both for his own reading and for outside distribution. There are many opportunities in the country, such as heaps of broken stones, gates, clefts of stiles, etc.

One prolific field is the ordinary tract-distributor himself. They are very common in and around small provincial towns. Only last Sunday I was over-taken by one, a respectable earnest young man, and in answer to his "Will you accept a tract, sir?" I as promptly replied, "Yes, if you will accept one of mine." He was evidently only too pleased to exchange, and I got him to readily *promise* to read Mr. Wheeler's *Hell* through, as I faithfully promised to do the same by his, which I did. During a short walk with him I urged him to in future do his own thinking, and not to treat it as he would his washing. I found his tracts the usual mass of lies about the Atheist Tom Paine, Voltaire, etc., and little anecdotes of converted Infidels; of course names and places were blank. I met the young man tract distributor afterwards and he actually smiled as he passed. I have great hopes of that young gentleman. P.

PRAYER.

ONCE, Hoja, in his sleep, believed
That nine gold pieces he received.
Hopeful, he cried, "Lord, make it ten!"
And lo! ten came. And chuckling, then
"Let there be nineteen, Lord," he prayed.
And then, awake, he stared dismayed
For the space of that sad minute
At his bare hand, with nothing in it.
Then shutting eyes, with hands outspread,
"Let it be nine, then, Lord," he said.

—*Poems from Turkey.*

FAIR DIVISION.—"My dear," said the aunt of a young widow to her niece one day, "is that your husband's portrait on the wall?" "Yes, auntie." "How blissfully happy! and what a heaven on earth must have been his life below!" simpered the aunt. "Ah, yes," said the widow, "but we arranged matters so that when he became blissful in heaven I became happy on earth."

AN English missionary was invited to a large dinner-party by a German professor and deputy Out of regard to his cloth, the host, after the ladies had withdrawn from the table, apologised to the missionary for their perhaps too *décolletée* style of dress. "O, pray don't mention it, replied the missionary; "I have lived for ten years among the savages of Africa, and am quite accustomed to such sights."

A colored preacher was talking of prayer, and said: "Now, bredren, when you prays don't pray so much in a gineral way; pray more pertickler. And when I says 'more pertickler,' do you know what I means? Let me tell yer. If I prays de Lord to gib me a turkey, dat ain't nothin'—I ain't a-goin' to git dat turkey! But when I prays de Lord to gib me one o' Massa John's turkeys, I knows I's gwine to git dat turkey fore Sat'd'y night!"

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mr. J. Coppock, F.C.L., "Animals, Plants, and Minerals: their Relations."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Henefer, "Thomas Paine, the Deist." Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt "Science and Responsibility."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. G. B. Shaw, "Socialism and Secularism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Bible as a Guide in Science."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road. N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote "Mr. Gladstone on Moses."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Richard Carlile and the Free Press Battle."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. Sam Standring, "Street Preachers."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Heavenly Government."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Has the Religion of Christ been of Benefit to the World?"

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "God and his Friends."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation"; 3.30, Mr. G. W. Foote.

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side). 6.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Who was Christ and what did he Teach?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. M. Smith, "God is Love." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Fall of Man: is the Story True?" Thursday, at 8, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. Samuel Soddy, "Religious Belief."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Simon Peter."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Miracles of the Old Testament."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Biography"; 5.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky"

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Omnipotence."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible"; 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "St. Paul's Impudence at Athens."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham — Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. C. Burton, "Phrenology and Religion," with illustrations.

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr Henry Smith, "The Soul that Sinneth it shall Die."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, debate between the Rev. Mr. Collar (of Manchester) and Mr. Stanley Jones (of Liverpool), on "Has God Revealed Himself to Man?" Free.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30 (and on Wednesday, 7.30), general meeting of Sunday Music League; 3, fortnightly meeting of members.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A. Clifton, "Agnosticism: from an Inquirer's Point of View."

Portsmouth Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. R. Forder, "Jesus: was he Man, God, or Myth?"

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street. — Mr. A. B. Wakefield, 3, "The Historic Struggle of Freethought"; 7, "The Eight Hours' Movement, Impracticable and Absurd."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr Jones will lecture.

Morecambe—On the Sands, 3, Mr. J. Greevz Fisher, "Evolution"; 7, Mr. A. B. Wakefield."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London S.E. —Sept. 14 (morning) Bethnal Green, (afternoon) Victoria Park; 21 (morning) Midland Arches, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich. October 5 (morning) Camberwell; 15, Battersea.

H SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool. —Sept. 14, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Lara Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool— Sept. 14, Manchester. Oct 12 Liverpool.

T THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham— Sept. 14 (morning) Camberwell 21 (morning out-door and evening in the hall) Plaistow; 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.— Sept. 21 (evening) Woolwich; 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 19, Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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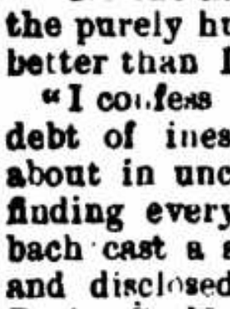

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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GLADSTONE ON MOSES.

[CONCLUDED].

MR. GLADSTONE advances five arguments to prove the antiquity of the Mosaic Law, and we shall proceed to discuss them. But before doing so we must make this observation. Not one of his arguments would carry the Law back to the time of Moses. They might, if they were sound, carry it back beyond the Captivity, but this is many hundreds of years from the death of the supposed lawgiver. It appears to us, indeed, that Mr. Gladstone is playing on his readers' lack of historic perspective.

First Argument.—The early ages of the Jews were purer and nobler, and less idolatrous, than the later; it is therefore "a paradox, and even a rather wanton paradox, to refer the production of those sacred Mosaic books, which constituted the charter of the Hebrews as a separate and peculiar people, to the epochs of a lowered and decaying spiritual life."

Surely Mr. Gladstone has read Jewish history upside down. Where in the narrative of the wandering in the desert, of the rule of the Judges, and of the early Kings, shall we find this heightened spiritual life? Look at the hideous story of the Levite and his concubine in the Book of Judges, and see what kind of private and public life existed in the "good old times." Then turn to the best parts of the Book of Isaiah, and see the immense improvement in every respect. If the Mosaic Law shows a high spiritual culture (which for the moment we neither affirm nor dispute), as Mr. Gladstone alleges, it was more likely to have originated in the later than in the earlier ages of Jewish history.

Second Argument.—From about 300 B.C. the Jews paid great reverence to the sacred text, and took painful precautions to preserve its integrity. Is it possible, therefore, that the ostensible editors were really the authors? And was there not "something like hallucination on the part of a people that accepted such novelties as ancient?"

This is a skilful, but not very ingenuous, appeal to the ordinary readers of to-day, who may well doubt the possibility of such an imposition being now successful, and who have neither the knowledge nor the imagination to weigh the probability of its success in a very different state of society, when there was no printing-press and no general circulation of literature, when the masses were grossly ignorant, and all the knowledge that existed was monopolised by the theocracy.

Let us take a couple of illustrations of how people can be the victims of "something like hallucination"—one from profane and one from sacred history.

During the mediæval period the Arthurian legends grew up in Western Europe. They were most circumstantial, as works of imagination are apt to be; witness the marvellous details of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* or his *History of the Great Plague*, or, in our own day, the minute Dutch painting of Dickens. When we read the Arthurian legends in Sir Thomas Mallory's great book they seem like actual occurrences. It requires an effort to realise that they are purely romantic; and they have still enough life-blood in them to give an air of reality to Tennyson's more shadowy *Idylls of the King*. Centuries ago those legends were real history. They were as true as Gospel. Now we know they are products of imagination. The famous Round Table was the dream of poets' brains. The gallant knights and lovely ladies were fictions. Arthur himself seems never to have existed. Like William Tell, another purely romantic creation, who has figured so prominently in Swiss history as an actual hero, Arthur has melted away in the light of modern criticism. Nor is it anything but foolishness to lament the "loss," for if history becomes more scientific, the poetry of the old legends remains as an imperishable possession.

Our second illustration shall be taken from the New Testament. In the Epistle of Jude a quotation is made from "Enoch, the seventh from Adam." Now this quotation is really taken from the Book of Enoch, a work which is ascribed by some authorities to the first, and by others to the second, century before Christ. That is the highest antiquity claimed for the book by any competent scholar. Yet here, in the Epistle of Jude, we have a Christian writer of probably the second century after Christ, citing the work as written by the Enoch who lived before the Flood. In other words, a work not four hundred years old, and perhaps not three hundred, was honestly taken to be older than Moses, older than Abraham, older than Noah. Was not this "something like hallucination"? And if a Christian writer could be so deceived, was it impossible for Jewish readers to be the victims of a less colossal deception?

Third Argument.—If the Jewish hierarchy composed the Pentateuch, and ascribed it, or at least the legislation, to Moses, the forgery was unaccountably unscientific. The books are "rather crude and irregular," they "have not that consistency which belongs to consecutiveness of form." Yet the priests had "unbounded freedom of manipulation," and there was every condition to "favor the production of a thoroughly systematic and orderly work."

Now this argument proceeds on two false assumptions; first, that the whole Pentateuch was concocted at one time by one set of hands—say like our Revised Version of the Bible; secondly, that the priests were skilful enough to anticipate the severity of modern criticism. The first assumption would be scouted by the whole school of "negative" critics; the second would be derided by every person with a grain of common sense.

The fact is, the forgers were skilful enough for their own necessities. They had merely to deal with the circumstances of their own time. And if the circumstances had not changed, as they did not until the modern invention of printing, and the growth of exact knowledge, the forgery would still hold its ground. It imposes on ordinary people still, and apparently it imposes on Mr. Gladstone. But it did not impose on Spinoza, who viewed it as a man of genius, a mathematician, and a scholar; it did not impose on Colenso,

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who examined it with more than the minuteness of Sir Charles Russell's examination of Pigott; it does not impose on the great textual and historical critics of Germany, Holland and France; nor does it impose on English writers like Dr. Robertson Smith and the editor of *Lux Mundi*. We may add that it did not impose on the critical sagacity of Voltaire and Thomas Paine.

Fourth Argument.—The exclusion of the doctrine of a future life discredits the idea of the Law being framed immediately before or after the Captivity, as the Jews had then become familiar with the "idea of a future life and an Underworld, as held both in the East and in Egypt."

But was not Moses "skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians," and was not the belief in a future life a profound conviction among the Egyptians long before his birth? Why then did *he* exclude it from the Law? Mr. Gladstone says it was because he wanted to draw a sharp line between the Hebrews and other nations. But why could not the same motive prevail with the post-exile hierarchy? Do we not know that they were passionate Judaists? Were they not the nurses of a patriotism far narrower and intenser than that which obtained in the age of Solomon?

Fifth Argument.—The Samaritan Pentateuch is a proof of the antiquity of the Mosaic Law. "How is it possible," Mr. Gladstone asks, "to conceive that it should have held as a Divine work the supreme place in the regard of the Samaritans, if, about or near the year B.C. 500, or, again, if at the time of Manasseh the seceder, it had, as a matter of fact, been a recent compilation of their enemies the Jews?"

This argument, if valid, would not carry the Pentateuch back to the time of Moses, which is what Mr. Gladstone undertakes to prove. At the utmost it could only establish the fact that the Pentateuch was in existence before the Captivity, when the old Hebrew character was in use among the Jews; and it does not require all the statistical power of Mr. Gladstone to see that a book might exist 700 years before Christ and still not exist 1,500 years before Christ. We are accustomed to cutting big slices out of ancient chronology, but really the years followed each other one at a time, and many things happened in the course of twenty generations.

Mr. Gladstone's argument, however, is fallacious. The Samaritans were not harder to impose upon than the Jews, and however great their hostility, they had a common interest in Moses and the founders of the race.

Mr. Gladstone is curiously silent about the strong objections to the antiquity of the Samaritan Pentateuch. We have no space to enter upon them here, but they are of a very pregnant character, and Mr. Gladstone has perhaps shown a wise discretion in avoiding this awkward branch of the subject.

Having gone through Mr. Gladstone's arguments, which we have drawn out in numerical order for the sake of clearness, we proceed to remark that they are all of an *a priori* character. He judiciously evades all the positive facts of the case. He does not touch a single internal difficulty. He does not explain, for instance, how "the stranger that is within thy gates" was inserted in the Fourth Commandment while the Jews were desert nomads dwelling in tents; nor does he give the slightest hint as to how the Mosaic Law *could* have been carried out in the desert, or why it was so utterly neglected during the rule of the Judges, and plainly violated during the reign of the early Kings. No one but a priest was to presume to offer sacrifice; yet we see David sacrificing, and at the opening of the Temple we see Solomon officiating as High Pontiff.

The one concession to rational criticism that Mr. Gladstone deigns to make is this. There is a "probable imperfection of the text"—a phrase wide enough to cover anything—and numbers may have gone wrong in transcribing; which again is a convenient method of reconciling the wildest contradictions, and simply involves the re-editing of the Pentateuch.

We have read that a famous *grande dame* (not one of Brantome's *grandes dames de par le monde* let us hope) has written to thank Mr. Gladstone for the great comfort and support she has derived from his recent articles. We do not envy him such praise. When a man of his standing enters the lists, it should not be to make a reassuring display to his lady friends in the grand stand, but to grapple in deadly earnest with a serious foe. This he is not doing. He had enough of Professor Huxley, and too much of Colonel Ingersoll. We can understand his preference for *Good Words*. It is a party magazine and no reply is permitted. He wins an easy victory who stalks into the arena alone and fights an imaginary opponent. He may gain the applause of those who wear his favor, but men of honesty and discernment will lift their eyebrows at the spectacle.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE ANGLO-ISRAELITES.

God's word is the fountain head of much foolishness. The belief in evil spirits, witchcraft, magic, dreams, charms, and even theosophy finds countenance in the Christian book-fetish. There seems no end to the crazy theories founded on the Bible. One day we have a prophet predicting the speedy approach of the end of the world, and at the same time forming his newspaper into a company from which he is to receive benefit until the time of his translation to heaven. On another we have a Church of God starting up and professing to be the only elect, although the entire body could be accommodated in a room of small dimensions.

One of the silliest sects in this Bible-instructed land of three hundred sects and but one sauce, is that of the Anglo-Israelites. The sect may be dated from the days of crazy Richard Brothers, who called himself the nephew of God Almighty, claiming descent from one of the brothers of Jesus mentioned it Matt. xiii., 55 and Mark vi., 3. His *Uncle* had given him the mission of restoring the chosen people to Jerusalem, and the faculty of discerning them among the children of England. In the face of the facts of history, ethnology and language, there are still a number of pious but ignorant people, who hold that the dispersed tribes of Israel are to be found in these islands, and the believers of course imagine themselves in particular to be of the chosen race to whom God's promises are due, or perhaps we should say over due. The Jews are not in it, being discarded for having crucified their blessed Savior.

The Anglo-Israelites have one weekly paper, *The Banner of Israel*, and two monthlies, *The British Israelite* and *The Messenger*. Several religious papers also countenance the cause without being devoted to its advocacy. They issue numerous pamphlets and tracts, and in Canada have a paper called *The Canadian Advance*. The late Bishop Titcomb held their views, and they number among their writers Dr. Wild, Col. J. M. Williams, Major-General A. M. Rainey, etc.

One main item of their belief is that Queen Victoria is a direct descendant of King David. They have issued a large chart, tracing her connection with that somewhat shady character, and thence to Adam and Eve. This they can fairly claim is to the full as trustworthy as many of the genealogical trees by which the upper ten thousand prove their titles to nobility.

The chart jumps rather suddenly from Zedekiah to some Irish chief, leaving us to suppose that Nebuchadnezzar's captive gave birth to an Irishman either in Jerusalem or Babylon. The better opinion, however, is that the Prophet Jeremiah emigrated to

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Ireland, carrying with him the ark of the covenant (perhaps with Jahveh inside), and also the stone which Jacob anointed after the manner of the Hindus with the lingam.

It seems that Jeremiah had a beautiful daughter named Tea-Tephi, who married one of the ancient Irish kings. The descendants married into the Scotch Royal Family, and thus our German speaking sovereign is proved to be a *pur sang* Anglo-Israelite. Jacob's stone, of course, found its way under the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey. Equally of course the Anglo-Israelites are to be restored to Palestine. Mr. Edward Hine, their most prolific advocate, in his earlier writings dated this event about the year 1882, but has since found reason to modify this opinion. But the Lord will not keep his own true and special people waiting very much longer. In his own good time he will gather his elect together in the Holy Land, and devote the rest of the world to destruction.

Let not the reader think I have any animus against this obscure sect, the adherents of which I believe to be, for the most part, as honest as they are earnest. My object in calling attention to their vagaries is simply to illustrate the effect of Bible worship in wasting time and stultifying intelligence. That Englishmen should be found who write big books and advocate week after week that they are descendants of the lost ten tribes, can only be explained by the benumbing effect of treating one book as divine and all others as of comparatively no account. Until the Bible is displaced from its pre-eminence, and importance is given to other branches of human culture, we must expect such absurdities as those of the Anglo-Israelites to grow and flourish.

J. M. Wheeler.

SHELLEY ON CHRISTIANITY.

You assert that the human race merited eternal reprobation because their common father had transgressed the divine command, and that the crucifixion of the Son of God was the only sacrifice of sufficient efficacy to satisfy eternal justice. But it is no less inconsistent with justice and subversive of morality that millions should be responsible for a crime which they had no share in committing, than that, if they had really committed it, the crucifixion of an innocent being could absolve them from moral turpitude. Certainly this is a mode of legislation peculiar to a state of savageness and anarchy; this is the irrefragable logic of tyranny and imposture.

The supposition that God has ever supernaturally revealed his will to man at any other period than the original creation of the human race, necessarily involves a compromise of his benevolence. It assumes that he withheld from mankind a benefit which it was in his power to confer. That he suffered his creatures to remain in ignorance of truths essential to their happiness and salvation. That during the lapse of innumerable ages, every individual of the human race had perished without redemption, from an universal stain which the Deity at length descended in person to erase. That the good and wise of all ages, involved in one common fate with the ignorant and wicked, have been tainted by involuntary and inevitable error, which torments infinite in duration may not avail to expiate.

In vain will you assure me with amiable inconsistency that the mercy of God will be extended to the virtuous, and that the vicious will alone be punished. The foundation of the Christian Religion is manifestly compromised by a concession of this nature. A subterfuge thus palpable plainly annihilates the necessity of the incarnation of God for the redemption of the human race, and represents the descent of the Messiah as a gratuitious display of Deity, solely adapted to perplex, to terrify and to embroil mankind.

It is sufficiently evident that an omniscient being never conceived the design of reforming the world by Christianity. Omniscience would surely have foreseen the inefficacy of that system, which experience demonstrates not only to have been utterly impotent in restraining, but to have been most active in exhaling the malevolent propensities of men. During the period which elapsed between the removal of the seat of empire to Constantinople in 328, and its capture by the Turks in 1453, what salutary influence did Christianity exercise upon that world which it was intended to enlighten? Never before was Europe the theatre of such ceaseless and sanguinary wars; never were the people so brutalised by ignorance and debased by slavery.

I will admit that one prediction of Jesus Christ has been indisputably fulfilled. "I come not to bring peace upon earth but a sword." Christianity indeed has equalled Judaism in the atrocities, and exceeded it in the extent of its desolation. Eleven millions of men, women and children have been killed in battle, butchered in their sleep, burned to death at public festivals of sacrifice, poisoned, tortured, assassinated and pillaged in the spirit of the Religion of Peace, and for the glory of the most merciful God.

In vain will you tell me that these terrible effects flow not from Christianity, but from the abuse of it. No such excuse will avail to palliate the enormities of a religion pretended to be divine. A limited intelligence is only so far responsible for the effects of its agency as it foresaw, or might have foreseen them; but Omniscience is manifestly chargeable with all the consequence of its conduct. Christianity itself declares that the worth of the tree is to be determined by the quality of its fruit. The extermination of infidels; the mutual persecutions of hostile sects; the midnight massacres and slow burning of thousands, because their creed contained either more or less than the orthodox standard, of which Christianity has been the immediate occasion; and the invariable opposition which philosophy has ever encountered from the spirit of revealed religion, plainly show that a very slight portion of sagacity was sufficient to have estimated at its true value the advantages of that belief to which some Theists are unaccountably attached.

You lay great stress upon the originality of the Christian system of morals. If this claim be just, either your religion must be false, or the Deity has willed that opposite modes of conduct should be pursued by mankind at different times, under the same circumstances; which is absurd.

The doctrine of acquiescing in the most insolent despotism; of praying for and loving our enemies; of faith and humility; appears to fix the perfection of the human character in that abjectness and credulity which priests and tyrants of all ages have found sufficiently convenient for their purposes. It is evident that a whole nation of Christians (could such an anomaly maintain itself a day) would become, like cattle, the property of the first occupier. It is evident that ten highwaymen would suffice to subjugate the world if it were composed of slaves who dared not to resist oppression.

The apathy to love and friendship, recommended by your creed, would, if attainable, not be less pernicious. This enthusiasm of anti-social misanthropy, if it were an actual rule of conduct, and not the speculation of a few interested persons, would speedily annihilate the human race. A total abstinence from sexual intercourse is not perhaps enjoined, but is strenuously recommended,* and was actually practised to a frightful extent by the primitive Christians.†

The penalties inflicted by that monster Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, on the pleasures of unlicensed love are so iniquitously severe, that no modern legislator could have affixed them to the most atrocious crimes.‡ This cold-blooded and hypocritical ruffian cut his son's throat, strangled his wife, murdered his father-in-law and his brother-in-law, and maintained at his court a set of bloodthirsty and bigoted Christian priests, one of whom was sufficient to excite the one half of the world to massacre the other.

I am willing to admit that some few axioms of morality, which Christianity has borrowed from the philosophers of Greece and India, dictate, in an unconnected state, rules of conduct worthy of regard; but the purest and most elevated lessons of morality must remain nugatory, the most probable inducements to virtue must fail of their effect, so long as the slightest weight is attached to that dogma which is the vital essence of revealed religion.

Belief is set up as the criterion of merit or demerit; a man is to be judged not by the purity of his intentions but by the orthodoxy of his creed; an assent to certain propositions is to outweigh in the balance of Christianity the most generous and elevated virtue.

—*From "A Refutation of Deism."*

* Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote to me; it is good for a man not to touch a woman. I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; it is better to marry than burn (1 Cor., chap. vii.)

† Se Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. ii., p. 210.

‡ Ibid, vol. ii., p. 269.

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GABRIEL CALLED HIM.

The descent of a balloon in a backwoods settlement is almost invariably productive of incidents. Landing once in a mountainous district in the State of Georgia (writes King, the aeronaut) my companion and myself were astonished at hearing loud shrieks and exclamations issuing from a house near by, while in the doorway we saw an old lady on her knees praying with great vociferation. The whole neighborhood had been aroused, and an earthquake could not have caused greater commotion. In the woods, not far from our landing-place, we found a bag of meal lying in the path. It had been dropped by some panic-stricken native. Farther on, a fishing party had abandoned several strings of fish. Our comedy came measurably near ending in tragedy, for we had a narrow escape from the shotguns of a gang of illicit distillers, who took us to be revenue officers. An Afro-American, hearing me call to him, started off at full-speed, crying as he ran, "Gabriel's done called me. I hear him holler." Very amusing was the experience of Elliot, in one of his descents. He had ascended from Charleston, on a summer afternoon, and was carried slowly down the harbor, landing at last, just at nightfall, on one of the islands. There was to be a wake that night, and the dead negro, Dick by name, lay in a cabin, while a dozen live ones sat outside telling spook stories, when Elliot dropped down in front of them. There was a yell, a scramble, and in a moment all but one had disappeared; he had been caught by the aeronaut's anchor, and dragged some distance, screaming piteously, "Oh, Massa Debil! Massa Debil! I'se not the niggar, I'se not the niggar! Dick's in dah! Dick's in dah!"

ACID DROPS.

The *Christian Commonwealth* says that "when they get old infidel controversialists generally give up their hard task. In a few years they seem to have had their say." As the names of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant are mentioned, we may remind our pious and inaccurate contemporary that Mrs. Besant, though a Theosophist, is still lecturing against Christianity, and that Mr. Bradlaugh will resume his anti-theological lectures at the Hall of Science in November.

When the *C. C.* contends that Christianity lives on in spite of all attacks, it forgets that it only does so by changing. One by one its worst features are dropped. Even the *C. C.* is shaky about Hell. Yet Christianity without a hell is on the road to ruin. Mr. Spurgeon sees this. His only mistake is in supposing that Hell can be kept in a humane age.

Can anybody inform us what have become of the Rev. Dr. S Wainwright, the president, and Mr. Alexander Scott, the secretary, of a Society for the Suppression of Blasphemous Literature? Shortly after Mr. Foote's trial in 1883 these gentlemen wrote to the *Times*:—"We propose to get up cases, as our funds will allow, against Prof. Huxley, Dr. Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, Swinburne, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, the publishers of Mill's works the publishers of Strauss's works, Leslie Stephen, John Morley, the editor of the *Jewish World*, Dr. Martineau, and others, who, by their writings have sown widespread unbelief, and, in some cases, rank Atheism, in cultivated families." Alas! Messrs. Wainwright and Scott were not supported as they should have been by a Christian world concerned for the defence of its faith. Otherwise we might have by this time got rid of the Blasphemy Laws We are not even aware that Messrs. Wainwright and Scott ever published a first list of subscriptions.

Church music is taking new developments. The other day a man whistled "Nearer, my God, to Thee," with variations, as part of a special service in a church at Ocean Grove (U.S) The man is still alive. Two hundred years ago, if he had performed that feat in Scotland, his life wouldn't have been worth five minutes' purchase.

"Whistling for Jesus" ought to be a great attraction. Ordinary Church music is too slow for some folk. Let the churches secure good whistlers, and they may hope to get in the halt, the lame, and the blind. At least for a season. But, of course, there is the danger of even whistling getting played out. Still, the churches need not despair. They might train a lot of asses (four-legged ones) to bray in concert, and advertise the performance as "The Brayhard Chorus; or Balaam Superseded."

The English clergy are divided on the subject of Cremation. Bishop Moorhouse pooh-poohs the notion that it will make any difference to faith, but Canon Swayne says "without burial, St. Paul's most suggestive analogy between the dead body and the sown seed would be practically effaced from the New Testament." If Canon Swayne thinks the body under the clay sprouts like a grain of corn, or that it cannot sprout a spiritual body as well in an urn as in a coffin, he must be as obtuse as St. Paul. None the less there is a germ of truth in his view; the imagination is differently affected by different modes of disposing of the dead, and were the practice of Cremation to become general, preachers would have greater difficulty in instilling the doctrine of the resurrection. The Pope sees this and hence denounces the heathen practice of burning the dead.

Cardinal Manning's letter to the Catholic Social Congress is worth noting. Among other legal nostrums he recommends the prohibition of the work of married women. This is worthy of him, and of his Church. Every observant man knows there are thousands of married women, blessed (as per the Church Service) with idle, drunken, and dissolute husbands, who have to work hard in order to support their children. Many married women, too, have sick or infirm husbands, and like heroines they toil for the means of life for both. Cardinal Manning would put women in "their place"—that is, the place of subordination and dependence assigned them by the Church.

The Catholic Social Congress was horrified by a letter from the Bishop of Salford (Dr. Vaughan) on the state of the poor in Manchester. But who is responsible for that state? Why chiefly the Church. It stupefies people's minds, and tells them to breed as fast as possible, and then sheds maudlin tears over its own mischief.

The *South Eastern Herald* graces its columns with choice letters from Christians on "The Atheists in Beresford Square." One, W. Darley, is good enough to say he esteems "the Atheist an enemy to civilisation and a disgrace to mankind." "They look upon seduction as no crime, and some of their private meetings would shame a brothel, being given over to vice in its most hideous forms." Such are a few of the flowers of Christian charity with which Atheists are presented.

At the Balsall Heath Police Court on Wednesday in last week, James Pride was sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labor for disgusting exposure in a public thoroughfare in the presence of a young lady who was passing. He was a member of Mr. Cadbury's Bible Class, and this was pleaded in mitigation of the sentence. We are also informed that he was a Sunday-school teacher. The prisoner left the dock exclaiming "I shall die, oh dear, I shall die." May be the world will be little the poorer if he does.

According to a report in the *South Wales Echo*, there is a nice Salvationist in that district. His name is Thomas Meredith, and he is a member of the Pentre Salvation Army. After a good bracing prayer-meeting he went and stole a horse, and offered to sell it to a publican for £3. This ridiculous offer excited suspicion, and Tommy was arrested. He appeared in court in the Salvation uniform, but the Blood and Fire did not save him from being committed to the quarter sessions. It appears that he was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for theft in April last, and after his release he returned to Pentre and rejoined the Army. This is one of those cases that *don't* appear in Booth's reports.

Troubles still continue at Camden Town Parish Church. All the choir boys have struck, and a meeting has been called to discuss the recent affray between the vicar, the Rev. Mr Fitzgerald, and one of his churchwardens. After a bout of fisticuffs, in which the parson got the worst of it, he took his revenge on his opponent by preaching at him from the text, "He was a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper." The meeting of parishioners decided to draw up

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charges against the vicar and communicate with the Bishop of London and the Rural Dean.

The Rev. Mr. Chishohm, of Inverness, having been convicted at the Sheriff Court of indecent behavior towards children, has been deposed by the Presbytery, but he has appealed against this decision, and the unpleasant subject is still kept open.

Prostitutes have always had a reputation for piety. We read that great clerical fetes are going on in Brittany in honor of St. Yves, and the women of the town have vowed to wreak vengeance on M. Renan if he should "profane the tomb of the saint by his presence."

The Rev. Wm Radcliffe, formerly curate at St. Barnabas, Pimlico, is committed for trial at Margate on a charge of fraudulently applying to his own use three rings of which he was bailee. It was stated that the accused had been sentenced to three years imprisonment in France, and was wanted at Christchurch, New Zealand, for arson and embezzlement.

Another nice specimen of the result of Christian teaching is Mr. Charles Mickley, Churchwarden of Bray Parish Church, who was fined the full penalty of £5 and costs for having caused a mare to be worked in an unfit condition. The poor creature, one of whose fore fetlocks was dislocated, was seen by a passer-by to be walking on the fetlock instead of the hoof whilst assisting to draw a load of corn. It transpired that the mare had been in the same condition for a considerable time.

A wonderful specimen of the religious scamp is to undergo trial at Graz (Austria) on September 19. His name is Franz Rabt, and he is 34 years of age. He has been a sexton and night policeman, and enjoyed a pious reputation, being a most assiduous attendant at divine service, and very fervent in praying. His arrest was for the murder of his wife, but he is also accused of a whole catalogue of crimes, including burglary, rape, incendiarism and forgery. No less than seventy-six witnesses are summoned against him.

The chronicler of the Almighty's doings this week will note the terrible colliery disaster in Germany, the spread of cholera in Valencia, the distress and deaths from floods in Hungary, and the inundation of twenty villages on the banks of the Elbe with two thousand persons on the point of starving.

The final report of the North China Famine Relief Committee at Shanghai mentions that from being largely under water there are still hundreds of villages where the people have not been able to sow anything. The committee express regret that calamitous floods are of frequent occurrence in China.

A Lieutenant Finley has been investigating the recorded facts of tornadoes in America. He finds that about 146 such storms visit the United States yearly, with a vortex velocity varying from one hundred to five hundred miles an hour. Yet some think everything is for the best in this world. It is safe to conclude they have never been caught in a tornado.

Religious Hindus really believe in a future life, and in them the genuine effects of the belief can be seen. Holding that if they put themselves to death their spirits will torment their enemies, they sometimes seek to gain their ends by threats of self-destruction. Recently in Rajputana a tax levied to pay certain village expenses having been demanded, the religious devotees, instigated by the head of the monastery, refused to pay it. In this refusal they were supported by devotees from neighboring villages, their number in the aggregate amounting to about one hundred and fifty, who threatened that they would bury themselves alive if not exempt from payment. Their threat was no mere empty one, for on the Thakoor declining to yield to their demand they forthwith began to carry it out by burying two of their number.

The abbot had previously caused trouble. Having been arrested, nearly a hundred of his followers rushed into the compound of the British Political Agent and demanded the abbot's release, threatening to kill themselves if their demand was not granted. Four graves were dug, and in each a man sat himself down, ready to be entombed if their leader was kept in custody. The contemplated wholesale self-immolation was however averted through the tenderheartedness of the Political Agent, who thought it best under the circumstances to comply with the demand of the abbot's infatuated followers.

Savage races having firm belief in dreams possess the greatest faith in a future life. It is said of the early Britons that they would lend in the expectation of a return of the loan in another world. We have not met with such faith—no, not in all Israel.

The Scarlet Lady was "drunk with the blood of the saints," but College Street Church, Northampton, has decided that no member of that congregation shall get drunk even on the Blood of Christ. By an overwhelming majority it has decided to abolish alcoholic wine from the communion table Henceforth they will have to go in for gooseberry or red-currant, or something of that kind.

The numbers of the ballot were—255 for the abolition, 56 against, and 113 neutral. The 113 don't care a cent. either way. All they want is the Blood of Christ. They only draw the line at vinegar. But the 56 want the good old full-bodied port, so that after drinking it they may say with the nigger at his first communion, "Me lub Jesus."

This abolition of alcholic wine in churches is a sign of the time. Of course it is contended that the Bible wines were sober drinks, but this is absurd on the face of it. What will not a Christian say, however, to act like a civilised being and at the same time to keep his printed fetish?

The Duke of Argyll is generally a wordy gentleman, but he is severely concise in his letter to the Rev. Jacob Primmer. This sky-pilot holds a paying commission to fight a "Romanising" Society of which the Duke is president. He has held a number of big open-air meetings, and carried true-blue Presbyterian resolutions, and he now calls upon the gallant Argyll to come out of his "traitorous society." The Duke replies "You write with great violence—no doubt with great sincerity—but, as I think, very little knowledge.—Yours etc." One for the Duke. Primmer must try again.

The vicar of Southgate, who is generally respected, had trouble in his household. A lady member of it lost her reason. In his distress he asked that no lectures might be given on the Green on that particular Sunday evening, as the doctor was very apprehensive of the result of any disturbance on the sensitive patient. The Freethinkers at once decided to hold no meeting. But the Christian Evidence lecturer only moved a little further off. This beautiful specimen of Christian charity has given rise to much local comment.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, the clever young writer who is taking the town by storm, has a skit on Theosophy in his new volume *In Black and White*. Madame Blavatsky, and the other ladies who cluster at 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, will hardly like the following:—"Once upon a time, some people in India made a new Heaven and a new Earth out of broken tea-cups, a missing brooch or two, and a hair-brush. These were hidden under bushes, or stuffed into holes in the hill-side, and an entire Civil Service of Subordinate Gods used to find or mend them again; and every one said— There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.'"

By the way, the Theosophists have just been discovering some records about 11,000 years old in Mexico, belonging to a great extinct race invented by Madame Blavatsky. But somehow the Theosophical discoveries never find their way into the books of real science.

Professor Coues, the eminent American naturalist, who is being sued for "libelling" Madame Blavatsky, has favored us with a copy of the New York *Sun* in which the "libel" appeared. He informs us that he has found our pamphlet *The New Cagliostro* useful, and asks us to send him a few

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copies for distribution. Of course we have acceded to his request.

For our part, we have refrained, and we shall refrain, from any remarks on Madame Blavatsky's private character. It is a subject on which we are profoundly ignorant, and wish to remain so. But her "ways that are dark" in establishing and promoting the Theosophical Society are public matters, and we have a perfect right to deal with them.

A London *Echo* article, signed "George J. Day," praises the work of the Salvation Army in Westminster. "In six months," it appears, "topers have given up their drink, lazy men their idleness, burglars their thieving, pugilists their ruffianism, and Atheists their freethought." This is a queer catalogue; and it is still more queer that the people who maliciously bracket Atheists with drunkards and burglars should cry out that Atheists attack their religion with too little politeness.

English Freethinkers should rejoice at the Boulanger exposures. We always contended that this charlatan was intriguing with the Royalists and the Church to overthrow the Republic. And what Freethinker is so blind as not to see that the restoration of any form of Monarchy in France would mean the fresh ascendancy of priests?

The singers of some of the most popular of our comic songs, I fear, are responsible—although only indirectly—for a great deal of irreverence. I assisted recently at "a drum-head collection" by a division of the Salvation Army on the Brighton beach. One of the spouters sought to give emphasis to his address by adopting the catechising method of oratory. "Oh, my brothers," he cried, "what are we wretched mortals—here to-day and gone to-morrow? What is the world? What is heaven? And, you sinful ones, what is hell?" Here came the opportunity of the irreverent lounger, who, taking his pipe from his mouth, shouted at the preacher the title of Mr. James Fawn's comical ditty, "Ask a policeman." And then the band played, and they passed the shrimps around.—"Carados" in *Referee*.

Canon Liddon's death has been the occasion of much wild writing. He was a learned man and a "great" preacher but only a very sanguine admirer can suppose that anything of his will live. Some have likened him to Bossuet—a foolish comparison! He was as much like Bossuet as a parrot is like an eagle. Others, especially Mr. Stead, call him the English Chrysostom. But that title is already appropriated by Jeremy Taylor, whose sermons are literature, which is more than can be said of Canon Liddon. We have only to add that the famous Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Christ show a curious inability to see the real nature of the dispute between Christians and Rationalists.

Friends of secular education must be alert. It is rumored that next year the Government will dish the Liberals with a scheme of Free Education, which will mean the perpetual public endowment of the Church of England schools. At present out of 15,000 parishes in this country there are nearly 10,000 where the only day school is a Church of England one. A sop to the Catholics and Wesleyans, in the shape of an endowment of their schools, will, it is expected, disarm opposition, and put secular educationists in a hopeless minority.

The Buffalo *Courier* tells this story: At the gospel tent meeting on Niagara Street a member had just ceased speaking about a cure of asthma affected by prayer when a lank individual arose and asked for the privilege of the floor. "If you have any experience, you may speak, brother," said the presiding officer. "I have had experience. My father was sick with the asthma for fifteen years, and he was finally brought to pray for his recovery. [Intense interest manifested among hearers.] He prayed fifty years, and [emphatically] he died of the asthma." Hysterical laughter among urchins on rear seats and consternation among the leaders.

General Booth is taking advantage of the levanting of the *Matrimonial News* editor. He is going to start a sort of woman market. In some parts of the world there are men who want wives, in other parts women who want husbands, and Booth proposes to bring them together. It is a risky business, but why shouldn't he succeed? He showed himself a first-rate matrimonial agent in the case of Miss Charlesworth.

In Richmond recently we saw a copy of the "Wicked" Bible issued by Field in 1657. It was ordered to be burnt, being shown to contain as many as 6,000 errors, among others the statement that "the unrighteous shall inherit eternal life." A Dutch friend who was present told us there was a Dutch Bible with the reading "The fool hath said in his heart there is a God." This should be the version of the future.

The Rev. John Wilkinson, of Mildmay, has a mission to the Jews. He says that when he started it he asked the Lord for £1,000 a year, and got it. Like Oliver Twist, he asked for more. Last year he petitioned for £5,000, and obtained it. Why doesn't the Lord inspire some idiots to give him enough straight off to convert all Jewry? We suspect he has not yet rendered the Lord a balance-sheet showing what becomes of the money.

The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse has been asking a Weston-super-Mare audience to "make people think well of Jesus Christ." But why is such a request necessary after eighteen centuries of the "divine man's" influence? Nobody thinks of asking anyone to make people think well of Socrates, or Plato, or Spinoza, or Shakespeare. The clergy are always begging for Jesus.

Mr. Pearse also told some childish stories about a pious old Cornish woman, who is 105 years old, and as rosy as an apple. As a matter of fact, there is no clear case of any human being living a hundred years; and we believe that every case that has been investigated to the bottom has turned out to be a ridiculous fraud. Mr. Pearse's "Rosie" is just fit for a Christian meeting.

Dr. Parker is a rare old mountebank. In a recent sermon he said, "Cities had a bad founder; the foundations of cities were laid by a murderer." The reference, of course, is to the Bible story of Cain, who "built a city." But Parker would never dare to talk this nonsense outside a pulpit.

A bacon merchant would be glad to hear of someone who can cure hams by faith, for a reasonable salary. Applicants must produce samples. Address to Mr. Wideawake, 23 Good Business Street, Manchester.

The saints who have gathered round Christ Schweinfurth at Illinois protest that although there have been some babies born, there has been no immorality among them. They sign a document declaring, "We, as a Church, believe that Jesus of Nazareth was conceived by the holy spirit of God; that the Virgin Mary did not bear the seed of man, but that the new life was a direct impartation from God, the invisible spirit. We also believe that this same God still lives, and that when he had clothed souls in robes of virgin white, he blessed some of them in precisely the same manner in which he blessed the holy Virgin of yore. We with one voice, solemnly declare before God and man, that inside the Church triumphant, or in this family, there has been no compromise of virtue and no traversing of the civil law of this fair country nor this our magnificent commonwealth. It is as far from us as is vice from virtue, to foster or tolerate aught that is condemned in our civil statutes." Their Christian neighbors feel it is a difficult point on which to appeal to the law, and suggest the service of Judge Lynch.

Mr. Gladstone has pointed to a Decretal of Pope Urban II., declaring that "those who put to death excommunicated persons are to render a measure of satisfaction suitable to what their intention may have been. For we do not count them to be homicides to whom it may have happened through their being zealous for Mother Church against the excommunicated to put any of those to death." The *Tablet* thinks it a sufficient reply to suppose it referred to some exceptional circumstances, as with "the just wars of the children of Israel."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 21, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road. All Saints', Manchester; at 11 a.m., "The Rock of Ages"; 3 p.m., "Where is the Devil?" 6.30 p.m., "A World Without God."

September 28, Hull.
October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.
November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsy; 30, Leicester.
December 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. HOLLAND.—Most of your last budget have appeared before. Still, thanks.

W. GILMOUR.—Send us cuttings whenever the spirit moves you.

A. H. B.—The infallibility of the Church has existed all along; what was promulgated in 1870 was the infallibility of the Pope speaking *ex cathedra* (from his chair) on all matters of faith and morals.

H. ROWDEN.—Shall be inserted.

R. RITCHIE.—Shall appear.

S. G.—There is no such passage in the Bible.

S. STANDRING.—The exertion did Mr. Foote no appreciable injury. As to the Southend matter, why not call a meeting to see what can be done? Mr. Foote will try to attend.

C. E. SMITH.—Received. No doubt it will prove useful.

H. PORTER.—We dislike badges altogether. Flowers are very pretty, some of them, but they don't bloom all the year. Mr. Foote's photos will be on sale at the Hull lectures. We have given fresh instructions about the contents-sheet.

JUDAS.—True enough, no doubt; but patriotism is very sensitive.

J. S. ROGERS.—Almanack copy received. We hope the Plymouth friends will pull together.

JAMES ROWNEY.—Too late to be of any practical use this week. Glad to hear you had a good meeting at Finsburk Park in the evening. Except for a little hoarseness, Mr. Foote is none the worse.

M. SMITH informs us that he was engaged to lecture in Hyde Park on Sunday morning; he was there at 11.30, and waited in vain until 12.15 for the chairman and the platform. Such neglect is utterly inexcusable; it brings the cause into discredit, and is a breach of faith with the public.

J. SAUNDERS.—We always see the *Christian World*.

W. BOWDEN.—Mr. Forder will enrol you. You are quite old enough to join. Read Colenso's *Pentateuch*, Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Giles's *Christian and Hebrew Records*. You will find a good deal of information in *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances*, and the footnotes will direct you to many good books.

J. W. EATON.—Whether the rowdies were *real* Christians is a matter of opinion. They belong to the Christian camp.

T. NOBLE.—No doubt there is a good field for Freethought work in the West of England and South Wales. It is very much a question of means. The N. S. S. wants a bigger income. Thanks for the cuttings.

A SOLDIER.—We think you acted very properly. It is an outrage that soldiers should be compelled to attend "divine service" and listen to what, in many cases, they despise or detest. We are not astonished that your most drunken comrades show the greatest bigotry. Let them drink and pray, if they will; you, as a Freethinker and a teetotaller, will doubtless live down their animosity.

A. HINDLE.—Could you not undertake to do something yourself? Some one must begin.

D. H.—All the experiential school of philosophers, teach that conscience is the result of social training. See Mill's *Utilitarianism*, and the chapter on the Mental and Moral Powers in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. *All* the "advanced" clergy have given up the Deluge as actual history; for instance Canon Driver, Archdeacon Farrar, and the Rev. C. Gore, editor of *Lux Mundi*.

S. G. M.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops"

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Port Elizabeth Spectator—Echo—Lucifer—Weekly Scotsman—West Lothian Courier—Truthseeker—South-Eastern Herald—Freethought—Boston Investigator—Stratford Herald—Liberator—Twentieth Century—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Countryman—Menschenthum—Liberator—Fairplay.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a great stir in Finsbury Park on Sunday afternoon. A crowd of Freethinkers responded to Mr. Foote's appeal. Not only did North London supply a large number, but some came from Camberwell, some from the East-end, some from the West, and some from even as far away as Battersea. The sun was shining gloriously, and Mr. Foote prudently stationed himself under a tree, where he awaited the arrival of the platform. Unfortunately this piece of furniture did not arrive. As luck would have it the boy who brings it failed on the very afternoon when it was most wanted. The dilemma was an awkward one. It was impossible to address such a big meeting without some kind of elevation. But in the very nick of time a providential policeman handed over a chair from the circles round the bandstand, and the ball opened under happy auspices.

There were many Christians present, including those who caused disorder on previous occasions, but they were overawed by the presence of so many Freethinkers. Mr. Foote was also careful to give no unnecessary offence to his opponents, and the result was that the lecture was listened to throughout with great attention. The disorderly element confined itself to silly small-talk on the outskirts of the meeting. By this means it prevented many persons from hearing all the lecture, but it did no further mischief.

When the discussion began the disorderly element asserted itself a little. A knot of interrupters, including the repulsive Mitchell, gathered at the back of the platform, but it did not succeed in doing any serious damage. The first "enemy" was a man with a white, serious face, and a fund of unintentional humor. He merely wanted to ask a question, and from his pregnant look it might have been conjectured that, after he had asked it, the lecturer would feel annihilated. He said he held something in his hand to show that the employees in the *Freethinker* office were not properly paid. Of course there was breathless suspense. Then he read out a paragraph from one of our back numbers, stating that we hoped the editor would soon be paid journeyman's wages for his labor; and he wanted Mr. Foote to explain that. The Freethinkers roared with laughter. You might almost have heard them at the Tower. And the Christians joined in the laughter when the case was explained. But the gentleman who asked the question was still dissatisfied. He had floored the lecturer, and it wasn't his fault if the lecturer wouldn't acknowledge it.

Then came Mr. Poulson, well known to Freethinkers who go to outdoor meetings—*too* well known, some of them would say. Not caring to attack Mr. Foote openly, Mr. Poulson sailed in on a side wind. He never tried to argue, but only to create prejudice. He declared that there was a lady, present in the Park that afternoon, whom the Freethinkers were starving, although she had worked for them for ever so many years. This put the Christians in high glee. They did not know that Mr. Poulson had discovered a mare's-nest. Mr. Foote knew the lady, and he was able to give the facts of the case. He was also able to show that Mr. Poulson had only heard the lady's story that very afternoon, and that he got up and made the public accusation without a moment's inquiry.

This lady's name is Blackwell, and as her going to the Christians is a challenge, she has only herself to thank if we take the public into our confidence. She never was a member of any Secular Society. She says she sent subscriptions to Mr. Bradlaugh many years ago. Of that we know nothing. It is quite possible. But we know that she has had money from Mr. Bradlaugh since. We never saw her, to our knowledge, until after our imprisonment, when she came begging assistance. Mr. Foote gave her several small sums, and on one occasion a half-sovereign. She came to his house, very much against his wish, and Mrs. Foote gave her money, pre-

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pared something hot as she was suffering from neuralgia, and gave her an order on a neighboring doctor for medicine. This Mrs. Blackwell has had assistance from other Freethinkers. Mrs. Besant has helped her. Mr. Rowney has given her small sums in Hyde Park. Miss Vance gave her money and groceries several weeks running, and visited her in the Cleveland Street Hospital, where she falsely acused the attendants of starving her. How many other Freethinkers have helped her we know not. Probably she has begged of all she thought able to assist. For years she was assisted again and again by the Benevolent Committee. Mr. Forder furnished her with clothes and got her employment, but she would not keep it. She would be eccentric and obtrusive; she could get on with nobody, and nobody could get on with her. Now she can wring no further contributions from our party, she goes to the Christians, and says we starve her, as though our party were under an obligation to maintain her, and to maintain her on her own terms.

It is painful to write thus, but it is our duty to nip this woman's mischief in the bud. If the Christians have gained her, we wish them joy of their catch. No doubt she will say whatever they wish, but such a purchase can hardly be profitable.

After Mr. Poulson came the gentleman who rejoices in the name of Jack Williams His personalities have won him an evil reputation, but on this occasion he was civil enough. After Mr. Foote's replies the big meeting broke up, and as the crowd streamed through the Park gates the passers-by wondered "what was up."

By the way, four new members joined the Finsbury Park Branch on Sunday. Evidently the opposition did no harm.

So far so good. A stand has been made with perfect success against the rowdies. But we are not absolutely out of the wood, and the Finsbury Park open-air station must be still supported. Mr. Moss lectures there again this afternoon (Sep. 21), and we hope a good number of North London Freethinkers will rally round him.

Mr. Foote lectures at Manchester to-day; the subjects are attractive; and he will be happy to see as many South Lancashire friends as can conveniently attend.

The Battersea Branch of the N. S. S. holds its quarterly Tea and Soiree next Sunday, Sept. 28. The meeting of members takes place at three in the afternoon, and this will be a good opportunity for Freethinkers in the district to join the Branch. Tea will be on tables at 5 30; tickets (only 6d. each) can be obtained at the Battersea Secular Hall, or of Mr. Forder, 23 Stonecutter Street.

A special meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch will be held on Monday (Sept. 22) at Mr. Rowney's, 155 Winstow Road, Green Lanes, N.

The editor of the Port Elizabeth *Spectator* in answer to a correspondent who gives an account of a pauper buried without a coffin, and then asks "Is this Christianity?" says: "Yes, that's exactly what it is. What else did you think it was? To allow a wretched pauper to starve to death and then refuse a deal coffin to contain her bones is just what is to be expected from nine-tenths of the Christianity that is current nowadays If you want humanity and charity, the less modern Christianity you mix with it the better."

Some one recently asked the following question of Mr. Herbert Spencer: "Whether since publishing *Education*, *First Principles* and *Study of Sociology* your opinion of true religion has been changed and modified"—a few extracts being given as illustrative of the writer's opinion—and Mr. Spencer has replied, "Your statement of my views is quite correct, and I continue to think the same."

Statistics show that money spent in education are a good investment against crime. In 1869 the total number of persons in custody under sentence of penal servitude in Great Britain, Gibraltar and Western Australia was 11,660, while in July last the number had fallen by about one-half, the exact figures being 5,944.

"We are very sorry to see that dear old Forder is compelled by ill-health to resign his position as Secretary of the National Secular Society. We do not wonder at this, for we think he should have done so earlier for his own sake; but his loss will be severely felt. He is unique, a curiosity, a combination of more good qualities than we should like to enumerate. Probably he has few enemies—we never knew he had so much as one; and yet he is full of quiet independence, push, perseverance, and unconquerable patience. It is impossible to guess how much we all owe to him. He would leave such a peculiar blank and vacant place, were he to go before his time over to the majority, which we sincerely hope his good sense will prevent him doing. If he would only come and settle down in Australia, no doubt we could utilise him well, and find him health into the bargain."—Joseph Symes in *Liberator*.

We have often objected to the name of "Tom" being applied to Paine, when it has evidently been bestowed as a sign of contempt. There is however, as the author of *Will Shakespeare and Tom Paine* shows, much to be said for the abbreviation having been originally used as a sign of good-fellowship, and there is even evidence that Paine used it himself. Mr. Gilbert Vale, in his Life of Paine, New York, 1841, p. 159, says, "Mr. Jarvis who gave us the information, observed that he once, by way of a joke, advised Mr. Paine to recant, and publish his recantation as a hoax, assuring him that he would then make a large fortune and get a good living. Mr. Paine, shaking his head replied, "Tom Paine never told a lie."

Mr. W. W. Collins is returning to Sydney from Tasmania by way of Auckland, and is giving the North New Zealanders a taste of his quality.

The Fourteenth Annual Congress of the American Secular Union will take place at the Grand Opera House, Portsmouth, Ohio, on Friday, Oct. 31, and continue its sessions on the Saturday and Sunday following. We trust there will be a good gathering.

The MSS. of the various manuals on morals, without religion, for which a prize was offered by the American Secular Union, are being read by Dr. D. G. Brinton and Prof. Felix Adler, and it is hoped the prize will be adjudicated at the Congress.

We are pleased to notice that Mr. Moses Harman, editor of *Lucifer*, who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for inserting in his paper a letter giving details of a rape by a husband on his suffering wife, has after seventeen weeks' incarceration in Kansas State prison, been released on a "writ of error." Whatever Mr. Harman's offence, it was one against taste, and dictated by a spirit of humanity. The sentence upon him was monstrously heavy, and like the recent attack on the *Kreutzer Sonata*, shows that the United States is by no means such a land of liberty as some are apt to think.

Judge C. B. Waite, author of an excellent *History of the Christian Religions to the year* 200, is president of the Chicago Secular Union. The *Boston Investigator* reports a capital presidential address on the separation of Church and State. The judge declares that the present ecclesiastical attempt to put God into the constitution or the United States, "is a desperate effort to bring the aid of the civil power to the support of a lost cause."

"Our British friends held a very successful conference in Manchester on Whit Sunday. Mr. Foote was elected President, and well supported. We are proud to see him in the chair, now that Mr. Bradlaugh's health has compelled him to resign. We feel sure Mr. Foote was and is the only possible President for some years to come; and he has our most hearty sympathy in his trying position. It is no trifle to follow Charles Bradlaugh. But we have confidence in the new President; and shall heartily hail the greatest success he may attain—and we expect it to be great."—Joseph Symes in *Liberator*.

Dr. Edmund Montgomery, writing in *Open Court*, says:—"Judged by the standard of morality, organic evolution has been brought about by pre-eminently immoral means. Morality enters into the process only when natural evolution becomes controlled for ethical purposes by man's power of

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rationally interposing with the otherwise non-rational and exorbitantly cruel disposition of nature in general. Morality is of human origin. It emanates from the rational understanding of man's social or hyper-individual nature. And, as regards religion, I, for one, can find no incitement for it in the deaf and blind cosmos, that lies outstretched there in infinite space, insensible to our joys and woes. I can detect religion, if religion it may still be called, only in the enthusiastic devotion lavished by generous hearts on the progressive exaltation of the inner worth of human existence."

Brave old Oliver Wendell Holmes celebrates his eighty-first birthday by a vigorous attack on the Christian doctrine of Hell. His paper in the *Atlantic Monthly* will do a great deal of good. He says the popular theology makes man a sheep and God a wolf. "Humanity," he declares, "is shocked and repelled by the Christian Tartarus. The heart of woman is in unconquerable rebellion against it." He concludes with some verses, of which we give a specimen:

Shall mouldering page or fading scroll
Outface the charter of the soul?
Shall priesthood's palsied arm protect
The wrong our human hearts reject,
And smite the lips whose shuddering cry
Proclaims the cruel deed a lie?
The wizard's rope we disallow
Was justice once—is murder now.

According to the recent census of Switzerland, that little republic contains 1,700,000 Protestants; 1,200,000 Catholics; 8,300 Jews, and 10,700 of no religion.

Cremation societies have been formed at Philadelphia on the tontine plan. Each society is limited to 35, thirty-five dollars covering cost of cremation. Each member pays in a dollar and the society engages to cremate him, making a new assessment of one dollar and taking in a new member upon every death.

The *Nonconformist and Independent* will become a penny paper with the title *The Independent and Nonconformist*. The Rev. F. Herbert Stead replaces Mr. Chas. S. Miall as editor. Under Mr. Miall, the *Nonconformist* was always of high class liberal tone and a stout opponent of all connection between Church and State. We wonder if the *Independent* will prove worthy of the old traditions.

The Ten Plagues and *The Wandering Jews*, two fresh numbers of "Bible Romances," are now ready. The work will probably be completed by Christmas.

GUILIELMUS REX.

THE folk who lived in Shakespeare's day
And saw that gentle figure pass
By London Bridge—his frequent way—
They little knew what man he was!

The pointed beard, the courteous mien,
The equal port to high and low,
All this they saw or might have seen—
But not the light beyond the brow!

The doublet's modest gray or brown,
The slender sword-hilt's plain device,
What sign had these for prince or clown?
Few turned, or none, to scan him twice.

Yet 't was the king of England's kings!
The rest with all their pomps and trains
Are mouldered, half-remembered things—
'Tis he alone that lives and reigns!

T. B. ALDRICH, in the *Century*.

A FRENCH FREETHINKER.

We regret to announce the death of M. Joffrin, the member for Montmartre, in the French Chamber. Last year he took part, as vice-president, in the reception by the Paris Municipal Council of the International Freethought Congress. He was then suffering from cancer in the cheek, which has now killed him. He bore his great sufferings with lofty fortitude, and never slackened his activity for the people's good while his strength lasted. France could have better spared some of the vain, ambitious, or mercenary intriguers who are now exposing each other's crimes.

THE TRIALS AND TROUBLES OF OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

AT the present time there appears to be a recrudescence—happily in a mild form—of the old stupid attempts to suppress the public oral advocacy of Freethought by the simple expedient of driving the speakers from their stands by main force or by persistent interruptions of a more or less violent character. There is, of course, no possibility of such tactics being justified by success, and for one, I see an element of good in the chastening hand, for as a party we should be worth little did not this mild and sporadic persecution stimulate us to a wider and even more earnest proclamation of our views.

For several years I have been accustomed to speak in the open-air as an advocate of Secularism, and my experience in this direction has been extensive, if not peculiar. That experience has been singularly free from disturbance. It has rarely happened that I have been troubled even by verbal interruptions, and a simple reminder that our platforms are invariably available for opponents has immediately restored quietness by the moral force of public opinion. I may perhaps lay myself open to a charge of egotism in writing upon this matter; but the open-air propaganda is a branch of such vital importance to the Freethought movement that I will venture to indicate the policy which in my opinion, it is best to pursue in face of a possibly hostile audience.

For the speaker and the person or persons in charge of the station there is one injunction in which is contained all the law and the prophets. That is—KEEP YOUR TEMPER. The lecturer who cannot retain complete control of himself should eschew open-air work, or, at least, should avoid stations at which hostility is at all likely to be exhibited. The tone of the speaker determines everything. He who loses his temper loses everything. He cannot control himself, and therefore he cannot influence his audience save in a direction distinctly disadvantageous to himself and to the cause which he for the time being represents.

My experience has always proved that an English audience contains a substantial proportion of people who are in favor of fair play. Disturbance generally arises from a knot of persons who have not sufficient sense to organise their own stupidity or malice to any formidable extent. It is therefore wise to enlist the sympathies of the well-disposed against the evil designs of those desiring to interrupt. This is a policy which I have never known to fail.

The only case in which a disturbance appeared imminent at any lecture of mine was at Tunbridge Wells. Some years ago, while Mr. Foote was in prison, a great Freethought demonstration was organised on the Common adjacent to that town. The disturbance on that occasion was really formidable, and the meeting could only be carried on by forming a protecting semi-circle of friends behind the speakers, who were protected from assault in front by a "lumpy" acclivity. Time after time the disturbers strove to break the arm-linked line in the rear, but their efforts were frustrated by the firmness of the guard. Good old Toby King wrought miracles of valor on that day.

About twelve months after this memorable gathering I was invited to go to Tunbridge Wells to deliver a Freethought lecture one Sunday afternoon, on the Common. In due course I went; but on arriving at the place I found that only one of the local Secularists—Mr. Harry Seymour—would "assist" at the meeting. This was unfortunate and annoying, but it could not be remedied, so we twain went to the Common in somewhat doleful mood. On our arrival we found about 150 young men and lads prepared to give us a lively time. First we "pitched" under the shade of some rocks, but the enemy climbed

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these and shelled us from above with clods of earth, fern-roots, and other botanical specimens. This, be it noted, was before any attempt had been made to commence the lecture. Then we moved to the platform upon which the demonstration had been held in the preceding year. The loafers and "larkers" followed us thither, anticipating a jolly time. They crowded round us, but abstained from violent interference. Seymour briefly introduced me, and standing on a little eminence, I addressed the crowd in a familiar way. I told them that I had come from London to speak on Freethought, and that I intended to speak on Freethought unless I was doubled up. I pointed out to them that it was to their interest to hear all views, as a view might be suppressed which possibly contained the truth. How could the suppression of any opinions be of advantage to them? Then I reminded them of the ancient love of fair play which is an Englishman's boast and pride, and asked them as Englishmen to hear me and to assail my opinions as lustily as they chose in discussion after the lecture.

For an hour did that audience listen patiently and quietly while I examined the Bible from an anti-theological standpoint. I softened nothing, omitted nothing that I had been accustomed to say in other places. Then a gentleman spoke twice in opposition to my views, arguing with intelligence and treating me with perfect courtesy. That afternoon, which opened so inauspiciously, was one of the pleasantest in my experience as an open-air speaker. May I, in all humility, offer this round, unvarnished tale for what it is worth to my brother advocates?

Of trials and troubles I have had my share. Papa Woffendale and his lambs have squalled me into nothingness at the Midland Arches; rain has drowned me out unseasonably; foul and ignorant "opponents" have wearied me until I have, in self-defence, been compelled to "boycott" one or two. But my severest trial fortunately had a comic aspect. One Sunday morning I was speaking in Hyde Park to a fairly large and very attentive audience. Suddenly there was a fierce grunting, and, a few yards away, two ill-conditioned curs were to be seen engaged in deadly combat. My audience fled as one man, and watched the struggle with consuming interest. Of course it was useless to go on for the time being—Demosthenes himself could not compete against a dog-fight. In a few minutes one of the canines threw up the sponge (metaphorically); my audience came back, and we finished the business as decorously as possible under the circumstances. GEORGE STANDRING.

TALMAGE'S TEXAS RIVAL.

There is an old negro in Austin, Texas, named Uncle Nace, who is a regular attendant at the church of the Rev. Whang-doodle Baxter. Meeting his pastor the other day, the latter said—

"You seem to enjoy my sermons mightily, Uncle Nace, considering you am so hard ob hearin'," shouted the clergyman.

Uncle Nace nodded understandingly.

"Kin yer heah me when I preaches!" bellowed the colored prelate in Uncle Nace's ear.

The old man shook his head.

"Whaf for den does yer come ter de church?" howled Baxter.

"Bekase hit 'muses me ter see you cut up dem monkey shines and saw de air wid yer arms."

PROFANE JOKES.

A cynic says that the meek may inherit the earth, but he is sure they will never get possession of it unless they do a lot of hustling.

"Mamma," said little Alice, as the baby lifted up its voice, "do all the babies come from heaven?" "Yes, dear." "I ain't s'prised," said Alice, thoughtfully, as the infant lifted up its voice higher. "Why, love?" "Oh, I wouldn't want them there either if I was the angels."

A little boy, whose impecunious parents are always moving from one house to another, was asked by the Sunday-school teacher: "Why did the Israelites move out of Egypt?" 'Because they couldn't pay their rent, I suppose," was the reply.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Man after God's own Heart."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Poets of Atheism." Tuesday, at 8, social evening.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Christian and Pre-Christian Civilisation."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Bible as a Guide in Morals."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Myth of the Ascension."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Death's Test."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Macey Road), 7.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "Jesus Christ: his Life and Teachings."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. Sam Standring, "God in Bethnal Green."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Rationalism applied to the Bible."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt will lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Samson."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "The Church and the People"; 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Biography."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 6.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Why I Reject Christianity."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity." Monday, 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Intelligence in Nature." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Resurrection: Did it Happen?" Thursday, at 8, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Difficulties of Theism."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Esau have I loved; Jacob have I hated."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "St. Paul on Mars Hill."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Creation Story."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Theism and Atheism."

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Samson"; 7, "Mr. Sam Standring, "St. Paul's Impudence at Athens."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. R. S. Bransby, "What has Christianity Done for the World?"

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30 Mr G. E C. Naewiger, "Why should an Atheist Fear to Die?"

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Doeg, "The Old Testament and the New."

Manchester N S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "The Rock of Ages"; 3, "Where is the Devil?"; 6 30, "A World Without God."

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A R. Atkey, "The Story of Religion in England, II."

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Readings and discussion.

Portsmouth - Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Coobyn, "A Citizen's Duty."

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Members and friends meet at tram terminus, Moorhead, at 2 30, and go by car to Herley for Ruskin Museum and Meersbrook Park.

South Shields—Capt Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 6.30, committee meeting; 7, usual weekly meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London. S.E.—Sept. 21 (morning) Midland Arches, (afternoon) Finsbury Park, (evening) Hammersmith; 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich. October 5 (morning) Camberwell; 15, Battersea.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Oct. 12 Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Sept. 21 (morning out-door and evening in the hall) Plaistow; 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 21 (evening) Woolwich; 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 19 Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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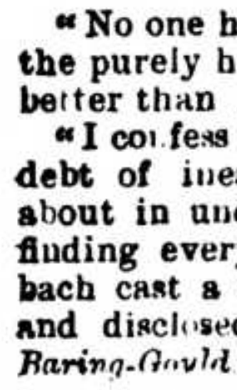

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WAIT TILL YOU DIE.

PASCAL remarked that, whether Christianity were true or false, the Christian was on the safe side; and Diderot replied that the priests and apologists of Mohammedanism, or any other creed, could say the very same thing with equal force. The argument, if it be an argument, implies the possibility of error, and what applies to one religion applies to all. The votaries of every creed may be mistaken if there is no absolute certitude; or, if there should be one true religion among the multitude, and but one, only the devotees of that single faith can be on the safe side. But as no one knows *which* is the only true religion, it follows, according to the law of probabilities, that the odds are greatly against any particular religion being the right one. The Christian therefore would have one chance of being right, and nine hundred and ninety-nine chances of being wrong. He has thus one chance in a thousand above the Atheist.

But on the other hand, if all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of a single one being certainly right? Does not the Christian's slight precentage of safety fade into something quite inappreciable in the light of this question? And is what is left—if *anything* is left—an adequate price for the abnegation of manhood? Would it tempt an honest man, with a sense of human dignity, to play fast and loose with his intellect, and accept a creed because it appeals to his selfish hopes and fears? Could such a slender chance of profit in the next life compensate for slavery in this life?

If belief is the safe side, the proper course is to believe *everything*. And it is useless to cry that this is impossible. Faith enables men to believe against reason, and one act of credulity is little easier than a thousand. He whose creed is determined by his fears should give free scope to such emotions. If they are his guides let him follow them. Why should he argue when argument may mislead? Why should he stumble at trifles when he has surmounted the first great obstacle to credulity? Let him believe all the religions of the world at once. He can do this as easily as he can believe in the Trinity. And having embraced all, he may rest satisfied that if there be a true religion he undoubtedly possesses it.

We do not suppose, however, that this reasoning will have any effect on Christians, Buddhists, Brahmins, Mohammedans, or Jews. But that very fact shows the hollow character of the argument from which we started. When the Christian talks about the safe side he is only displaying the weakness of his faith, and appealing to timidity when he has no further appeal to reason.

The argument of "the safe side" would have no pertinency, even with the imbecile, if man were immortal. It seeks advantage from the fact that every man must die. It tries to paralyse reason with the clutch of fear.

How frequent is the superstitionist's remark "Wait till you come to die!" He does not always use these very words, but this is the meaning of all his verbiage. He forgets, or does not know, that philosophy destroys the terror of death. A rational man is aware of the truth expressed by Mill, that death is but one incident in life, and often the least important. He recognises with Bacon that we die daily. He knows that every hour is a step towards death. He does not play, like an ostrich, with the universal law of mortality; nor, on the other hand, does he allow the tomb to cast its chill obscurity over the business and pleasure of life. He lives without hypocrisy, and when the time comes he will die without fear. As Hamlet says, "the readiness is all." Another word also comes from the wisest of men—"Cowards do often taste of death; the valiant die but once."

A belief that will do for life will do for death. The religionists prove this themselves. Whatever a man is confident of is sustaining. The Christian dies a Christian, and the Mohammedan a Mohammedan. The one has dying visions of angels—or may be of devils; the other sees heaven burst open, and the black-eyed houris of paradise beckon him with rosy fingers. What they leaned on in life supports them in death. Its truth or falsity makes no difference at that moment.

Freethinkers are sustained by *convictions*. Intellect and emotion concur in their case. They have no visions of angels or devils, but dear loved faces are better than phantoms, and he who has done a little good in the world, however humbly and obscurely, may dream of the happier and nobler days to come, when true words and good deeds will have brought forth the glorious fruit of happiness for the children of men.

We do not mean to assert that no Freethinker, at any time, ever relapsed on his death-bed. Such cases have apparently occurred during life, and while one particular religion is in the ascendant it is not difficult to understand them. These relapses are always to the creed a man finds about him, or to the creed of his childhood. They simply prove the power of environment and early training, and that a man needs all his strength to stand against big majorities. At best they are cases of mental pathology.

Great historic Freethinkers have always died true to their convictions. They were used to standing alone. For ample proof of this the reader is referred to *Infidel Death Beds*. And when smaller Freethinkers are numerous enough they avoid the greatest dangers of physical weakness. It is easy for Christian relatives or friends to pester a dying Freethinker; it is easy even, in the worst moments of weakness, to put words in his mouth. But if Freethought friends visit him, he feels strengthened and relieved. Allies may well be needed, sometimes, in such a battle with bigotry.

After all, "Wait till you die!" is an argument of folly and cowardice. What can we conjecture of any other life except from our experience of this? On this earth reason is the safe side, honesty is the safe side, humanity is the safe side; and what is the safe side here is likely to be the safe side elsewhere.

G. W. FOOTE.

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WHY ATTACK THE CLERGY?

It is not altogether an enviable task to have to attack and expose a particular class of men. Wholesale condemnations are, with reason, regarded with suspicion, yet with all desire to be charitable we find it as hard to credit that the clergy are honest, as Jesus found the way of the rich man to heaven. They are sworn to believe they are called by the Holy Ghost. Is not this, as Carlyle says, to solemnly constitute oneself an impostor at the threshold? They are sworn to believe in articles and creeds which they dare not preach. What clergyman, for instance, really holds "That works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God." (Art. xiii.); that "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth is that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature" (Art. xviii.) The articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic, but their general teaching the very reverse.

Some people wonder why in these days of science, the old Jewish fables of Genesis still rank as divine. The answer is: because they are endowed. Had the belief in alchemy or astrology been supported with millions of property as the Church has been, those beliefs would still be flourishing. Of course some few may sincerely hold the beliefs in which they have been trained, but the alternative of dishonesty is ignorance. Every clergyman ought to know such elementary facts that Christianity is but one of many faiths that have occupied the minds of men, and that science and research have undermined many of its foundations.

Not only in doctrines, but in discipline, the clergy are bound to forms they no longer hold. Their rubrics and canons, drawn up over three centuries ago, are no longer suited to the requirements of the Church, and on every side we see they are broken and disregarded by those sworn to obey them; even a bishop being at present under trial for this offence.

Let us say at once that we consider the bulk of Nonconformist ministers in the same box with their brethren of the established Church. It is true they are paid by their own congregations. Yet they accept office under conditions they do not fulfil. Nearly every chapel has a trust-deed prescribing creeds which the ministers neither believe nor preach. That is, the ministers and congregations of these chapels hold the buildings and endowments, in alienation from their trusts and in violation of the law. Where trust-deeds have been loosely drawn, as in the case of the early Presbyterians, many of them have passed into the hands of Unitarians. Where more tightly drawn they are flagrantly violated. It is safe to say there are no chapels holding defined trust-deeds from last century where the doctrines preached are in strict accordance with the terms upon which the chapels were endowed.

Nor do we find the Nonconformists as a body one whit less worldly than the Church of England. They, too, aim after social position and endowment, and pride themselves on that wisdom which Paul declared was "foolishness with God." They, too, slide over the dogmas of their faith, seek to reconcile contradictions, and expound impossible ways of making the best of both worlds, in flat antagonism to Jesus (Matt. vi., 24). Like the clergy, they preach principles flagrantly opposed to their own practice.

There can be no improvement in a system whose essential tenets are the fall of a first man through the temptation of a woman made from his rib, and the redemption of his descendants long afterwards, through the merits of a crucified God, the illegitimate offspring of a virgin mother and a ghost, and the consignment of unbelievers to eternal torment.

The people who make a trade of preaching this pernicious nonsense are enemies of society. They are caterpillars of the commonwealth. They toil not, neither do they spin. Yet annually they consume millions upon millions of the nation's wealth. Their creeds stand in the way of all progress, and the parasites themselves have, as a class, always been foremost in opposition to any attempts at improving the lot of the masses. What keeps the working man from enjoying the museums he is taxed to support on his one day of rest? The clergy and ministers, whose interests lie in having the monopoly of Sunday for their own establishments. It is not, then, only against superstition that we must maintain an aggressive attitude, but also against its interested exponents.

J. M. Wheeler.

A NEW CREED.

A group of theologians met
To modernise their creed.
Which held that black is white, and yet
Had satisfied their need.

Their great-grandfathers learned it on
Their great-grandmothers' knees,
About predestination and
Electoral decrees.

In language more ambiguous
Than Latin upside-down,
It taught that some were born to sin
And some to wear the crown.

These learned theologians fought,
Disputed, argued long;
And each one held that he was right
And all the rest were wrong.

They all admitted that the creed
Was somewhat out of date,
But still they were not all agreed
Just what to renovate.

But when their work was finished quite,
Their creed did nothing lack;
For where it once read "black is white,"
It now reads "white is black."

E. Frank Lintaber.

WHAT HE WAS ROARING ABOUT.

Highlanders, as we know have the habit when talking English, such as it is, of interpolating the personal pronoun "he" where it is not required, such as "The king he has come." Often, therefore, a sentence, or expression is rendered strange, as we are going to prove. The Rev. Mr. McD——, of a certain Highland parish, recently began his discourse thus: "My brethren, you will find the subject of this discourse in the first Epistle-General of the Apostle of Peter, chapter five, verse eight, in the words 'The devil he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' Now my friends, with your leave, we will divide the subject into four heads. First we shall endeavor to ascertain who the devil he was. Second, we shall inquire into his geographical position—namely, where the devil he was. Third, and this is of a general character—who the devil he was seeking. Fourthly and lastly, we shall endeavor to solve a question which has never been solved yet—what the devil he was roaring about."

CLERICAL CELIBACY.

Mr. H. C. Lea in his *History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol. i., p. 31, 1888, says: "Deprived as was the priesthood of the gratification afforded by marriage to the natural instincts, the wife, at best, was succeeded by the concubine; at worst by a succession of paramors, for which the functions of priest and confessor gave peculiar opportunity. So thoroughly was this recognised that a man confessing an illicit amor, was forbidden to name the partner of his guilt for fear it might lead the confessor into the temptation of abusing his knowledge of her frailty."

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HE WAS CONVERTED.

I RECENTLY spent a week's holiday at a Hydropathic in the west of Scotland, where I met with more than one strange specimen of human kind. Among them was an undersized Methodist parson who occupied his time by marching about the grounds, either gazing into the heavenly vault, or strutting like a peacock, evidently under the impression that every eye was following his movements. This black-beetle, when addressing Jehovah, turned his face upwards and laid down the law with vigor. He swung his arms about, and postured. There was, with him, no hanging of the head in prayer; no clasping of the hands; no going into a corner; no outward appearance of humility. He knew exactly what he wanted and boldly made his requirements known. I only heard him pray once, but he said grace three times a day at table and seemed so barren of ideas that the same words—very few in number—were parrot-like, uttered over and over again without the slightest variation. Grace said, he always looked round the room with a self-satisfied smile while he adjusted his table napkin. But I began to write with the intention of repeating a good story, which was told to me by another visitor; so I must leave the parson alone. Here is the story. A preacher on the streets of Glasgow was one day engaged in the common exercise of street preachers—he was telling how bad a man he was before his conversion—when something landed on his nose. Quoth the man of God: "Now just let me illustrate my point by this fly which has landed on my nose. So wicked was I in former times that even so small a thing as this led to the uttering of an oath; but now, by the grace of God, I can remove it quietly like this—[here he raised his hand to his face and the insect at once moved on to his forefinger. He drew his hand down quickly and screamed out] "Oh, hell and damnation! It's a wasp." Tableau.

R. M. R.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF A JUVENILE APPEARANCE.

A young clergyman had gone to supply the vacant pulpit of the church in a Midland village. He was just out of the theological seminary, and had an extremely boyish appearance. A little before the hour, the new minister made his way almost unnoticed into the pulpit, where he was concealed from view by the reading-desk in front of him. But an old lady, who sat close on the right of the pulpit, in consideration of her deafness, was much concerned to see a boy in the place of the expected clergyman. So she arose very softly, stepped on tip-toe to the pulpit stairs, and, beckoning with her finger, whisped loudly, in coaxing accents—"Come down, my boy. You mustn't sit there. That's the place for the minister!"

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(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

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The less men know, the more they believe that they know. Belief passes in their minds for knowledge, and the very circumstances which should beget doubt produce increase of faith. Every glittering apparition that is pointed out to them in the vast wild of imagination passes for a reality; and the more distant, the more confused, the more incomprehensible it is, the more sublime it is esteemed. He who should attempt to shift these scenes of airy vision for those of real knowledge might expect to be treated with scorn and anger by the whole theological and metaphysical tribe, the masters and the scholars; he would be despised as a plebeian philosopher, and railed at as an infidel.—*Lord Bolingbroke.*

JEWISH CREDULITY, CAVILS AND KABBALAH.

IF any one wants his fill of credulity and superstition he must read Hebrew commentaries, or study the Hebrew Kabbalah. Christian commentaries sometimes run them very close, but for downright absurdity they can hardly beat God's chosen people. Perhaps no greater nonsense can be found anywhere than the directions in the Bible (Numbers v.) as to the trial by ordeal for jealousy, but the Rabbins have elaborated even Bible superstition. Jesus believed in devils, but one of the Rabbis gives directions how to raise them. "Whoever wishes to see them, let him take the interior covering of a black cat, the daughter of a first-born black cat, which is also the daughter of a first-born, and let him burn it in the fire, and pulverise it, and then fill his eyes with it and he will see them" (Berachoth, fol. 6 col 1). Very likely.

The order of Moses that the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath should be stoned alive was atrocious. The Rabbis are only absurd. In the Mishnah you may read how Rabbi Meir allows a man to wear his wooden leg on the Sabbath, while R. Joseph forbids this at any price. One man carrying a loaf breaks the Sabbath, but two carrying it between them do not. When a drop of milk falls into a pot of meat, unless the meat is more than sixty times the size of the drop it must not be eaten.

Deep students of the Kabbalah know that Satan and the Messiah are one and the same. The way to prove it is by the science of *Gematria*. The numerical value of the letters m, sh, h is 358, which is also the numerical value of n, ch, sh, a serpent, by which Satan is to be understood.—Q.E.D.

From the letters of the word Adam, A, D, M, being the beginning of the names Adam, David, and Messiah, it is evident that the soul of Adam passed into David, and then transmigrated on into the Messiah!

It is well-known that in the passage in Judges xviii., 30, the name of Manasseh was substituted for that of Moses, to conceal the fact that the priests of the silver image at Dan traced their descent to the great law-giver. The scribes were in a strait. Either they must disregard the integrity of their sacred scriptures or they must admit the damning evidence that Moses was the grandfather of an idolater. They therefore invented a theory that the spirit of God influenced the writer of Judges to insert the letter *n* between the *m* and *s*, but the spirit did not premit the *n* to be written in a straight line among the rest of the letters but suspended above, so that it may be for ever doubtful whether the word is to be read Msh or Mnsh, Moses or Manasseh.

LUCIANUS.

CAUSE FOR THANKFULNESS.

In the Theatre Royal, Dublin, when the Italian Company came to play "Faust," the actor who took the part of Mephistopheles neglected to try the size of the trap-door by which he was supposed to descend into the infernal regions. His figure, which "he had not lost, but which had gone *before*," was too large for the opening, and at the supreme moment he discovered he could not get down above his waist. To heighten the awkwardness of the situation, and to relieve the strained feelings of the audience, one of the gods in the gallery, in a rich Irish brogue, exclaimed, "Begorra! hell's full."—*Harper's Magazine.*

NOT FIT FOR PARADISE.

A poor Catholic, having been released from the cares of this world, and from a scurry wife, presented himself at the gates of paradise.

"Have you been through purgatory?" asked St. Peter.

"No; but I have been married," he replied, seriously.

"Come in, then; it's all the same."

At this moment arrived another man, just defunct, who begged of St. Peter to be permitted to go in also. "Softly, softly! have you been through purgatory?"

"No; but what of that? Did you not admit, a moment ago, one who had not been there any more than I?"

"Certainly; but he has been married."

"Married! Who are you talking to? I have been married twice."

"O-h pshaw!" replied St. Peter; "get away; paradise is not for fools!"

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KISS THE BOOK.

At a recent naval court of inquiry much unconscious humor was exhibited. The sailors called as witnesses were quite unused to such proceedings, and went about their work very much as a Sioux Indian might be expected to conjugate a Greek verb.

One of them—Bill Bubbles—came shuffling forward, his eyes hunting all round the room, as if in search of some place of safety.

"Come here," said the admiral.

He came, of course, upon the wrong side.

"No, here! What's your name?"

"Bubbles."

"What's all of it?"

"Bill Bubbles."

"Bill Bubbles, take the book."

"Book, sir?"

"Yes, here."

The admiral stood up, placed his eye glasses astride of his nose, peered through them at the unhappy Bubbles, and held out the Bible. Bubbles made a motion as if to take the Bible, perhaps thinking it a gratuity.

"No, no! just place your hand on it."

Bubbles put up his left hand.

"No, your right hand."

Bubbles put up both hands,

The admiral seized the left one between his thumb and finger and removed it.

The right remained.

"Now, Bubbles."

"Yez'r."

"Do you solemnly swear that the evidence you will give in this case shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?"

"Yez'r."

"Well, then, kiss the book."

"Hey, zur?"

"Kiss the book."

"Kiss it, zur?"

"Yes, kiss it."

Bubbles looked around appealingly, but there seemed to be no help for it, so he placed himself squarely on his feet, drew a long breath, bent over the Bible, and produced a noise which made the admiral jump.

For an instant, the Bible seemed to be in peril, and the admiral rescuing it with a sudden pull, looked sternly at Bubbles, and said slowly: "Go yonder and sit down."

THE PREACHER AND ASS.

A FABLE.

A preacher met an ass one day
With a load of carrots by the way;
A bunch was dangling on his nose
To make him draw you may suppose.
The preacher smiled, and thus he spoke:
"Dear friend this is beyond a joke,
To toil for some degraded sot;
Your's is indeed an hopeless lot.
And then to aggravate your woes
He dangles carrots on your nose;
For well he knows you cannot catch 'em
A donkey's part is just to fetch 'em."
"Your sympathy I reciprocate,"
Replied the ass, "for such is fate;
Man thinks his prospects all so bright,
Yet he's the ass's prototype.
What are your mansions in the sky?
Why man alive, they're all my eye;
To think you'll get them when you're dead,
Why sir, how very soft your head!
Like me, you're valued for your labor.
Now, pray don't turn so rusty, neighbor!
Just count the ass's vices o'er—
Conceited man has ten times more;
Now o'er his virtues gently run,
You'll find the ass has every one:
Submission that for virtue passes
Is valued both in men and asses;
And all the treasures priestcraft shows
But carrots on a donkey's nose;
Your fiery torture but a thong
To whip the drudging serf along."
"*Bon jour*," replies the priest, "*adieu*,
I fear your story is too true."

J. Saunders.

ACID DROPS.

David Jones was a Welsh bard and a prominent Methodist. He was also secretary of the Nant Padar Building Society. During his life he was so popular that no one could safely say a word against him. But now he is dead it is discovered that he robbed the Society of £11,500, and covered his crime by means of a forged set of pass-books. The pious thief is beyond the reach of punishment, and the £11,500, has gone to Davy Jones's locker.

David Jones was a Calvinistic Methodist. No doubt he thought himself one of the elect, predestined to glory, and felt sure his theft and forgery would not annul the eternal decrees of God. Very likely he died in a vision of angels and harps, with a little smoke curling up from the pit, where the poor devils were roasting who had the misfortune to be honest but damned.

Henry Devlin was executed in Glasgow Gaol on Tuesday morning for the murder of his wife. Being a Catholic he was attended by Father Clifford. An altar was erected in his cell and Mass was said at 7 o'clock. After this the Sacrament was administered, and Devlin was hung with the body of Christ inside him. We presume he is now in heaven, while the wife he murdered is perhaps in hell. Oh what a beautiful creed.

The Bishop of Sodor and Man has been lecturing at Douglas on Science and the Bible. In regard to the Deluge he says he does not believe it was universal as regards the area of the world. When the writer says it covered "all the mountains under heaven" that meant all the mountains he saw. When he speaks of all animals being brought into the ark he means all in that district. Is the Bishop not aware that a flood which covered Mount Ararat would be practically universal? Nor could specimens of all the animals in Asia Minor have lived in the ark without a miracle.

The Bishop appeals for confirmation of the tale in Genesis to the Chaldean Tablets. This is rather rich. Those tablets admittedly represent stories far older than the times of Moses, and scholars are undecided as to whether these stories have any historical value or are purely mythical. Any way, there is no evidence that the Jews knew anything of a flood before they went to Babylon, after which they probably copied the Babylonian legends.

A writer in the *Figaro* is giving "Recollections of the Empress Eugénie." It seems the Empress is very superstitious. In 1870 a little before the *plébescite*, as she went out from Mass one Sunday she opened the Bible at random and put her finger on a verse. Reading it, she exclaimed "We shall have a magnificent success." The success came but it meant irretrievable disaster.

This method of divining was common among the early Methodists and is amusingly referred to by Bishop Lavington in his *Enthusiasm of Methodists*. In ancient times all forms of lottery were supposed to be under the superintendence of deity in accordance with the text of Proverbs which says "the lot is in the hand of the Lord." The superstition of telling fortunes by the Bible and a key still lingers in some parts of England.

A member of a certain fashionable church who spoke of her pastor irreverently as "the apostle to the gentiles," remarked once after a particularly doctrinal sermon, that if Mr. Blank preached restitution instead of repentance he would preach to empty pews.

Since the Supreme Court of Wisconsin decided that Bible-reading was illegal in the Public Schools, the question of religious education has become a burning one in the United States, where the Catholics are doing their utmost to upset the public school system. The question of Bible reading will be referred to the Supreme Court of the Union. We should like to hear that Col. Ingersoll has been engaged to argue it.

Freethought, says "Czar Alexander is the best living likeness of the orthodox deity."

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Celestine Edwards, the negro preacher, has been lecturing at Sunderland While he was holding forth in the Assembly Hall on "Christianity and Labor," an enterprising person, who was apparently a laborer and probably a Christian, stole into the ante-room and appropriated the lecturer's hat and overcoat.

How "converted infidels" are made.—A man who was never a member of any Secular Society, but has been frequently assisted by the Benevolent Committee, met Mr. Forder the other day, and said to him, "Ah, you won't help me any more, eh? Well, if you don't give me something, I shall go over to the other side When the man does "go over" we shall draw attention to this paragraph and connect his name with it.

The Licensed Victuallers' Mirror is a pious as well as a beery organ. One of its contributors pours out the vials of his wrath on the "infidels" who "defy God" in Hyde Park. We hope this forcible-feeble writer has received his pot of ale; it would be too much to hope he has received his cheque.

According to the Glasgow *Evening News*. the ordination at Cumbernauld Parish Church was honored by a special license to keep the pubs. open till midnight. Ordaining is evidently a thirsty business.

The Rev. H. W. Majendie, vicar of Torre, says there is no doubt the evil spirit of unbelief and rebellion against religion is spreading and increasing alarmingly, and will continue to spread and increase. He seems to attribute it to the Board schools, and perhaps he is not very far wrong.

Samuel Maxwell, a waiter at Lockhart's rooms, Brompton Road, and a member of the Salvation Army, has been sentenced to three months' hard labor for robbery from his employer.

The Codex Bezæ, a very ancient manuscript of the New Testament at Cambridge, contains no less than 13.281 variations from the ordinary text. When God took the trouble to inspire the writers, he ought at the same time to have inspired the copyists and thus saved theologians from wrangling over various readings of the divine word.

The Swiss government have frankly owned that the story of William Tell is a myth, and have ordered that the narrative shall be expunged from the school-books. This although the myth brings visitors and money to Switzerland. When will Christians be equally honest with Bible myths?

German Catholics, having the balance of Power in the Reichstag, are becoming importunate for further concessions. They demand the re-establishment in Germany of all the Catholic orders, including the Jesuits, Government aid for Catholic missions in German Africa and the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. Meanwhile the Government is adopting a course of petty persecution towards the German Freethinkers, who are the only party able to neutralise the efforts of the Catholics and keep them in check.

The Bishop of Ballarat, Victoria, has offered an insult to the Y M.C.A., which nothing but gore will ever wipe out. He states that he wants to have no connection with that body "if its effects were simply to create young females of the male sex, and though he liked to see the youths put off, as the Scripture said, the old man, he did not wish them to put on the old woman." The *Sydney Bulletin*, which reports this hard saying of the Bishop's, adds: "The boneless young person with the heavenly smile and the inch of white sock showing between his pants and his shoes is so mad at this that he has risen with his umbrella in one hand and his golosh in the other, and has asked in a small voice for an explanation. And if he doesn't get it the chances are that he will let his carnal passions loose and inform his mother about it."—*Star*.

The men of God are to be exempt from the law which prohibits the importation of contract labor into the United States. They do not come to labor, but to *prey*.

A writer in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* says: "About three years ago a meeting was held of the church-members of a certain well-known church, not twenty miles from Weston, composed mostly too of business men, and the question was raised and discussed, after due notice given, 'Whether it is, or is not, possible—in the present state of the commercial world—to observe the precepts of Christianity, *and* to succeed in business?' And a majority of votes decided that it was 'impossible'!"

The Rev. Peter Mackenzie is a curiosity, if the report of the *Rochdale Observer* is trustworthy. The *R. O.* calls him "the Comic Man of Methodism," and says he often speaks at the rate of 300 words a minute. Perhaps this may account for his being made to compare the historical books of the Bible with "all the old masters, Turner and the rest of them." "Noah," he said, "was the most successful financier that ever lived. He successfully launched a limited liability company when the whole world was in a state of liquidation. Talk about limited companies! That was the successful company! Then there was Abraham and the prophets; he could not enumerate them all—*they must buy a catalogue!*" This is the sort of thing that goes down with Wesleyans now. What would John Wesley say, could he listen for a moment to such folly?

The Rev. E. Lloyd Jones has recently had what he considers a little angel in the form of a baby girl, and is consequently annoyed with a Darlington clergyman who stated that every babe born into the world was a little devil until it was baptised. The Darlington clergyman relies on the fact that Jesus prescribed baptism as a condition of salvation. The logical outcome of this belief is the form of baptism mentioned in *Tristram Shandy*, for five minutes' delay on the part of a minister might mean the damnation of another soul in eternal hell.

R. D. C. Cordeaux, the solicitor of Hull who hanged himself last week, left a note, saying, "God forgive me for this rash act." Evidently no Atheist.

The Rev. Burham Pegg, Principal of Bath House College, Twickenham, seems to be a follower of the late unlamented Mr. Squeers, of Dotheboys Hall. In an action brought against him for breach of contract, evidence was given that children were reduced to a woefully emaciated condition by the bad diet and ill-treatment. The soup was like vinegar and the meat often bad. Mrs. Pegg, like Mrs. Squeers, dosed the boys with brimstone and treacle. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed, and the judge awarded full costs against the Rev. Squeers Pegg.

An enthusiastic believer was relating to a sceptic spiritual performances to which he could testify, and among other things said that on a certain occasion the spirit of his wife, who had been dead several years, returned to him, and, seating herself upon his knee, put her arms around him, and kissed him as much to his gratification as she used to do when living. "You do not mean to say," remarked the sceptic, "that the spirit of your wife really embraced you and kissed you?" "No, not exactly that," replied the believer, "but her spirit took possession of the body of a female medium, and through her embraced and kissed me."

A New York telegram announces that one hundred negroes have been poisoned in Dallas Co. Texas, through eating arsenical pork. The old Jew upstairs must have lost his temper at seeing pious people partake of the unclean animal.

The *Times* of Tuesday devotes an article to the artistic training of the working man, yet never mentions the obvious fact that this would be best obtained by giving workmen the opportunity of studying the works of art on their one day of leisure. A writer in the *Daily News* points out that in Paris the picture galleries and museum are open on Sunday but closed on Monday when the attendants have their day of rest. The enjoyment of the many is thus promoted at the least sacrifice to the few.

The Rev. W. E. Sellers, of the Wesleyan Church, Willesden, spoke a lot of nonsense in preaching to the Temperance

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and Friendly Society. He said, for instance, that "All charitable institutions were the creation of Christianity." He is evidently unaware that philanthropy is a Greek word, in use in the days of Plato, and that hospitals existed among the Egyptians a thousand years before Jesus is said to have cured the blind by clay and spittle; omitting to leave the secret of his success to any successors.

The floods in Austria and Hungary have been terrible in their severity, but they have been dwarfed into insignificance by those in China, where it is reported that four millions of people have been washed out of house and home.

Cyclones in America, gales and shipwrecks in the China seas, famine at Suakim, increase of cholera in Spain, barley as well as potato blight in Ireland, a plague of devastating locusts in Rajuputana (India), and a plague of rats in Lincolnshire, may afford food for meditation to pious optimists whose creed is "He doeth all things well."

The number of deaths among cattle arising from snake-bites in India was, according to the last yearly census, upwards of 68,000. This may be all very well for the snakes, but it is rather hard on the cattle and their owners.

The Rev. Wm. F. Pettit, a prominent Methodist minister of Lafayette, Indiana, is charged with poisoning his wife, but has been let out on bail of ten thousand dollars.

Holy Russia is maintaining her reputation. Those who refuse to join the orthodox Church are persecuted in various ways. A number of German settlers have been expelled for declining to change their religion.

An inquest was held on Monday at Listowel on the body of Mr. Marum, M.P., who died suddenly in church on Sunday. The jury, after hearing medical evidence, returned a verdict of heart disease. Suppose Mr. C. Bradlaugh, M.P., were to die in a Secular Hall on a Sunday. What a hollabalu there would be in religious circles!

The editor of the *Spectator* cannot understand how the idea of ghosts could arise if there was no actuality to give rise to it. Evidently the editor has not read Dr. E. B. Tylor's work on *Primitive Culture*, or he would surely have no difficulty in seeing that dreams were mainly responsible for a belief that is contributed to in savage minds by shadows and reflections. The return of the sun and the stars is also found in early religions to be associated with the return of the dead. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection of Christ is founded on the earlier resurrection of sun-gods.

The story of the gorilla acting as signalman on a railway at Natal calls up the statement of Mr. Anderson, in his *Twenty-five Years in a Waggon*, of the Bushman who assured him he could both talk to the baboons and understand what they said. What does Mr. Romanes say?

A correspondent of a Church paper says that at a church in the suburbs of Hull the vicar has a stipend of £50 per annum for each person in his congregation. Yet his stipend is only £200.

Prophet Baxter is down again. He found that Boulanger's name made the number (666) of the Beast, and prophesied great things for him. But Boulanger is now as dead (politically) as a shotten herring, and Prophet Baxter will have to find another Beast. This is the sixth or seventh time he has been mistaken, but his dupes are not easily undeceived, and he comes up smiling after every fiasco.

Woman tells this story of the late Canon Liddon. During his travels in the East he was so pleased with his dragoman that he gave him a large amount of backsheesh. Two days later the happy dragoman called on Canon Liddon and exhibited the new wife he had bought with the Englishman's money. It was like the good old patriarchal times again.

Canon Liddon is to have a memorial. Fifty years hence who will remember him except the readers of old-fashioned theology? Sensible folk will soon be obliged to suggest that a man should be dead ten years before there is any talk of perpetuating his memory.

Mr. Ben Tillett is not to address the Church Congress after all. He is not a member of the English Church, and the Committee find it is against the rules for an outsider to speak at their annual palaver. We hope Ben Tillett will use this illustration of charity the next time he occupies a Christian pulpit.

It is admitted by the *Speaker* that the Ticino revolution was largely brought about by the clericalism which "has nothing in common with good government." The fundamental principle of the Republic was flouted because it threatened to destroy clerical supremacy.

On Sunday a collection was made for the poor old Pope in all the Catholic churches of county Limerick. Many of the principal townsmen of Newcastle West put nothing in the box as a protest against the action of Bishop O'Dwyer who is to carry the money to Rome. Father Hurley, the parish priest, referred to the matter at Mass, and said "God help the Catholicity of those who would not contribute a mite to the Vicar of Christ!"

Irishmen are saying "We won't take our politics from Rome." By and bye they will say, "We won't take our religion from Rome."

A pious league of Sabbatarians has been started by some American sky-pilots, with the object of protesting against the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday at Chicago in 1892. The members of the League vow not to go to Chicago or make any purchases from the Exhibition if it is opened on Sundays. They will probably only succeed in showing how insignificant Sabbatarians are becoming.

The Blood of Christ question has been agitating at Marseilles. There is a church in that city, Notre Dame de la Garde, where the young priests have to go through the celebration of the Mass about every ten minutes between seven in the morning and noon. The wine which is used is poor, sour stuff, and the priests complained that it injured their health. Accordingly the Pope was asked to let them tone up the Blood of Christ with brandy, and after a full discussion the request has been granted, but the alcohol found in the wine must not exceed 12 per cent. We congratulate the Marseilles priests, and hope that the Blood of Christ will henceforth agree with them.

Now that slavery is on its last legs the Catholic Church is carrying on a vigorous crusade against it. Cardinal Lavigerie is thundering away with the Pope's blessing, and has managed to assemble an Anti-Slavery Congress at Paris. The complexion of this Congress is purely clerical. Jules Simon is the only Republican who gives it any support. Victor Schœlcher, the aged Atheist and Republican, whose life and fortune have been devoted to the cause of emancipation, would not countenance this Catholic dodge to gain a little cheap popularity.

M. Keller, the president of the Congress, made a number of extraordinary statements, which were well received, however, by the clerical anti-slavers. He said that one of the three wise men from the East, who visited the cradle of Christ, was a black man. He also declared that Mohammedanism had introduced both slavery and polygamy as sacred institutions. But every reader of the Koran knows that it regulates slavery just as the Old Testament does; and that while, like the Jew Book, it sanctions polygamy, it lays down regulations that are far juster to women than those which are found in the Old Testament.

LITTLE TOMMY.

A mother who had lost one of her little darlings had the following epitaph inscribed on his tombstone:

> We cannot have everything to please us;
> Little Tommy's gone to Jesus.

A wit added this couplet:

> Fear not, dear friends, all may yet be well;
> Perhaps little Tommy's gone to hell.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 28, at the Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Hull; at 10.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; at 2.30, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.
November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsy; 30, Leicester.
December 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

J. CLOSE.—The suggestion has been made before. We may see our way to adopt it.

H. M.—Too long for a joke. Brevity is the soul of wit.

J. F. HENLEY.—Explanations do not alter facts. When the girl let the baby fall and broke its leg, it was a poor consola- that she never did it before. Mr. Smith said the chairman did not arrive in Hyde Park on Sept. 14. You say he did, but the two gentlemen did not know each other. But surely they had *tongues*. Couldn't they inquire? Might not your chairman have asked "Is Mr. Smith here?" We were not wrong in saying that such a fiasco was inexcusable, though we mean no offence to you personally, or to others not responsible.

J. P. SILKSTONE.—Mr. Foote has written to the secretary of the Branch for an explanation. Thanks.

R. M.—We are unable to tell you who was Cain's father-in-law. We should guess, "Adam or the Devil."

A. J. (West Ham).—Colenso's *Arithmetic* is a good one. What do you mean by Reading Books? What subjects do you wish to study?

W. HOLLAND.—Mr. Foote would be glad to visit Manchester more frequently, but there are so many other places that desire his services.

H. BORLAND.—The "Thirty Converted Infidels" tract has been exposed again and again. Thomas Cooper did go back to Christianity and so did Joseph Barker—both a great many years ago; but most of the other cases are false, and the rest are insignificant persons who were in no sense "leaders" of Freethought. Glad to hear your Branch is progressing.

W. GILMOUR.—Thanks. We dealt with the Primmer-Argyll correspondence last week.

E. S. DAY.—Jokes are always welcome.

E. COX.—If you want to challenge Mr. Standring you should write him direct. Why write to us?

S. STANDRING.—Thanks for the memorandum.

J. H. ARTHUR.—(1) St. Paul (1 Galatians iii.) reckons 430 years from the covenant with Abraham to the giving of the Law after the Exodus. This agrees with Josephus, who gives 215 years from Abraham to the going down of Jacob into Egypt, and 215 from that to the Exodus. This chronology is accepted by nearly all the commentators. The passage in Exodus (xii., 40, 41) is ambiguous, and the commentators say that the 430 years refer to the sojourning, not to the dwelling in Egypt. You may be sure that Mr. Foote has good grounds for all his statements in *Bible Romances*. (2) You should remember that there is such a thing as being too solemn. If you press the thing literally Sunday means the Sun's Day *(dies solis)*, and is a pre-Christian celebration. Of course the Jewish Sunday (to use the word generically) was the Sabbath; but who could be misled by a colloquial phrase on such a subject?

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—C. B., 10s.; surplus on Excursion, North-West London Branch, 2s. 7d.; Finsbury Branch, 10s.; Wood Green Branch, 5s.; Brighton Branch (2nd subscription), 4s. 6d.; Hyde Park Branch, 6s.—R. FORDER.

T. DUNBAR.—It is always pleasant to hear from those we have been instrumental in converting to Freethought.

C. B.—The Benevolent Fund is administered most carefully by a Special Committee, which does its work gratuitously. Subscribers may rely on every penny going to deserving persons.

A. J. FIELD.—We daresay Finsbury Park will be quiet enough henceforth.

FREETHINKER.—The statement that Celestine Edwards has silenced the Secularists in Hyde Park is a silly falsehood. See our Lecture Guide every week for the work of the Hyde Park Branch, which it one of the most active in London.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Lichtfreund—Echo—Star—Cape Argus—Finsbury Park Journal—South Eastern Herald—Redcar Gazette—Rochdale Observer—Hull Daily News—Weston-Super-Mare Gazette—Willesden Herald—Sporting Life—St. Pancras Guardian—Individualist—Manx Sun—Exeter Evening Post.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's audiences on Sunday were the largest he has ever had in the Manchester Secular Hall. The heat was intense in the evening, owing to the crowded state of the place, and the atmosphere told on the lecturer afterwards. The chief opponent was the Rev. Mr. Coller.

The Manchester Branch has been very successful with its open-air meetings. The lectures are listened to attentively, and a great deal of literature is distributed. Altogether the prospect in Manchester is brightening.

One Freethinker travelled sixty miles to hear Mr. Foote on Sunday. There are only two or three "saints" in the part he came from, but they get the *Freethinker* and circulate Secular literature in that benighted district.

Mr. Foote opened the course of Free Lectures at the Hall of Science on Thursday, Sept. 18. Despite the rain there was a good audience. There were three opponents—of a sort! Why cannot the Christians send decent representatives of their faith?

A very intelligent-looking young man spoke to Mr. Foote after the lecture. He had been told by an orthodox friend not to go and hear Mr. Foote who was "a low vulgar beast." He did come though, and was "agreeably disappointed." He enjoyed the lecture, and was resolved to study our side of the question.

Mr. G. Standring is down to deliver the second lecture of this Free Course on Thursday, Sept. 25, his subject being "A Defence of Secularism." Mr. Forder follows on Thursday, Oct. 2, on "Christian Legends," and Mr. Foote winds up on Thursday, Oct, 9.

A small meeting was held at Anderton's Hotel on Wednesday evening, September 17, to form a Committee to agitate for the legalisation of bequests for Freethought purposes. Mr. G. J. Holyoake presided, and made a brief speech on the object of the meeting. A committee was then formed, with power to add to its number. Mr. Foote was asked to become a member, but could give no promise before consulting his colleagues on the N.S.S. A most capable secretary was secured in Mr. H. L. Brækstad. The Committee is issuing a circular, and further operations will soon be undertaken.

The Camberwell Branch is re-opening its Science Classes under the conduct of Mr. Coppock. Full particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

Mr. Martin Weatherburn hopes to form a Branch at Blyth. The Freethought movement is spreading in the Tyneside district.

George Standring sends the following note: "I lectured last Sunday morning at Finsbury Park. The audience was a pretty large one, and, with the exception of a few trifling verbal interruptions, everything went smoothly. There was no discussion. After the lecture, a person put a question *sotto voce*, and, as he appeared too bashful to mount the platform, I stated his question and replied to it. This too modest Christian subsequently engaged me in a conversational debate, still displaying the outward signs of a timid inquirer. In a short time the circle of listeners increased, and my modest friend threw off the disguise he had assumed. He was supported by the empty laughter of a few boys who would have been more appropriately employed in eating sweetstuff than in jeering at a Freethought advocate. The modest Christian put on the offensive armor of his tribe, and, as soon as I discovered his true character, I left him to his own devices, remarking that, as he had been too cowardly to meet me upon the platform, I would not expose myself to his insults under other conditions. I afterwards learned from a Freethought friend that there had been a disposition evinced to cause a disturbance by hustling on the outskirts of the audience; but, for some reason or another, the attempt was abandoned."

Mr. A. B. Moss reports a success in Finsbury Park on Sunday afternoon. He had a large and attentive audience. Freethinkers came in strong force to support the platform.

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We see fro a the *St. Pancras Guardian* that Miss Vance delivered an effective little speech at the meeting called to consider the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald, vicar of Camden Town. There is plenty of room for lady speakers on our platform just now, and it is to be hoped they will come forward in the cause of mental emancipation, which is indeed the cause of woman.

The Boston *Record* prints this paragraph: "Mrs. Robert G. Ingersoll is the recipient of countless tracts, Church prints, leaflets and religious publications embracing every modern creed. The senders evidently have one shrewd point in mind—believing firmly that if they can reach Mrs. Ingersoll successfully, she can be depended upon to win over the eloq ent Robert." The senders might as well spare themselves the trouble and save their postage. Mrs Ingersoll is altogether too kind-hearted to ever become a Christian, and too big-brained to heed their tracts. She knows already all that the Church can say, and she does not feel the more kindly toward it for its persistent, scurrilous, spiteful and idiotic abuse of Colonel Ingersoll. When the Church gets Mrs. Ingersoll away from her husband, the heavens will collapse—and there doesn't seem to be any immediate danger of that.—*Truthseeker*

The *Cambria Daily Leader* reproduces our recent paragraphs on Mr. Ben Tillett and his funny religion.

The Russian ministry has accorded to the district assemblies of the government of Ekaterinoslov permission to open book-stores in all the villages in which there may be a demand for reading matter, under the condition that no other publications be kept for sale than such as the secular and the religious censors may approve. But the *Grazhdanin*, a daily paper of St Petersburg, takes exceptions to that measure. "It is unwise," says that paper, "to put dangerous weapons in the hands of the people. Bookstores once opened for the common people will in a short time be turned by the Liberals into weapons against the government, and the disintegration of the national spirit will be wrought. Of course no other books but such as the censor approves are desired at present. The people need at first only stories of Russian heroes and patriot warriors. But in a short time they will begin reading the editorials of newspapers and get into the habit of reasoning about current events. Then they will become acquainted with Mill, Lassalle, and other writers of the kind. Within five or six years the Liberalistic propaganda will find means to distribute among them books and papers of the most dangerous tendencies." So mote it be!

The Italians in London met in Freemasons' Tavern, on Monday, Sept. 22nd, to celebrate the abrogation of the Pope's temporal power on Sept. 20, 1870.

In 1845, a German pastor named Wislicenus made a considerable stir by a Rationalistic pamphlet entitled *Letter or Spirit?* This was made the occasion of deposing him from the ministry and he became the founder of the Free Congregations in Germany, most of whom are decided Freethinkers. Dr. T. Voelkel of Magdeberg, has now reissued the pamphlet with an historical introduction.

Charles Robert Newman, the brother of Cardinal Newman and Francis William Newman, the Theist, was a real reasoning Atheist. Several papers from his pen appeared in the columns of the *Reasoner*, though as far as we can ascertain he published no works on theology. These papers should be worthy of republication. The three brothers began as Evangelical Protestants, curiously exemplifying the tendencies of the age away from Protestantism.

During October the platform of the London Hall of Science will be occupied by Mr Foote. The subjects of his lectures will be announced in our next.

Mr. Bradlaugh will lecture at the London Hall of Science in November. On the Sunday mornings he will restate his political and social programme, and on the Sunday evening's his theological position.

Messrs. Bentley and Co. announce a *Life of Thoreau*, by Mr. H. S. Salt, author of the *Life of James Thomson (B. V.)*

Our old contributor, Mr. W. P. Ball, has long been working on a scientific treatise. We see it is announced among "forthcoming books" by Macmillan and Co. The title is "Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?" The social implications of this question are of transcendent importance. Mr. Ball takes the negative view.

Now the open-air lecture stations are closing, and the winter season with its long evening approaches, we venture to make a fresh appeal to our friends to promote the circulation of this journal. If three or four hundred friends would take extra copies (one, two, or more) for a few weeks, and put them into orthodox hands, it would procure us many new readers and some fresh subscribers.

More than a hundred thousand of "Freethinker Tracts" have been sent out from our office, and probably most of them are in circulation.

THE POWER OF SUPERSTITION.

In the Rev. John Heckewelden's *History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Natives*, a good instance is given of the force of human credulity. The Indian tribes universally believed in the power of sorcerers to inflict evil by means of magic. Some time ago a Quaker trader named John Anderson, who among the Indians was called "the honest Quaker trader," after vainly endeavoring to convince them that there was no such thing as witchcraft, desired that two of their magicians might be brought before him on different days, and try by their spells to do him whatever harm they could. The Indians tried at first to dissuade him from so dangerous an experiment; but he persisted, and they acceded to his demand. A medicine man was brought, but, knowing Anderson, he said he was so good and honest that he could not think of doing him an injury. The Indians found this excuse perfectly good, and were more than ever convinced of this man's power from his refusal to exercise it.

Another was discovered of a different stamp. He was an arch-sorcerer, dreaded for his power and malevolence. Every effort was made to dissuade Mr. Anderson from the ordeal. But he was firm in his purpose, and only stipulated that the magician, who boasted that he could kill his enemies at the distance of one hundred miles, should remain at the distance of about twelve feet. A reward was exhibited, to be given to the magician if he succeeded.

The spectators being assembled, the sorcerer took his place, arrayed in the most frightful manner he could devise. Anderson stood firm and composed at the stipulated distance. The wizard began his incantations, working his fingers on his blanket, plucking now and then a little wool, breathing on it and using other spells to which the power of bewitching is ascribed. All this had no effect on Anderson, who remained calm, now and then calling on his antagonist not to be sparing of his exertions. The conjuror began to make the most horried gestures, and used all the means in his power to frighten the Quaker, who remained unmoved. At length the magician was obliged to desist from exhaustion and alleged for his excuse that the white men eat too much salt provisions; that salt had a powerful repulsive effect, which made the powerful invisible substance that he employed recoil upon him; that the Indians, who eat but little salt, had often felt the effects of this substance, but that the great quantity of it which the white men used had effectually protected them against it.

The imposition of the sorcerer's pretence was palpable. Yet the Indians refused to discredit him. They firmly believed that the salt which the white man used was the only cause of his failure in this instance, and if it had not been for the salted meat Mr. Anderson fed upon, he would have fallen a victim as well as others to the incantations of this impostor.

The story well illustrates the tenacity with which the credulous adhere to their superstitions, and will doubtless suggest somewhat similar experiences between Freethinkers and the orthodox.

THE reign of superstition begins to yield to a religion of reason and humanity. The first forerunners of that religion appeared at the end of the sixteenth century, when the philosophers of nothern Europe first dared to appeal from dogma to nature, and since that revival of common sense the prison walls of clerical obscurantism have been shaken by shock after shock, till daylight now enters through a thousand fissures.—*Prof. Oswald.*

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WHY JUDAS SUICIDED.

Two thousand years are nearly fled
Since J. C. through the country led
A dozen Hebrews, hopeless cranks,
To witness his fantastic pranks;
To help him drink his home-made wine,
And see him slay the farmers' swine,
To hear him brag of being king
And see him dance the highland fling
Upon the Galilean sea;
And take the tax collector's fee
From out a fresh-caught haddock's gill,
And quite a crowd of people fill
With some young sprats a boy had got
Alive within a gallipot;
To see him still the angry wave
And dig a dead man from his grave;
And many other tricks he played
That puts good Moses in the shade.

One Judas catered for the lot,
Collecting all the browns they got.
No doubt they made a tidy screw,
For who so lib'ral as a Jew?
This Judas soon began to think
J. C. too sharp about the chink,
For ev'ry time they stumped a town
He'd to account for ev'ry brown
And give returns, to stop all doubt,
How he had laid the money out.

At length it dawned upon his mind
J. C. to boasting was inclined.
He'd heard him crow that he was king,
And part of God, or some such thing.
Thought he, "'Twould be in vain to seek
One who could match J. C. in cheek;
Why, he was but a joiner lad—
I knew him working with his dad;
But now we hear him cracking on
That he is God Almighty's son.
I'll go and tell the Jewish priest
Where he intends to hold the feast."

Then to the temple straight he went,
On pocketing reward intent.
Said he, "My lords, strange news I bring
Of one who swears that he is king,
And means, there can't be any doubt,
To quickly drive the Romans out.
If you're inclined to lock him up,
I'll tell you where he's going to sup;
But first, my lords, you understand
I'd like a little cash in hand;
For since I've served this bouncing bloke
He's kept me fairly 'stoney broke.'"

"All right. Suppose we say a quid?
No doubt the man is off his head;
For if what you have told be true,
There never was a madder Jew."
"A quid! So help me God, my lords,
I cannot understand your words.
I sell my master, good and kind,
Who heals the sick and cures the blind!
You think my conscience made of steel!
Two quid, or I am off the deal."
They haggled long about the job,
But closed at last for thirty bob.

As Judas toddled slowly home,
He met by chance a former chum,
And when the "how d'ye-does" were said
They liquored at the "Jacob's Head."
"Come," said the pal, "there's fifty bob
I'll get you for your master's nob.
A great phrenologist in town
Will pay you ready money down
If you will put him on the track
Of this most famous maniac,
For since he's learnt his subtle craft
He loves the head of one that's daft."

Jude ran to call his bargain off;
The judge received him with a laugh,
And said, "My friend, it seems to me
You're quite as cracked as poor J. C.
Pick up your coin, you silly elf,
And go away and hang yourself."
Poor Judas, having lost a quid,
Went forth and did as he was bid.

T. Clark.

A SPLENDID FUTURE FOR THE AUTOMATIC MACHINES.

The capabilities of the Automatic Machines for supplying almost anything is comparatively unlimited—from scenting your handkerchief to telling your fortune—so being of a kindly nature I sent the outcome of my careful thought to the Bishops and very Archbishops of the Church, showing them how a vast income could be made by manipulating these machines by an ecclesiastical syndicate for the benefit of the poor underpaid Bishops, etc., of the Established Church. They have not had the common courtesy to acknowledge even the receipt of my letters. My plan is this: The Syndicate to place Machines for Automatic Supply in all public places, where a penny put in the slot would produce a crust of bread and a short drink—wine or some blood-red liquid—the sacrament in fact—not too great a hunk of bread and of course no cheese, or of course the office boys would be making their dinner off their Savior at the small charge of a penny; whilst other machines could be worked for the purpose of baptism—when the penny is placed in the slot a spray of baptismal water would be squirted over the placer—warmed in winter and iced in summer. These three things: the bread, the wine, and the water could be blessed in bulk, and then employment could be given to the numerous hulking clergy seen walking about listlessly, in filling the receptacles daily with this holy food and these holy "goes" of cheap wine. As no notice has been taken of my money-making scheme, I write this to you, sir! feeling sure that with your usual impartiality you'll make it public in your very secular journal, and so not let this great idea drop silently into the great ocean of failures.

Humanitas.

THE FAT IN THE FIRE.

The Baptist community of Pretoria are greatly shocked with Mr. Statham, the editor of the *Transvaal Observer*, who has offended the proprieties beyond conception. It seems that on the invitation of the Rev. Mr. Cousins, Mr. Statham agreed to preach a sermon in the Baptist Church some three Sundays ago, and accordingly, on the day appointed, Mr. Statham duly occupied the pulpit. His sermon, however, was quite unorthodox, and wholly contrary to the teachings of the clergy. It was designed to show that Christ was not a divine being, and that the Bible was a mere fable. The principles that underlie thoughts of that nature may be either right or wrong, but to give expression to them in the pulpit of a church which is sacred to the utterances of faith, and where clergymen are accustomed to teach exactly opposite doctrines, is bad form altogether. As the local Christians are saying:—"Mr Cousins planted, trained, and reared the tree of faith, and Mr. Statham stepped in, applied the axe cruelly to the root, and sought to eradicate it. Freethought is useful in its way, but it is quite out of place in the pulpit of a Christian Church, and if a gentleman accept an invitation to preach in such a sacred edifice, he practically intimates by his acceptance that he agrees with the tenets of that Church. To promise a clergyman to preach for him, and then to give a lecture on Freethought, is a breach of the proprieties which cannot be too highly censured." Shocking, to be sure!

Peter's Pence for 1889.—The sums received at Rome last year for Peter's pence are reported to have been as follows: From Austria, about £16,000; Spain, £8,000; France, £12,800; Germany, £7,200; Ireland £6,000; England, £3,800; Belgium, £6,200; Switzerland, £2,200; Poland, £3,400; North America, £7,400; South America, £12,400; Africa, £3,800; Asia, £4,000; Roumania, £4,000; Italy, £14,200, and Portugal, £6,000. Other sums, making up £4,000, were collected in Australia, Oceanica, Russia, Sweden, Norway, etc. The whole sum received was about £120,000 being less by £6,000 than what was received in 1888. The European States which contributed nothing were Turkey, Montenegro, Greece, and Servia.

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ANOTHER POLISH HERESY CASE.

Mr. W. R. Morfill reviews in the *Academy* a Polish work by Kraushara giving an account of "A Blasphemy Case in Poland in the Eighteenth Century." It appears that Sigsmund Unruh or Unrug (born at Miedzychod 1676), a Protestant noble of Obornik, and chamberlain to the king Augustus, was in 1715 accused of blasphemy. He kept a commonplace book in which was inserted a statement in French, to the effect that truth had not descended from heaven to the inhabitants of this globe to be a perpetual source of error, war, hatred and division. This was taken from *l'Esprit des Cours d'Europe* of Nicholas Gueudeville, of whom some account will be found in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Unruh was denounced, brought before the tribunal at Pietrokof, the birthplace of that good Freethinker Mrs. Rose, and was condemned to be burnt. Fortunately Unruh escaped to Germany, and his book alone was burnt. In 1726 his sentence was remitted and he died in 1732. This case may perhaps throw some light on that of Liszinski narrated in the *Freethinker* for Sept. 14.—J. M. W.

REVIEW.

Garrison in Heaven. A Dream by William Denton. First English edition, 1890. Manchester, E. W. Wallis, 10 Gt. Ducie Street. Price 3d.—This is an amusing skit on orthodoxy by the late W. F. Denton, the geologist and anti-Christian spiritist lecturer. It depicts Lloyd Garrison, the great Abolitionist, admitted to heaven because after death the ministers began to speak well of him; seeing all the menagerie of the apocalypse, but being disatisfied because all his old familiar friends and fellow workers were down in hell. He then wanted to see Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, Adams and Paine, but found they were all below, while he was expected to keep company with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samson, David and Calvin. At length Garrison takes up a corner as near to hell as he can possibly get, and expresses his determination to start an underground railway and run in every soul from that infernal pit.

PROFANE JOKES.

A drunken Scotchman was admonished by the parson thus: "I can go into the village and come home again without getting drunk." "Ah meenister, but I'm so popular," was the apologetic reply.

Vicar (reading from Book of Extracts): "What an elegant passage! I must use it in my sermons. Dear me no! It's from one of Zola's novels, and my congregation would recognise it."

The Holy Sabbath.—Bridget: "The new neigbors next door wants to cut their grass, and they say as would you be so kind as to lend them your lawn-mower." Puritanical Mistress: "Lend my mower to cut grass on the Sabbath. Tell them we haven't got one."

A gentleman in clerical attire entered a bookshop and asked if a translation of the recently-discovered book of Enoch was out. "Enoch! Enoch! Enoch!" said the assistant, trying to summon his biblical knowledge; let me see, wasn't that the Jew who went to hell in a fiery cab."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Shelley and Swinburne."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 3 sharp, quarterly meeting, election of officers, etc.; 5.30, tea, tickets only 6d. each; 7, soiree. Tuesday, at 8, social evening.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "External Evidences of Christian Religion"; preceded by a recitation.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Practical Results of Bible Teachings."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "How we become Ill."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Capt. Moundes, "Science of Religion."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Design in Nature."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus, and what did he Teach?"

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Devil."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Shelley on God and the Bible"; general meeting of members after the lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "The Confusion of Tongues."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "Bible Morality"; 3.30, Mr. E. T. Garner, "Modern Irreligion: for Good or Evil."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 6.30, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. J. Lawler will lecture. Monday, 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Does the Bible Teach a Personal Devil?"

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Absurdities of the Church Prayer-Book."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Resurrection: did it happen?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Has the Religion of Christ been of Benefit to the World?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "What is Christianity?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. J. Marshall will lecture.

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecy as Tests of Truth."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "The World's Religions."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, a concert.

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, quarterly meeting; all members are requested to attend.

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trade Societies' Lecture Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. Sam Standring, 3, "Who Wants to go to Heaven?"; 6.30, "St. Paul's Shocking Blasphemy." Admission free.

Hull—Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 10.30, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 2.30, "Heaven and Hell"; 6.30, "A World Without God."

Leeds—All subscribers to the Leeds Freethought Lecture Fund, commenced about two years ago, are requested to meet at Caves' Temperance Hotel, Briggate, at 3, to consider the best means of utilising the money subscribed.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Mene," first of three sermons on Daniel v.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—3, half-yearly meeting of members; 6.30, Mr. Joseph Spencer in his humorous and dramatic recitals. Dancing class opens on Wednesday, Oct. 1 at 8, admission 6d., quarter 5s.

Newcastle-on-Tyne Sunday Music League, 4 Half's Court, Newgate Street, 11, (and on Wednesday at 7.30), usual meeting of members.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, Mr. R Forder, 3, "How I became a Freethinker, and why I remain one"; 7, "Was Jesus God, Man, or Myth?"

Oldham — Hall of Science, Horsedge Street, 10.30, quarterly meeting.

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Readings and discussion; all are invited.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Lush will lecture.

Sheffield - Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. William Heaford, 11, "A Freethinker's View of Christ"; 3, "The Sermon on the Mount Examined and Found Wanting"; 7, "A Vindication of Athei-m."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

Sunderland—Victoria Hall, Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11, "Eight Hours by Law"; 3, "Justification of my Heresy"; 7, "The Political Parties in England and their Prospects."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield — Market Cross, on Saturday, Sept. 27, at 7.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Are Nonconformists Christians?"

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 11, Mr. Thomas Park will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 28 (morning) Clerkenwell, (evening) Woolwich. Oct 5 (morning) Camberwell; 15, Battersea; 19 (evening) Woolwich; 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park.

E. Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Oct. 12, Liverpool.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Sept. 28 (morning) outside "Salmon and Ball," Bethnal Green. Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 28 (afternoon) Finsbury Park. Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 19, Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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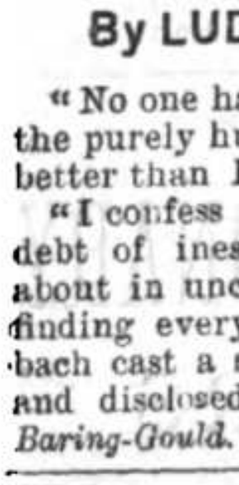

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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GLADSTONE'S WIND UP.

MR. GLADSTONE'S article in the October number of *Good Words* seems to conclude the series. Its title is "Recent Corroborations of Scripture from the Regions of History and Natural Science." In the preliminary section he refers to evolution as "confirming the great argument of design"; but as, in this respect, he differs from John Stuart Mill, and even from Darwin himself, his mere *ipse dixit* counts for nothing. Mr. Gladstone also observes that "the doctrine of birth-sin, as it is sometimes called, is simply the recognition of the hereditary disorder and degeneracy of our natures; and of all men the evolutionist would be the last to establish a title to object to it in principle." Here again Mr. Gladstone shows a curious ignorance of evolution. Darwinians do not believe in the "degeneracy" of human nature; on the contrary, they assert its slow but constant improvement. They do not teach the *fall* of man, but the *rise* of man. On the other hand, the Darwinian law of heredity and the Christian doctrine of original sin, have absolutely nothing in common; and whoever asserts that they have, understands neither the one nor the other.

Mr. Gladstone imagines that he has proved the scientific accuracy of the Creation story to the satisfaction of every person of intelligence. No doubt he has done so to his own satisfaction; but others will reflect that he has obstinately evaded every serious difficulty.

Never has it been our misfortune to read a more extravagant piece of special-pleading than Mr. Gladstone's section on the Assyrian and Hebrew myths of the Deluge. He does not dispute that the Assyrian tablets deciphered by the late Mr. George Smith were "composed more than 2,000 years B.C.;" that is, five hundred years before the alleged date of Moses. Yet, in the face of this chronology; in face of the lack of all reference to the Deluge in the Jewish historical books before the Captivity; in face of the great influence which contact with Babylon indisputably exercised on the Jewish people; Mr. Gladstone asserts that the Hebrew and Assyrian flood-stories are "derived through independent channels," that "the one comes through a powerful and civilised empire, the other through an obscure nomad family." Surely Mr. Gladstone must see that he is begging the whole question. He has first to establish the fact—if it be a fact—that the flood-story was known to the pre-Mosaic Jews; whereas, he has nothing but assumption to show that it was even known to the pre-Exile Jews.

Everything Mr. Gladstone has to say on the subject is based on this simple trick of begging the question. He starts from a premiss which he knows is the very proposition in dispute, and at the finish he blandly desires his opponents to admit his conclusion.

First, he says the Jewish account of the Flood is monotheistic; which, by the way, it is not, for there are two accounts purposely disguised in our English version, in one of which the deity is called by the single name of Jehovah, and in the other by the plural name of Elohim. On the other hand, he says, the Assyrian account is polytheistic; and he argues that the simpler form is nearer to the original source. But does not Mr. Gladstone see that all this is consistent with the position of the "negative" critics, who assert that the Jewish flood-story was borrowed from Babylon when the Jews were monotheistic?

Secondly, he asserts that the absence of local coloring in the flood-story of the Jews is natural if it was derived from a simple nomad people like Abraham, his ancestors and his posterity. But is it not just as natural on the theory that it was doctored by the later Jewish priests for their own people? Would they not cut away everything that gave the story a foreign air?

Even, however, if Abraham and his family picked up a knowledge of the flood-story while they hovered on the skirts of the Chaldean civilisation, or brought it away with them from "Ur of the Chaldees," there is no disputing the fact that the legend existed among the Chaldeans before the basis of the Jewish nation was laid.

Let us now see how Mr. Gladstone disposes of Professor Huxley. Does he reply to Huxley's arguments? Not a bit of it. He declares with a not too ingenuous modesty that he has "no capacity to handle" such a controversy, although Huxley's argument against a partial deluge, in any wise resembling the Bible-story, was level to the most ordinary intelligence, and based on geographical and physical truths which are taught to school-boys. Mr. Gladstone does not refrain, however, from sneering at Huxley's "magisterial" tone; and for the rest, he plays off against him the authorities of Mr. Howorth, the Duke of Argyll and Sir J. Dawson. But Mr. Howorth's evidence only shows that there were catastrophes in the earlier ages of the earth, which no one need dispute; and Dawson, in one of his Religious Tract Society pamphlets, distinctly argues that the Deluge was only one of the many disasters that have happened in geological history. What on earth has this to do with the flood which occurred in the historical period, a huge mass of water kept standing on the sloping plains of Mesopotamia, an ark containing specimens of all forms of life, and the destruction by miracle of all the human race with the exception of eight persons?

Mr. Gladstone is a better writer than the ordinary Christian apologist, but his method of controversy is no whit superior. He thinks to settle disputes by quoting *opinions* from orthodox and semi-orthodox scholars. But this is not the way to end controversy, or to establish any satisfactory conclusion. Nor is it exactly honest to neglect to inform the reader that the scholars quoted *are* orthodox or semi-orthodox, and to refrain from indicating the great authorities whose opinions are of an opposite character. Indeed, we venture to call it an imposition on the ignorance of the ordinary reader.

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Mr. Gladstone talks as though the flood-story were accepted as "history" by the generality of Christian scholars and scientists. But it is not so accepted by Professor St George Mivart, the Catholic; by the Bishop of Carlisle and Archdeacon Farrar, of the Church of England; or by many a critic in the ranks Nonconformity. The tendency is to explain the story as a legend, with a spiritual lesson, or to whittle it down to the proportions of a local flood; and we may ultimately learn that Noah's Flood is an exaggeration of a village deluge that washed away three kittens and a blind puppy.

Much unprofitable "learning" is devoted by Mr. Gladstone to showing how the human race descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Even if these names are symbolic of the white, yellow and black races, they do not give the Bible any claim to inspiration; for these great diversities were well-known, and the legend, whenever it was developed, would naturally follow them. But the American and Australian races were *not* known, and precisely as the Bible leaves them out does Mr. Gladstone leave them out. He quietly sacrifices two continents for the sake of the Pentateuch.

With respect to the Sinaitic journey of the Jews, nothing could be more childish than the remark that the names of places, the distances, and so forth, prove the narrative of Exodus to be "a contemporary record of the events to which it relates." Is Mr. Gladstone so innocent as to imagine that the Jewish writers of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries before Christ were unable to obtain any information about the frontiers of Egypt and the coast of the Red Sea? Did not Solomon marry an Egyptian princess? Were not the Jews fighting in alliance with Egypt when the hosts of Sennacherib were destroyed? It really seems as if nothing were too childish for a Christian apologist to advance on behalf of the Bible.

The last "corroboration" of Scripture is that the world, in the late Dr. Whewell's opinion, will end with a catastrophe. Mr. Gladstone is informed on "high authority" that this is the "established conclusion of astronomers"; and this is also "the emphatic declaration of the inspired Word." Peter prophesied it. And where? Why in the Second Epistle of Peter, which scholars do not allow to be his at all! Yet on this basis Mr. Gladstone proclaims that "the Galilean fishermen knew what all the genius and learning of the world for thousands of years failed to discover." For our part, we have a great distrust of Mr. Gladstone's "high authority." In any case, this questionable "established conclusion of astronomers" has no relation to the prophecy of Peter, for this gentleman did not mean the absolute destruction of the earth (as we read his words), but rather a renovation of it, as the dwelling of righteousness.

Sir Isaac Newton was a great scientist. He also wrote in defence of the Bible. Where are those writings now? Ask the amateurs of curious literature. Mr. Gladstone is a great statesman. He also writes in defence of the Bible, and we believe that his apologies will share the fate of Newton's. They display what is too often "the last informity of noble minds."

G. W. FOOTE.

MARY AND JAMES.

The traditional and untrustworthy character of the Gospel stories may be well illustrated by the confusion evidently existing in the minds of the writers, as to some of the personages. Four individuals with the name of Mary are usually distinguished.

1st. Mary the virgin mother of Jesus. Of this unique specimen of the human race few particulars are given. Imagination has supplied the place in the *Protevangelion* and *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*. After the wondrous birth, almost the only occasions upon which she is mentioned, she is snubbed by her son (Luke ii., 49; John ii., 4; Matt. xii., 46). This virgin had a good sized family, James, Joses, Simon, Jude and their sisters being mentioned, (Matt. xiii., 55, 56.)

2nd. Mary the wife of Cleophas, mentioned in John xix., 25, as "his mother's sister," being together with his mother and Mary Magdalene. It is curious that "his mother's sister" had the same name as his mother; and that according to Luke xxiv., 18, Cleopas did not know Jesus when he saw him. The same group of women is described by Matt. xxvii., 56, as consisting of "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James [Qy. No. 1 or No. 2] and Joses and the mother of Zebedee's children. Some have suggested that John meant four persons, the virgin, her sister nameless, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene, and further that this nameless sister was the mother of Zebedee's children. But John must have expressed himself badly, for the text only implies three persons. Others suppose that Mary was called his mother's sister because Cleophas and Joseph were brothers, of which there is no evidence.

3rd. Mary, the sister of Martha. This lady appears to be identical with No. 4. She is described by John (xi., 2) as "that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair." According to Luke vii., 37, this was a woman "which was a sinner," and in the heading to the chapter and the tradition of the Fathers, and the teaching of the Church, was Mary Magdalene.* Both Baronius and Lightfoot support the opinion that these two are one.

4th. Mary Magdalene. This, after the virgin, is the most notable of the gospel Marys. This lady was possessed of seven devils, and was honored with absolutely the first appearance of the risen God (John xx., 1-18).

Now the Talmudic writers speak of the mother of Jesus as Miriam Magdala, *i.e.*, Mary *the plaiter of woman's hair*, which Lightfoot informs us was a polite euphemism for a harlot, that profession being usually followed by prostitutes.† The Jewish tradition that Jesus was the offspring of Miriam Magdala and one Pandera was a very awkward one, and we can but suspect that the early Christians put Mary Magdalene in a new *rôle* to explain it away.

No less curious and instructive is the confusion among the gospel James's. From the passage already cited, it is evident that Mary No. 1 had a son of this name. Indeed, Mark vi., 3, calls Jesus "the brother of James"; and Paul (Gal. i., 19) speaks of "James, the brother of the Lord." This gentleman we will call James No. 1. Apparently he was not an apostle, (we are told, John vii., 5, "neither did his brethren believe on him") for Mark (iii., 17-18) mentions among the apostles, "James, the son of Zebedee," who we will call No. 2, and also "James, the son of Alpheus," No. 3. Yet Paul speaks of the Lord's brother as one of the apostles!

It appears from Matt. xxvii., 56, that the mother of "James the Less," whether No. 1, No. 2, or No. 3, was called Mary, and some hence suppose that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was Mary, the wife of Alpheus. Which was James the Great, and whether there were really two, or three, or more of them, no one can accurately determine. Dr. Niemeyer makes no less than five by distinguishing the son of Alpheus from James the Less, and arguing that the James last mentioned in Acts i., 13, was not the brother but the father of Judas. The reader will notice that the words *the brother* are not in the original, which reads "Judas of James," this being a usual way of repre-

* This passage has been adopted by the Church as the lesson of the day for her Festival, July 22.

† See *The Jewish Life of Christ*, p. 40.

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senting "the son of," as with "James of Alpheus" in the same verse. This is indeed the version of the Syriac, which thus makes Judas the son of James.

The *Gospel of the Birth of Mary*, ascribed to Matthew, throws some lights and shadows on these intricate relationships. According to it, Jesus had two aunts, both named Mary. Aunt Mary No. 1 married Alpheus, by whom she had James No. 3. Aunt Mary No. 2 married Zebedee, by whom she had James No. 2 and his brother Boanerges John. There was, of course, in addition James No. 1 the offspring of Virgin Mother Mary. Truly a remarkable family.

But more. Having suggested that all these Marys may be rolled into the one, Mary Magdala, let us see if the same is not the case with James.

James No. 2 was, according to Acts xii., 2, killed by Herod the king—perhaps the same Herod who wanted to kill Jesus, and who himself died B.C. 4. James No. 1 or No. 3 presides at the Council of Jerusalem, dated A.D. 52 (Acts xv., 13).

Paul, even as he knows nothing of any Virgin Mary or of the risen Christ appearing to women, says Christ showed himself to James, and speaks of James the apostle as the Lord's brother. Evidently he, the earliest witness on the subject, knew but James No. 1, and this James with whom he goes to confer at Jerusalem (Gal. ii., 9) parallels with James No. 3, who presided at the Council there. If he had known of any James No. 2 he would surely have mentioned him. But James No. 2 is to be identified with the James the just, whose martyrdom is related by Josephus, and, in a very different fashion, by Hegesippus, who calls him both the Just, and the Lord's brother, and as having the government of the Church. Possibly there was only one James, though we see no reason a good Christian should not believe there may have been three in one and one in three.

J. M. Wheeler.

"A LIVING GOD."

Frequently of late, in discussing with intelligent liberal-minded clergymen like the Rev. Mr. Brennan and others, I have observed that while they are prepared to let many beliefs sacred to the hearts of the orthodox rush "like the devil" down a steep hill into oblivion, they insist that whatever rational criticism can do, it cannot destroy the living God, who, they declare, comes scathless through the critical ordeal.

Of course, if there be a "living God" residing somewhere in the universe, criticism will not harm him; it will probably stimulate such inquiry as will lead to the discovery of his whereabouts. Mention of the "living God" implies, however, that there are some, probably many, dead gods, who, presumably, before they took their "quietus," whether with "bare bodkins" or other weapons of destruction, were once living Gods, and occupied some portion of the universe; but whether they were destroyed by criticism or fatally injured in a warfare with other deities or devils, or committed suicide, we have no means of knowing.

But suppose for the sake of argument a "living God" exists, what sort of being would he be like? How should we be able to know him, that we might distinguish him from the "dead Gods" or from any beings? Is the living God a person, or an essence? If he is a person, has he an organisation? Has he a head, body and legs like a man; or is his head like a man's and the rest of his organisation like a beast's—in point of fact like some of the Gods represented in the British Museum? And if the "living God" is a personal being, how can he be said to be Infinite and Omnipresent—how could you have a God everywhere and a universe somewhere when there was nowhere for it to be? Either we must have an infinite God and no universe; or an infinite universe and no God; or a finite universe and a finite God—which in the Theist's sense is no god at all. If he is an essence how can he be said to live or to be intelligent? But if God is a "living God" how does he live? What does he eat and what does he drink? And where does he get it? Has he taken the advice of Sir Anthony Absolute, and got a world and atmosphere of his own? And what does this God do for a living? Does he engage in any useful occupation; or does he merely "overlook" the workers and idlers in this world? Is he perpetually awake and at work, or does he sometimes rest or sleep?

Is he alone in the part of the universe he occupies or has he some companions? Do the affairs of the world interest him, or is he a disinterested spectator? Is he pained when he sees men doing evil, and pleased when he sees them doing good? These are a few of the questions I feel disposed to put to the learned divines who talk so glibly about the "living God"; but if any of these questions are broached we are at once told that we must not apply the same method of reasoning when we are dealing with God as we should if we were dealing with human beings. But why not? "Oh!" say these learned gentlemen, "the finite faculties of man cannot judge the infinite"; and then, to put the finishing stroke to their argument, they ask: "Will you set up your puny mind to determine the qualities of God?" But as the puny mind in question is the only one we have by which we can decide anything, to that touchstone ultimately everything must be brought—even the question of the existence and attributes of the "living God."

Like Col. Ingersoll, I frankly confess that I should not know a god if I saw one. I have not seen one and I am not acquainted with anybody that has. Indeed, the first charter of St. John, and the 18th verse says: "No man hath seen God at any time;" and, as no photographer has, as far as I am aware, taken a portrait, and no artist painted a correct representation of him, in my judgment no man has a distinct idea of what is meant by God.

It seems to me, however, that if there be a "Living God" looking down from heaven, who sees all that is going on in this world of strife and trouble; who observes the tyrant as he puts his foot savagely down upon the necks of the weak and struggling; who sees the haughty and deceitful taking mean advantage of their poorer and humbler brethren; who watches the diplomatic Iagos of modern civilisation as they carry out their insidious designs; who is unable to turn them from their wretched course, or destroy their power—that such a God is a poor, miserable creature, who deserves our commiseration. And on the other hand, "a living God" who combines infinite power with infinite goodness, who sits or stands quietly by—a passive observer—while injustice and wickedness are being hourly transacted, would deserve and get nothing but our sincerest condemnation. We may rest assured, however, that science day by day is banishing the gods. Already they have taken their flight into the obscurest corner of the universe. They no longer cause earthquakes, famines, or disease, these phenomena being now attributed to natural causes. Telegraphy, electricity, the steam engine, and above all education, are playing rare havoc with the supernatural beings; and one day we shall probably regard as a curiosity the man who knows so little of the powers of nature that he still clings to the belief in "a living God."

Arthur B. Moss.

A colored parson tried to coax his wife to let herself be killed by a railroad train, so as to secure him a hundred dollars or so with which to move West, but she stubbornly refused and went and denounced him. Just like a white woman.

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MR. GLADSTONE CAUGHT NAPPING.

Mr. Gladstone makes a curious slip in the article on "The Mosaic Legislation," says the *Jewish Chronicle*. Speaking of the Massorites and their wonderfully painstaking efforts to preserve the text of the Old Testament from corruption, he says: "This body is one without a parallel in the history of the world;" and again: "The Hebrews were the only people who built up by degrees a regular scientific method of handling the material forms in which the substance of their Sacred Books was clothed." Mr. Gladstone might have been saved from this mistake by a reference to the *Jewish Quarterly Review*, where the Rev. Isidore Harris has shown in his learned account of the Maasorah that the Jews were by no means singular among the nations of antiquity in respect of having devised such a work. The Hindus, *e.g.*, as early as 600 B.C. computed the number of verses, words, and syllables contained in the Rig Veda hymns. The Samaritans did the same for the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Arabs for the Koran, while the Chinese, the Greeks, and the Persians adopted similar methods for the preservation of their ancient writings. The Syrians, too, had a Massorah, which they denominated *Mashlemonutho*, or "tradition," and it is the opinion of Mr. Harris that the Syrian work may have influenced the development of some departments of the Hebrew Massorah. Mr. Gladstone's mistake has something more than a literary interest, inasmuch as he builds on it a portion of his case for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

SEND THY ANGEL.

In Demerara, lived an old darkie who was supposed to be very religious, this used to be his prayer every night before going to bed: "Oh Lord, when dow art ready dy survint Sam Jones, am ready, send thy angel O Lor, to scort him to de realms ob bliss, whar he lib wid you in glory eber more. Amen." Some darkies getting hold of this knocked at the door one evening just as Sam had finished. Sam jumped off his knees, and inquired, "Who dar?" One of the young nigs replied, "The angel ob the Lord come for his sarvint, Sam Jones to scort him to de realms of bliss." Before he could get any farther, Sam Jones exclaimed "Sh ——, you, Sam Jones not lib hyar, he lib free doors farder down de treet."

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ACID DROPS.

The Mormons are caving in, and the good old Bible institution of polygamy is being killed by the Bibliolators of America. The president of the Morman Church in Salt Lake City has issued a manifesto, denying that the Church teaches polygamy or plural marriages any longer, and declaring that the Mormons will submit to the United States' marriage-law.

The Bishop of Carlisle is wise in his generation. He has publicly given up the Deluge as a universal catastrophe. The story came from an eye-witness, and when he said that all the earth and the highest hills were covered with water, he only meant "as far as he could see." Of course this may satisfy those who want to cling to the Bible, but as a matter of honesty the Bishop should reply to Professor Huxley's argument that the Jewish writers must have been aware of the existence of some considerable mountain ranges, which a small partial Deluge *could not* have covered.

His lordship of Carlisle is no less cunning with respect to the Revised Version of the Bible. He does not recommend it for use in the pulpit, but at the same time he does not prohibit its use in his diocese. He thinks the new Bible should be used in the study; that is, he sees the advantage of having two Bibles, one for the old conservative dupes who object to new-fangled things, and the other for the more go-ahead people who want everything brought up to date. Good old Goodwin!

Germany is nominally a Christian country, and the Emperor is a pronounced Christian. Yet the authorities have instituted a medical examination of a young conscript who declares it is against Christianity to kill anyone in peace or war. The doctors say he is perfectly sane. What then will become of him? And what will become of the question? The emperor might submit it to a representative body of ministers, and if they came to a friendly and unanimous decision it would be the first time such a thing had occurred in the whole of Christian history.

Miss Von Finkelstein must think well of England. She makes a lot of money here by lecturing on the "Holy Land," where she has resided, and she has married a "magnificent" Englishman "six foot high."

In one of her recent lectures at Croydon, Miss Von Finkelstein seems to have startled her audience by contending that Jesus was not poor. Even the *Christian World* appears to share the astonishment. But every real student of the Gospels is perfectly aware that "the Galilean peasant" and "the poor carpenter" of pulpits and pious platforms is a sentimental creation. There is not the slightest indication of poverty about Jesus; and, as Miss Von Finkelstein points out, there are indications that Joseph was a master carpenter, probably carrying on a good business; nor does the circumstance of the baby Jesus having been born in a manger prove the poverty of his mother, for the inn was full, and five or six times the rent of a room is often paid for inferior accommodation.

Miss Von Finkelstein maintains that the passage, "the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head," is totally misunderstood. It simply meant that Jesus was not married, that he shared the general sleeping place of the family, and had no separate resting-place which he could ask any man to share.

By and bye we shall, perhaps, see in Jesus a revival preacher who lived on remittances from "the governor." Joseph wanted him to return to the shop, but as he wouldn't the old man made him an allowance. Perhaps, after all, Judas sold up the firm in a hasty moment while Jesus was awaiting a remittance from Nazareth.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," says the Bible, and for acting in the spirit of this godly maxim fifteen Hindus have each been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. This is how it happened. The wife of a Bhil was sick, and her husband had recourse to his spiritual adviser, who indicated a woman named Sayana and her daughter as witches whose influence had caused the sickness. When the brother of the Chief of Pimpri passed by, the Bhil told the visitor the cause of his fears. Sayana was then sent for and tied to a stake in the sun. First the Bhil retinue beat her with their fists, and as she survived sticks were heated in the fire for external application. This treatment lasted for six hours, and the woman became senseless. She was next suspended from a mandwa, but the bamboo broke. A tomtom was hung round her neck, and she was then dragged round whilst the party danced. The inanimate woman was then taken home, were she lingered one day. All these unfortunates are to be pited—the poor "witch" who was tortured to death, and the fifteen prisoners who are paying the penalty of their delusion. What calls for our curses is the superstition which led to the tragedy. In whatever form it exists, brutal or refined, superstition is an evil legacy from the ages of ignorance and barbarism, and should be swept off the face of the earth; and the sooner the better for the peace and progress of mankind.

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The Christian pulpit is fast becoming a mixture of cant and profanity. The Rev. J. M'Neill comes back to his London church after a long holiday, and says he is glad to be once again among "his own people." This is very rich. He is just going to leave them for what he thinks a better church in south-west London.

Down in Edinburgh, as he was driving to the station, Mr. McNeill met with an accident. The horse ran away and the vehicle was damaged, but the preacher only sustained a shaking. Now, as the *ego* is largely developed in the tribe of McNeill, he dragged the matter into his first prayer among his "own people," while he was having a little private talk (in public) with the Almighty. He returned thanks for "a special mercy." That is, providence saved *his* life, although the same providence lets hundreds of persons—some of them dear little children—be killed every year by accidents in the streets of London. What a notion of their own importance have some of these sky-pilots!

In the course of his sermon Mr. McNeill remarked that Jesus Christ was "always on the go." This is not very witty, and as Mr. McNeil was speaking of one who to him —at least by profession—was a God of infinite wisdom and power, it is not very courteous. What a drop from the old preachers, some of whom were men of genius, to the new sort, who get a great reputation for wit by simply introducing the common slang of the street! And how much real belief in the divinity of Jesus can a man have to speak of him as "always on the go"?

Mr. McNeill has been telling how he was saved from the waves of scepticism. It was by the recollection of his father at family prayers. Evidently he did not go very deep. He dipped his feet, shivered, and climbed back into the machine.

Colonel Ingersoll contends for the freedom of the press in America. He denounces the attempt to suppress Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*, and asserts "the right of men and women of America to read for themselves." For this the *Christian Commonwealth* calls him a champion of obscenity, and a corrupter of youth, although he describes the story as "brutal and absurd" and its view of life as "cruel, vile, and false." In other words this Christian journal stigmatises Ingersoll as an immoral wretch, because he demands fair play for a Christian writer who is trying to teach the doctrine of Christ. After this we need not wonder at anything Christians say of "infidels" in a fit of Christian charity.

Tolstoi's book is not obscene. Those who try to suppress it on that ground, especially while they circulate the Bible, are paltry hypocrites. The story is repulsive, but there is not an obscene expression in it, nor a word that could excite lust, except in a Christian journalist.

The Nile has overflowed with considerable damage, and serious floods are also reported from France, where the damage in the Department of the Ardèche alone is estimated at two millions sterling, and from Switzerland and the Tyrol.

During the conduct of service at Leyland Road Wesleyan Chapel, Southport, the Rev. Thomas Binns fell forward and died immediately.

The Christian papers are all denouncing gambling, and they are all obliged to refer to the arguments (now a generation old) of Mr. Herbert Spencer—the Agnostic!

Gambling, by the way, or something very like it, has the sanction of Scripture. The twelve tribes of Israel raffled for the division of Palestine, and Christ's thirteenth apostle was chosen by the casting of lots. In early times all forms of gambling were supposed to be under supernatural direction. Proverbs says "the lot is in the hand of the Lord." But it is the fashion of religion to first encourage a vice and afterwards denounce it.

The *Christian World* recognises Mr. Gladstone's sincerity in defending the Bible, but it doubts "whether there will be unanimous acceptance, among competent judges, of the estimate he has formed of his argumentative success." A neat way of calling a man——well, the reader can fill it in at his choice.

Clifton College is an institution for the production of sky-pilots, and scriptural texts are always in vogue. A lad who admitted he had been on the promenade on Clifton Down, which he called the Broad Walk, when he ought to have been playing football was told: "Broad is the way in that leadeth to destruction, and the narrow way the run in at football, and few there be that enter therein."

According to the *Daily News* correspondent, the miracle of the liquifaction of the blood of St. Januarius took place at a later hour than usual on the 19th instant; but, according to the traditions of the populace, it was a very "good miracle," promising prosperity to the city; for the blood foamed and was of a deep red color as it came from the shrine. We suppose the priest was late in managing the chemicals for this yearly miracle, which is sanctioned by the presence of the Cardinal of Naples.

Judas has been officially abolished in the island of Madeira. It has been a time-honored custom of the natives to exhibit in one of their numerous religious processions an effigy of Judas, upon which the opprobrium of the populace was duly heaped, and at the close of the day Judas was burnt with vociferous expressions of triumph and joy. Of late years it has happened that the effigy of Judas has borne a striking resemblance to some person upon whom the general pubic had ceased to smile, and thus the governor of the island, the mayor of Funchal, and a foreign consul have been caricatured in the procession and burnt in effigy. The powers that be have decided that the admixture of politics and religion is not wholesome, and so the edict has gone forth that hereafter the people must get along without Judas.

The Druidical remains in Cornwall are accounted for by the country people by saying that the stones are people who would not pay proper respect for the Sabbath, and who, as punishment for that crime, were arrested and struck into stone to stand on the moor for ever, to show what comes of not keeping Sabbath. The stones are thus monuments, not only of the religion of the Druids, but of the still more stupid faith of their Christian successors.

Deification in one's own lifetime is not the common lot. There is, however, said to be a sect in Orissa who worship Queen Victoria as their chief divinity. She probably knows and cares as little about them as deities usually do about their worshippers. In the Punjaub a sect, however, had their deity before them. They called him Nikhal Sen. This deity was no other than the redoubted General Nicholson, and nothing the general could do or say damped the enthusiasm of his adorers. The more he punished them the greater grew the religious awe with which they worshipped him.

Gipsy Smith, who seems to have joined the Wesleyans, was preaching some time ago at Hull, and boasted of having converted "scores, nay hundreds," of Athei-ts. One of them was "the leading Atheist" in a Yorkshire town. This was coming perilously near the point, and the Gipsy saved himself by saying that he would not give the man's name. But he damned himself by giving a reason for withholding it He said that the man was afraid to declare his conversion, because—O ye gods and little fishes! it is *too* rich! —because he was afraid it would ruin his business! Gipsy Smith is not even a clever liar. Being known as an Atheist is not the way to do a roaring trade. On the other hand, if a shopkeeper professed himself a convert from Atheism, half the pious fools in the town would patronise him forthwith.

Christian stories are nearly always *thin*. Here is the Rev. J. H. Atkinson, of Richmond Chapel, Breck Road, telling how Ben Tillett did a good turn for Jesus in Victoria Park Addressing a big crowd of workmen, many of them Socialists, he told them how the Man of Nazareth was good and kind and loving, and how he would be helping the dock laborers if he were still on earth—a very safe prophecy! At last one of the Socialists said, "Let us give three cheers for the Man of Nazareth," and three

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ringing cheers were given for the gentleman, who, by the way, did not acknowledge the compliment. Of course, the point of this story lies in the "fact" that those workmen had never heard about Jesus before, and that is a downright absurdity.

The Anti-Semitic and clerical parties have been vigorously stimulating the bigotry of the rural Christians in Lower Austria, and the result is the return of fifteen reactionists among the twenty newly-elected deputies.

The Wesleyans want to raise £10,000. And what for? Why to decorate the tombs of the Wesleys, repair John's house, and restore his chapel. That is how they tackle the problems of the age.

At the opening of a new Wesleyan chapel at Rushden, the Rev C. H. Kelly said that people should be practical as well as pious. "God would not forgive a man who prayed devoutly but yet permitted the collection plate to pass him with nothing but a devout look." In other words, shell out or go to hell.

A plump parson travelled from Hull to Selby on Monday morning in the same compartment with Mr. Foote. Before the train started the plump parson was talking jocosely to a brother sky-pilot on the platform about the previous day's services. Inquiries were made about two other sky-pilots who had been preaching, and the information was given that they got £11 or £12 between them for a sermon a-piece—a very short one, as the music was very long. The other occupants of the compartment were poor-looking men. One of them was an Irishman bound for Liverpool. We wonder what they thought of the £11 or £12 and the business talk of the jolly parsons.

The Rev. Newman Hall says that the money spent in one year for alcoholic liquors would be sufficient to supply each human being on the globe with a copy of the Bible, or would support 200 000 missionaries at a salary of £200 each. We doubt if those who imbibe the liquor will be much affected by this calculation. They may think theirs is after all the least of the three evils.

The Conference of the Y.M.C.A. at Birmingham served to illustrate the fact that religious bodies have to rely on secular methods for success. Mr. Fraser, of Liverpool, pointed out that they made a mistake in proclaiming so clearly that they wished to win souls for Christ. Young men must be enticed into the Association, for the mere proclamation of the fact was enough to frighten them from coming under their roof. Others advocated gymnasiums; but smoking was strongly objected to. The secretary complained "that rationalism was even creeping into their association." But the Rev. F. Pegg undertook to exorcise the evil spirit, and we should think he is fully equal to this easy task.

The post of auctioneer to a tithe distrainer is, in Wales, no enviable situation. The Rev. E. Jones, vicar of Solva, seized the cow of the Rev. Garibaldi Thomas, an independent minister, and the auctioneer was only protected from violence by the minister whose cow was being taken. At another place the auctioneer was pelted with rotten eggs and severely jostled, and an assistant had to run for his life. These are some of the amenities of Christian tithe warfare.

A large batch of "'verts" have recently gone over to Rome, and more are preparing to follow in the event of Archbishop Benson's judgment being adverse to the Ritualists. Among the most notable of the new Romanists are Kegan Paul, the publisher, Mr. Francillon, editor of the *Globe*, the Earl of Devon, brother-in-law to Viscount Halifax, president of the English Church Union, and the Rev. J. H. Doe, vicar of Eaton Barry, near Dunstable.

It is curious to find a Christian minister writing to a Jewish paper in opposition to the attempts of Christian conversionists. Yet this is what the Rev. T. G. Headley, of Petersham does. But Mr. Headley is a curious Broad Church Christian, and some would entirely deny his title to the latter part of the designation.

The *Church Reformer* publishes a letter from Rev. Charles Kingsley to Canon MacColl, dated Nov 8, 1872, in which he advocates the substitution of purgatory for eternal blazes. He says, that "to predicate endless punishment, from the moment of death, of those who either sin or misbelieve, not of *atasthalie*, but of weakness and invincible ignorance, is not required by the Church of England, nor (as far as I am aware) by the Churches of Rome or of Greece; and that the doctrine of an intermediate state has been in all Christian ages and lands (save where Puritan influences have prevailed) the refuge of the sense of justice and pity in man from so terrible a doctrine." Kingsley seems to have been regardless of the fact that in getting rid of one barbarous hypothesis he was but substituting another, still more serviceable in the hands of cheating priests.

There was a pretty shindy at Allahabad on September 1. A Brahmin lad from Gwalior applied to the Rev. Mr. Alexander, of the Presbyterian Mission, to become a Christian; but his mother and friends objecting, he was forcibly rescued and taken away. The "assaulters" have been arrested and will be tried.

When a Hindu becomes a Christian he goes and lives at the Mission, though he may be the sole support of a widow mother. This may account for the anxiety of this lad's mother, and the sympathy of her friends. Anyhow the case throws a strong light on Christian methods of proselytising.

Theosophy has had very little success in Freethought circles, despite Mrs. Besant's energetic and eloquent preaching. We know of one Freethinker who, at Mrs. Besant's request, read Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy* religiously through; and after finishing it he remarked that he would sooner join a Catholic pilgrimage to Lourdes than "take on such stuff." With dry humor he said that the book had a good index, but it wanted a glossary.

Ben Tillett has been telling a *Chronicle* interviewer what he *would* have said to the Church Congress. "I should," he remarked, "have endeavored in detail to show how a Church which shouts for what is called 'law and order,' which was against the Factory Acts, which opposed the abolition of slavery, which has upheld the landlords, which is now on the side of the capitalist, might hope to do something for the people." Mr. Tillett's recipe is that of all sentimental reformers who do not understand religion. The clergy are to give up preaching theology—which is the only reason for their existence—and go in for "social betterment." Still, Mr. Tillett thinks the masses want the Bible and Jesus Christ. He will find, if he studies the problem deeply enough, that this is a quite sufficient basis for priestcraft.

Perhaps Mr. Tillett is unaware that the Methodists and Presbyterians in America stood up stoutly for slavery. It was not the Episcopal Church which bore all the guilt. Slavery was justified by all the Churches, and justified from the Bible.

Miss Jones—"Professor, do you dare to look me in the face and then say that I originally sprang from a monkey?" Professor, a little taken aback, but equal to the occasion—"Well, really, it must have been a very charming monkey indeed!"

Alpine guide: "Here at this cross is the place where the guide of Peter fell and was killed. Don't you want to give me a little money for his poor wife and children?" "Oh, yes; but how is it that yesterday on the other side of the mountain they showed us a cross for this same guide?" "That is all right; that is for the travellers who go up the other side."

A little girl of Los Angeles, whose family were about to move to Arizona, who had heard that country spoken of as a forlorn and particularly God-forsaken place, was saying her prayers at her mother's knee the night before their intended departure. She said all that had ever been taught her, and then, with peculiar emphasis, she said: "And now good-bye God, for to-morrow we are going to Arizona"

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MR FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 5, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "The Rock of Ages."

Thursday, Oct. 9, Hall of Science, at 8, "Christian and Secular Morality." Admission free.

October 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimsby; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months. 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

MECHANIC.—We are glad to have been of use to you in your studies. Mr. Foote is far too busy to undertake any fresh work. Read Bastian's *Brain as the Organ of Mind*, Bain's *Body and Mind*, and, if you can get it, Lewes's *Physical Basis of Mind*.

JACOB EDMUNDS.—We can only repeat that you seem to us right, and your friend wrong. We may write on the subject some day.

R. W.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

W. JAMES.—Poor Mr. Easton, who shot himself in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, was a Secularist. He suffered a severe paralytic stroke some time ago, which shattered his nervous system, and made him practically irresponsible. We do not know why he selected St. Paul's. Perhaps it was a last sarcasm. We understand that he had some experience of Christian bigotry. He was unmarried, and had no one depending on him.

A. J. FIELD.—You are quite right in excluding foul-mouthed Christians from the platform.

R. CHERTOFF.—You will see we have given a good report of the Jewish meeting. We hope your Freethought Union of Jews will be formed herewith. The N. S. S. will give you any assistance.

J. DAVIDSON.—Mr. Kegan Paul, who has just become a Catholic, is the gentleman who edited and wrote about William Godwin and his noble wife. We never had an exalted opinion of him, mentally or otherwise.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the jokes and extract.

J. F. HENLEY.—We regard the incident as closed.

J. DOBSON (Huddersfield).—Glad to hear your open-air lectures were so successful, and that these and Mr. Standring's efforts have brought the Branch some new members. Next summer every Branch in the country should hold outdoor meetings.

V. V.—We agree with your estimate of Rabelais. He shook the Church with his laughter.

T. D. H.—All orders for literature should be sent to Mr. Forder. Sending to Mr. Foote causes trouble and delay.

L. FRENCH.—The Liverpool Branch *did* invite Mrs. Besant. They cannot help it if she prefers to lecture for the Theosophists. She is also going to Dublin and Belfast for the Theosophists. Of course her heart is in the new cause.

C. TURNER.—Marchant's misrepresentations are beneath contempt. The Bethnal Green Branch can afford to smile at his statement that its meetings are held in the back room of a public-house. A lie only does harm when it has a grain of truth in it.

J. BRUMAGE.—We hope your brief holiday will do you good. The date is booked.

F. JONES begs to thank the West Ham Freethinkers who followed his wife to the grave; their sympathy was like a ray of sunshine in the darkness.

C. E. FORD.—We should hardly think the Brighton Freethinkers will fail to plump for the secular-education candidates at the School Board elections. "Sectarian" and "unsectarian" are only squabbles among Bibliolators. The Secular policy is to sweep the Bible out of the schools altogether.

SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—Yes, witches were almost universally believed in.

J. S. ROGERS.—Please direct your letters to 14 Clerkenwell Green, and put *penny*, not *halfpenny*, stamps on them.

J. WATSON reports that the West Ham Branch played a cricket match with the Woodford Freethinkers on Sunday, and won by 7 runs and 7 wickets. The Branch would like to make arrangements to play other Branches next season.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Grimsby News—Star—Western Figaro—Twentieth Century—Christian Mission Times—Sussex Gazette—South Wales Daily News—Sussex Evening Times—Manchester Guardian—Lucifer—Progressive Thinker—Birmingham Daily Post—Loyal American—Open Court.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had capital audiences on Sunday at Hull, and the Branch is in high glee at a very successful day's work. There was no real discussion after any of the lectures, but there were plenty of questions, which were carefully answered. Nearly 150 copies of the *Freethinker* were sold and there was a demand for more. The Branch also gained some new members It has only been operating for about eighteen months, and it already numbers nearly sixty members. Mr. Naewiger is an active and capable secretary, the committee are hard workers, and they are well backed up by sturdy Mr. Billany, who commands the unqualified respect of every honest opponent. Of course there are plenty of the other sort, who write letters to his employers, but Mr. Billany is too well-known to be injured by such contemptible bigots.

This evening (Oct. 5) Mr. Foote begins a course of four special Sunday evening lectures at the London Hall of Science, his subject being "The Rock of Ages." The subsequent lectures will be—"Where is the Devil?" "Mistakes of Jesus" and "The Puzzle of the Trinity."

After Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening (Oct. 5) there will be a meeting of ladies and gentlemen willing to form a Committee for organising a grand ball for the London Freethinkers during November. Those who can take part in the arrangements are desired to meet Mr. Foote in the committee-room upstairs.

The secretaryship of the National Secular Society will not be altered for the present, as it is impossible to find a successor to Mr. Forder who is at once quite competent and able to give his whole time to the work. Mr. Forder consents to go on fulfilling the duties of the post for the present, and in March the Organisation Committee will present a practical report to the Executive.

Ingersoll has written a powerful article on Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*. It appears in the *North American Review*. We have reprinted it in pamphlet form. The Colonel is at his best in this article. We believe it will be widely read, and as widely admired.

Two fresh numbers of "Bible Romances" are now ready—*Balaam's Ass* and *God in a Box*. Probably both will be thought amusing. The latter contains some instructive matter as well.

We have in the press a centenary edition of the *Rights of Man*, to which Mr. Wheeler contributes a political biography of Thomas Paine, containing a good deal of fresh information. This edition will, we think, be the handsomest ever issued at such a low price. It will be sold at a shilling.

The N. S. S. Almanack is getting under weigh. Mr. Forder is sending out a circular to the Branches, informing them that their returns *must* be sent in, complete up to date, by October 12. Secretaries must give a full statement of officers, dates and place of meeting, and a list of newsagents in the town who sell Freethought literature. Mind the last date—Oct. 12.

The Christian Evidence Society declines to send representatives to oppose the Secular Federation lecturers at the London Hall of Science, chiefly on the ground that it does not wish to do anything to bring an audience to the place. This insolence will be remembered when the C. E. S. arranges for a course of its own in the same building. Meanwhile we

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beg to remind Mr. Engstrom that he has never succeeded in bringing a couple of dozen Christians to the hall. Our party supplies the audience for his speakers, and he neglects the duty he begs money for in declining to attempt the conversion of a hall-full of Secularists.

The Rev. F. A. Ford came to Mr. G. Standring's lecture and opposed him like a gentleman. Mr. Ford honestly fights for his principles. He promised to come again on the following Thursday (Oct. 2), when Mr. Forder was announced to occupy the platform. Mr. Foote winds up the course next Thursday (Oct. 9) with a lecture on "Christian and Secular Morality."

Another course of Free Lectures will be given by the London Secular Federation at the Tower Hamlets Radical Club, 3 Redman's Road, Mile End, E., on Thursdays, Oct. 19. 23, and 30, and Nov. 6. Mr. Foote opens the course. The other lecturers are Mrs. Thornton Smith, Mr. A. B. Moss, and Mr. J. M. Robertson.

These Free Lectures cannot be carried on without money, and we earnestly appeal to our London friends for financial support. If the necessary means are provided, the Federation will invade every part of the metropolis during the winter.

The Council of the North-Eastern Secular Federation will meet at 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, to day (Oct. 5) at 3 p.m. Business of importance will be brought forward, and a full attendance of delegates is requested. Delegates not met at train will meet Newcastle friends at the above address at 11 a.m. Tea will be provided after meeting; 6d. each. I beg to acknowledge the following subscriptions:—Sunderland Branch, 13s.; J. S., per Mr. Nicholson, 2s. 6d.; Miss Bennett, 1s.; Mr. Bennett, 2s.; Martin Weatherburn, 5s.—JOSEPH BROWN, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hon. Secretary.

The Liverpool Secularists have issued the prospectus of their building scheme for securing a hall in that city. Every Freethinker in Liverpool and the vicinity should *at once* see what he can do. The shares are one pound each, and payable in easy instalments. Prospectuses can be obtained from Mr. H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, or from Mr. V. W. Hardwick, Olive Street, Oxford Street. Mr Foote personally appeals to all his friends in Liverpool to give the scheme their support.

The new half-yearly report of the Manchester Branch is a healthy document. The liabilities have been reduced to £6, partly owing to the energy of the lady members, who have taken the hall-cleaning in hand themselves. The Branch now holds 234 shares in the Hall Company; of these, 125 were presented by Mr. F. Smallman and 75 by Mr. George Payne. According to the report the Branch is "now in a better financial position than at any former period."

The quarterly meeting of the Battersea Branch was well attended last Sunday afternoon. The balance-sheet showed a small sum on the right side, although there is still an old debt for seating accommodation. Mr. Shambrook was elected president, Mr. W. Heaford member of Executive Council, and Mr. Dew treasurer; the other officers were re-elected. Tea was provided after the meeting for over eighty members and friends. Many who had not procured tickets beforehand had to go away disappointed. The soirée after the tea was an immense success, a large number of people being content to look and listen to the dancing and singing through the large open windows, from the enclosed ground at the side of the hall.

Mr. A. B. Moss delivered three outdoor lectures on Sunday to large audiences. At Clerkenwell Green he formally challenged Mr. Dick, of the Christian Evidence Society; but the challenge was declined on the significant ground that Secularism thrives by discussion.

Joseph Symes is always pegging away at Melbourne. We are pleased to notice that after all troubles he says that "in marvellous Melbourne there is nothing more marvellous than the Australasian Secular Association." May it speed on diffusing light and liberty to all the continent.

Mr. Mullenger, a Melbourne Secularist, called on us recently with a letter of introduction from Mr. Joseph Symes. If many of his supporters are like Mr. Mullenger, our old colleague ought to be a proud and happy man. We were glad to hear that Joseph Symes is fighting like a Trojan, and that the new Secular Hall he has succeeded in raising is twice as big as the London Hall of Science. England's loss is very much Australia's gain.

Professor Francis William Newman is engaged in writing a work on the earlier years of his brother, the late Cardinal. We trust he will also give some account of his brother Charles Robert Newman, the Atheist.

A debate has been arranged at Kalson, Minnesota, between Mr. W. F. Jamieson and the Rev. L. T. Nichols.

The petty persecution of Freethinkers in Germany continues. One Daniel Keller has received two months' imprisonment at Mannheim for blasphemy uttered in a restaurant. Mr. Keller denied the existence of God and a future life, and stated that Christ was a Socialist. Our good friend Dr. T. Voekel, who has had no less than eight processes against him for blasphemy, has several times recently been molested. At Erfurt and Nienburg he has been forbidden to lecture under penalties.

We have at length received the full "Compte-Rendu Officiel" of the Universal Freethought Congress at Paris Sept., 1889. It is a handsome, well-printed volume of 384 pages, and is published by E. Dentu, 3 Place de Valois, at the price of four francs. We reserve criticism until our next issue.

We are glad to see the announcement that Mr. Gladstone's *Good Words* articles on the Bible are to be shortly republished in a volume, for they will do far more good than harm to the cause of Freethought. Mr. Foote has a notion of collecting his replies to Mr. Gladstone in the form of a pamphlet, after careful revision and some amplification. What do our readers say to the project? We shall be glad to hear from those who would like to see it carried out.

In the *Universal Review* for September Mr. Grant Allan has an article on "The Gods of Egypt," in which he shows reason to think those gods were evolved from the belief in ghosts rather than from natural myths.

It is over two thousand years since Xenophanes said that the god of the oxen would be an ox. A versifier of to-day, in a book just published, *The Wanderings of Oisin*, makes the peacock say of God:

"He is a monstrous peacock, and he waves all through the night
His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots of light."

At the celebration at Rome of the removal of the Temporal Power of the Papacy, Sept. 20, 1870, Menotti Garibaldi urged the freethinking youth of Italy to repay excommunication with excommunication, and show they could do without the priests. Two French anti-clerical deputies were present.

We happen to know that the *Freethinker* has been an intellectual stimulus to many of its readers. One of our correspondents, who has collected a little library of very good works, and very expensive ones for a working man, after consulting us about further studies, adds, "I lie under a debt of gratitude to the *Freethinker*, for until it was put into my hands in 1882 I used to read nothing but novels."

The Rev. H. O. Pentecost is now lecturing on Sunday mornings at Liberal League Hall, Newark, afternoons at Everett Assembly Rooms, Brooklyn, and evenings at Grand Opera House Hall, New York. He takes the same subject for each lecture, and has a new one every week.

The controversy on the Secular lectures at Grimsby still continues, and the local *News* very fairly gives insertion to letters from Mr. W. Heaford, J. W. Wittering, and "A Seceder from the Catholic Church," in reply to Christian critics.

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* devotes an excellent article to Mr. John Morley. This is what the writer, Herr C. C. Schardt says of "honest John" as a religious reformer:—"In writing of Mr. Morley's religious views and his position towards the Christian religion, some reserve has to be practised. He does

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not, like to be called an atheist, and prefers the name of agnostic. Mr. Morley is most attracted by Positivism, but he abhors the ritual of the Church of Humanity. He considers himself a representative of modern humanity awaiting the Paul of the humanitarian faith of the future. This Paul is to save what is best in the Christian religion, just as the Paul of the Acts of the Apostles took what was best from the religion of the Jews and from the philosophic schools of Greece and Rome. Like Goethe, he is of opinion, that if there are immortal gods, they resemble good men on earth."

A JEWISH FREETHINKERS' FESTIVAL.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, Sept. 24, the Jewish "Day of Atonement" or *Yom Kippur*, a remarkable and significant gathering took place at the Hall of Science, London. It should be stated that on the occasion of the "White Fast" business of all kinds is suspended amongst the Jews. For the pious it is a day of prayer and penance, during which they neither eat nor drink; for the ungodly it is simply a general holiday, in much the same way as our Good Friday is a day of dry-eyed weeping and mortification inside the churches, and of laughter and enjoyment outside.

Now, the Jewish Freethinkers of London resolved this year to celebrate their *Yom Kippur* by holding a Freethought Meeting at the headquarters of Secularism in the metropolis. Mr. Foote and others (including the present writer) were invited to take part in the proceedings. On arriving, at 3.30, I found some six or seven hundred persons assembled and listening with evident appreciation to an address by a speaker whose command over his audience was enviably complete. He spoke in Yiddish, a dialect which is, I believe, peculiar to the Jews. It is not German, but it seems to bear the same relation to that language that "pidgin-English" bears to our own tongue.

On the platform I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Schaak, and by her kindly aid was enabled to follow, at least in outline, the speech which was being delivered when I entered. It proved to be a very spirited attack upon the Jewish religion. The speaker frequently referred to and quoted passages from the Talmud, criticising them in a fashion which as frequently elicited loud laughter and applause from the audience. He spoke of the artifices of the rabbis, who live by the sacrifices of their devotees. So far as I could gather the purport of his address, it was a critical examination of the Hebrew doctrine and ceremonial.

At the conclusion of the speech, the chairman called upon me to make a few remarks. Painfully conscious of the difficulty which many of my hearers would experience in following my words, I confined myself to a hearty welcome to my Jewish brethren, pointing out that while we were diverse in language and nationality, we were one in our Freethought. The persecution which Jews and the English Freethinkers had alike suffered at the hands of the common foe—Christianity—should serve to unite them all in one common work. I concluded by suggesting that the Jewish Freethinkers of London should organise their forces, and co-operate with existing Secular organisations.

Mr. Foote then addressed the meeting. Never before had he stood in face of such an assembly, but he was pleased to find that the Jewish Freethinkers of London could bring together so large a gathering. The Christians, he pointed out, had stolen their God and Bible from the Jews, and had then persecuted them. The Jews had, however, remained steadfast under unparalleled suffering. Christianity had also persecuted Freethought, and the bond of sympathy thus made between Jewish and English Freethinkers should stimulate them to work hand-in-hand against the enemy of both. Priests, parsons and rabbis were all engaged in different departments of the same business—that of tricking and deluding the people for the benefit of robbers and oppressors.

A resolution was then read and submitted to the meeting, expressing the desirability of forming a Freethought Society of London Jews. This was carried with unanimity. There is therefore reason to hope that one result of the gathering at the Hall of Science will be the establishment of some organisation amongst our Jewish brethren.

G. Standring.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Executive Meeting, Sept. 24th. Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, Bentley, Courtney, Gordon, Heath, Killick, Larkin, Moss, Roger, Reynolds, Samson, Smith, Umpleby, Warren, A. Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. The cash statement for the month showed a decrease of £2 3s. 8d. on the General Fund, and £2 0s. 2d. on the Benevolent Fund. Miss Vance moved and Mr. Roger seconded, "that with respect to the shares presented to the Society by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, a declaration of trust be executed in conformity with the written suggestion of Mr. Bradlaugh."

The report of the Organisation Committee relating to the appointment of a new secretary was then taken.

1. We are unanimously of opinion that it would be best, if possible, to engage a secretary who could give his whole time to the Society's work.

2. Having fully discussed the applications of those in this category, we regret to say that we cannot recommend any of them at present as quite eligible for the post.

3. Among the applicants who offer a portion of their time there are only two we feel able to recommend for the Executive's selection, viz.: Mr. C. J. Hunt and Mr. S. Standring.

4. As, however, Mr. Forder is situated in the same way as both these gentlemen, it might be better, and we incline to think so, for the Executive to wait until immediately before the next Conference before making final provision for a change in the secretaryship.

5. In case a secretary could be found to devote his whole time to the work, we had decided to recommend the offer of a salary for the present of two guineas per week; a salary for the present of any other secretary would necessarily depend on the special circumstances of each case.

This report having been fully considered, Mrs. Thornton Smith moved, and Mr. Killick seconded, "That Mr. Forder be asked to retain the secretaryship for the present, and that the Organisation Committee be requested to bring the matter in a practical shape before the Executive at its March meeting." Carried.

New Branches were authorised to be formed at Halstead, Essex, and Dum Dum, India. An application for the formation of a new Branch at Tottenham was, in consideration of the existence of Branches at Finsbury Park, Edmonton, and Wood Green, referred to the Organisation Committee for consideration.

Mr. Foote reported that there were fair grounds for believing that the Liverpool Branch would shortly be in a position to secure premises of their own. The very many Freethinkers in Liverpool are earnestly desired to support the Branch in this laudable object.

Mr. Samson reported that the Finsbury Park Branch projected a series of meetings during the winter of an educational character, with a view to the education of Freethinkers in controversial matters.

R. Forder, *Secretary*.

Obituary.—I have to record the death of a very old member of the West Ham Branch N.S.S., Mrs. F. Jones. The funeral took place on Sunday last, at East Ham Cemetery. Mr. Ivatts, our president, read the Secular Burial Service, and stated that Mrs. Jones lived and died without any superstitious belief, and a day or two before she died expressed a wish not to see the vicar of the parish when he called. A large number of Christians were attracted by the novelty, as this was the first Secular funeral in this cemetery.—E. Anderson, hon. sec.

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YANKEE REVIVALS.

THIS is the way Denison, Texas Sunday *Gazetteer* announces the opening of a revival: "Burnett and Mulkey are billed to exhibit with their monster unified gospel aggregation at Greenville this week, and the papers of that city are full of advance notices of the coming attraction. We have seen this show ourselves, and can conscientiously indorse its entire olio of features. Mr. Mulkey, who cleans the gasoline torches, does the ushering and calls the acts in the big show, and does the eccentric comedy in the concert, is a thorough artist in his line, and acquits himself in a manner that would be creditable to any amusement enterprise. His startling equestrian acts in the large pavilion are also features of merit, while his great menage act with the famous studs (Belzebub, Triune Deity, Hell Fire, Eternal Punishment, Predestination, Faith, Saving Grace, and Total Depravity) from the stables of the early fathers, is probably unsurpassed among the best performances of tented gospel exhibitions. The battle-scarred chargers are a good deal run down just now, it is true, and are afflicted to some extent with spavin and ringbone and heaves and botts and blind staggers, but by dint of feeding branmash and antimony, and using a carpet tack under the centre girth, Mr. Mulkey succeeds in bringing them on with a lively spurt and puts them around the hippodrome track at a quite good hickory. Mr. Mulkey also carries a large grip filled with the latest gags that are to be had out of almanacs, and makes local application of them in a manner that is inimitable. To this brilliant olio he has recently added a topical song entitled "We're Very Wide Awake, Jehove and I," on which he is said to receive a recall at each performance. Mr. Burnett is the slugger of the combination, and when he puts on the gloves and comes crawling under the ropes, the practiced observer may notice Satan take up another hole in his belt and turn to his trainer for an alcohol sponge bath to hide his growing pallor. Time called, and the belted bruiser of the Plutonian Atheletic Club faces the music like a little man, but he is no match for the gospel heavy-weight, and goes down with a swimming sensation in his head and his teeth full of four-ounce boxing glove. Again and again he rises to the call of "time," falls to avoid punishment, hugs the ropes and fights for wind, but all in vain. Right and left he is knocked by the strong arm of faith, until a terrific left-hander lands upon his neck with a sickening thud and he goes down in a heap at the foot of the grand stand, while the band plays "Annie Laurie." No. Anyone who says Burnett and Mulkey give a bum show speaks ignorantly or with malice aforethought. They do no such thing."

DEATH'S COMPLAINT.

From "Twentieth Century."

I DREAMED of Death, a maid with spotless gear,
With slumberous eyes, with bosom warm and deep
As though some tired head there might sink to sleep
In rapturous rest unflawed by one least fear.
"Oh, surely," I said to her, "no cause were here
For all the eternal terrors that o'ersweep
Humanity, and that oft so whelm and steep
Its last weak hours in torment so austere!"

"Ah, true," Death's pale and beauteous lips now grieved:
"I bring man but the oblivious boon he needs. . . .
Yet note thou my dim realm where cypress waves!"
Then following her sad gesture, I perceived
The myriad spectres of man's own void creeds,
That crawled like haggard ghouls among his graves!

EDGAR FAWCETT.

PROFANE JOKES.

The swell of the ocean—Jonah.

Customer: "I'm afraid I'm getting bald." Operator: "Well, sir, I think when you attend public worship, if I was you, I'd sit in the gallery."

Tommy you should remember that we never get anything in this world unless we ask God for it? "Yes, we do pa!" answered Tommy, "I got a licking in school to-day, and you bet I didn't ask Him for it."

Old party (to minister speaking of Lazarus): "Yes, sir, into Satan's bosom." Minister: "No, my good woman, not Satan's—Abraham's." Old party: "Ah, sir, you know the gentlefolk's name better nor I do."

Student seeking board (being of a pious turn of mind): "I wish a nice quiet room, where I should be uninterrupted in my devotions." Landlady: "Oh! in that case I always require to be paid in advance."

Lord Campbell, in his *Lives of the Chancellors*, says that Lord Tenterden, the celebrated judge, expired with these words on his lips: "Gentlemen of the jury, you will now consider your verdict."

A gentleman had signed the pledge, but the clergyman of the church he attended did not discover any improvement, so one morning he called early on his parishioner. The servant answered the door. "Where is your master?" said the clergyman. "Gone out, sir" was the reply. "And has he left off drinking yet?" he continued. "Oh, yes, sir;" said the servant, "master has left off drinking two or three times this morning."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. J. Coppock, "The Condition of th Earth's Interior"; members' quarterly meeting after the lecture.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Messrs. H. Hunt and Simpkins, debate on "The Existence of God." Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Members subs. now due.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God: Where and What?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Rock of Ages."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Why I became a Freethinker."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. Toleman Garner, "Life's Duty from a Freethought Point of View"; 8.30, members' quarterly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Soddy, "Religious Belief."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "God and his Friends."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Must I Believe in Christ?"

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Secularism in Infancy."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand). 11.15, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"; 3.30, Mr. R. Snell, "Has the Religion of Jesus been of Benefit to the World?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, debate between Mr. C. W. Stokes and Mr. A. T. Dipper on "Theism v. Atheism." Monday, 7.30, debate between the Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt on "Does the Bible Teach a Personal Devil?"

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, a lecture.

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 11.30 debate between Mr. Cohen and Mr Ehrlein on "Design in Nature": 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Evolution v. Special Creation."

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Is Matter of Itself able to Produce Phenomena?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Boyce and others, a discussion.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 11, members' annual meeting; 7, Mr. A. Bevan, "Reformers, Past and Future."

Crook—Commercia Hotel, Commercial Stree , 6, a meeting.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. G. Vickers, "The Bible and Women."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11.30, committee meeting and Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Haslam, "The Value of Criticism."

Plymouth 100 Union Street, 7, usual meeting.

Portsmouth Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, light readings, interspersed with music.

Sheffield Hall of Science Rockingham Street, 3, members' quarterly meeting; 7, monthly evening: recitations and music.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 5 (morning) Camberwell; 15, Battersea; 19 (evening) Woolwich; 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Oct 12 Liverpool.

T THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Oct 5 (evening) Woolwich; 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 19 Mile End, debate; 26, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 41.] SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE PARSONS' PALAVER.

HULL has been black with parsons. They came from all parts of the kingdom, and discussed all sorts of questions. All of them are called by the Holy Ghost, yet their differences of opinion are as pronounced as those of other persons who are merely endowed with common sense.

There was unlimited talk about "the social question," but we cannot find a sensible suggestion. The upshot of the discussion seems to be this: parsons are to act as "the candid friend" of both sides in trade disputes; they should not arbitrate, because they are not specialists, but they should implore the combatants to act in "the spirit of Christianity." In other words, the clerical pill is a necessary part of the remedy. Several speakers waxed eloquent about "the poor," and prophesied the wonderful things that Christianity in general, and the Church in particular, is going to do for them. But these beautiful promises have been made for centuries. The Church is always promising. It outrivals Mr. Micawber. If it had to meet its bills, instead of perpetually renewing them, it would be utterly bankrupt.

Some of the frothy speech about "the poor" strikes us as ghastly hypocrisy. An archbishop and several bishops were the most distinguished performers in this comedy. These gentleman are in the receipt of thousands a year for purely imaginary services. They teach men how to get to heaven, a place that only exists on the map of faith. They have hardly the impudence to deny, at this time of day, that if there be a heaven, and God be wise and good, every honest man will find it. Have they, then, the impudence to affirm that honest men are manufactured by bishops? We challenge them to declare what function they perform. We should be pleased to tell them to their faces that they are living monuments of priestcraft; that their incomes are monstrous and scandalous; and that their whining over the sorrows of the poor, whose industry sustains their extravagance, is a wretched mixture of farce and tragedy. It is a wonder to us that working men can be so abject as to listen to these high-fed parasites; to applaud them when they insult with pity the victims of their extortion, is a disgrace to human nature.

We have no patience to discuss the nauseous cant of snuffling bishops. Their lachrymose effusions over poverty and distress are themes for satire and denunciation. We are surprised that Jesus Christ, if he still exist, can stand it so patiently. His "meekness" is proverbial, but the slightest sense of self-respect should impel him to stop the wretches who drag him through the mire. Well may the poet ask,

> What manhood in that God can be
> Who sees their worship, and is dumb?

Let us, however, keep sight of one important fact. When hundreds of clergymen meet together, and find they *must* talk about strikes, sanitation, disease, and people's dwellings, it shows that the interest in theology is seriously declining. Kingdom-come is giving way to secular salvation. The coating gets thicker and thicker, and the pill dwindles. Some day, perhaps, the Church Congress will open and close with prayer, and all the rest of the time will be spent by the great Clerical Debating Society in discussing questions which are always started, and always eventually settled, by more serious and well-informed persons.

Archdeacon Farrar made a fight for his Brotherhoods. The Church is to be saved by enrolling a lot of strapping young fellows, binding them by vows of poverty and chastity, and setting them to work among "the poor," in back-streets and slums, while the regular, married parson looks after the fashionable part of the town. Dr. Farrar wants to see "a revival." He declares that "there are parishes of the Church of England, numbering thousands of the working classes, where practically all but the name of Christianity may be said to be dead." He says that the Church is too prudent and respectable and deprecates enthusiasm. Thus she lost the Nonconformists, thus she lost Newman and the Tractarians, and thus the Salvation Army grows to two millions. But after all, we may ask the Archdeacon whether these people are not going to heaven as well as Churchmen. We understand he decidedly thinks they are. Why then is he so anxious about them? Simply because he wishes them to deal with his shop. Other traders' goods are sound, but the Church hankers after all the custom and profit.

Up rose the Bishop of Liverpool, who has been thrice married, and opposed the Brotherhoods. He would have none of them. Let the Church stick to the old Gospel. Lord Norton also opposed the imposition of vows. A "Brother" might fall in love with a charming young lady, and the fat would be in the fire. His lordship, however, recommended the checking of improvident marriages among curates—not being a curate himself, and not understanding the species. Other speakers opposed the Archdeacon, and the "Brotherhoods" went by the board.

Another subject of discussion was Inspiration. High Churchmen like Mr. Gore look down upon Church Congresses with a lofty disdain, and the debate was therefore one-sided. The Dean of Peterborough led off and said nothing in particular. Professor Margoliouth followed suit, and was much applauded on declaring that the inspiration of Scripture was "as hopeful as ever it was." The farce, in fact, was screaming. Canon Tristram argued that the Bible was inspired because it gave the names of ancient places correctly. Other speakers were no less subtle and acute. No wonder the Bishop of Beverley terminated the sitting with the remark that "criticism was in its infancy." It evidently was at the Church Congress.

The Church Congress did consider one practical matter. It was Free Education. Some of the clergy were for opposing it tooth and nail, but others saw that the thing was coming, and advised the Church

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to make a bargain whereby its sectional schools could be supported out of the rates. No doubt this policy will be pursued. It is to be feared that a large body of Nonconformists will play into the Church's hands when the crisis arrives. A note to that effect has already been sounded. But if this policy succeeds, its triumph will be but momentary, for the principle of Secular Education is the only permanent solution of the problem.

A word in conclusion about the "meeting of working men" in Hengler's Circus. Two bishops (Durham and Ripon) did some fairly good clowning, and were followed by two hard-working-men in the persons of Sir John Gorst and Sir Albert Rollit, both members of the Collective Wisdom at Westminster. Sir John talked unctuously about "the Master"—not Lord Salisbury, but Jesus Christ; and Sir Albert talked about slavery and the inhumanity of Greece and Rome. It was, in fact, clowning all round; and working men who crowd (if they *did* crowd) to hear two rich priests, a climbing Tory lawyer, and a wealthy merchant, hold forth on "labor," deserve to be bamboozled and plundered for the rest of their natural lives.

G. W. FOOTE.

JOSHUA AND THE SUN.

Savages fail to recognise the limits of their power over nature. Things which the experience of the race shows us to be obviously impossible are not only attempted but believed to be performed by persons in a low stage of culture. Miracles always accompany ignorance. No better proof of the barbarous and unintelligent state whence we have emerged could be given than the stories of the supernatural which are found embodied in all religions, and also in the customs of savages and the folk-lore of peasantry.

Primitive man thinks of all phenomena as caused by spirits. Hence to control the spirits is to control the phenomena. Herodotus (iv., 173) tells a curious tale how once in the land of Psylii, the modern Tripoli, the wind blowing from the Sahara dried up all the water-tanks. So the people took counsel and marched in a body to make war on the south wind. But when they entered the desert, the simoon swept down on them and buried them. It is still said of the Bedouins of Eastern Africa that "no whirlwind ever sweeps across the path without being pursued by a dozen savages with drawn creeses, who stab into the centre of the dusty column, in order to drive away the evil spirit that is believed to be riding on the blast." The Chinese beat gongs and make other noises at an eclipse, to drive away the dragon of darkness. At an eclipse, too, the Ojibbeways used to think the sun was being extinguished, so they shot fire-tipped arrows in the air, hoping thus to re-kindle his expiring light. At the present day Theosophists seek to compass magical powers which in early times were supposed to be generally possessed by sorcerers.

Rain-making was one of the most common of these supposed powers. Instances are found in the Bible. Samuel says: "I will call unto the Lord and he shall send thunder and rain," and he does so (1 Sam. xii., 17, 18). So Elijah, by prayer (which in early times meant a magical spell), obtained rain. Jesus controls the winds and waves, walks on the water, and levitates through the air.

Mr. J. G. Frazer, in his splendid work on *The Golden Bough*, gives many instances of savages making sunshine and staying the sun. Thus "the Melanesians make sunshine by means of a mock sun. A round stone is wound about with red braid and stuck with owl's feathers to represent rays; it is then hung on a high tree." "In a pass of the Peruvian Andes stand two ruined towers on opposite hills. Iron hooks are clamped into their walls for the purpose of stretching a net from one tower to the other. The net is intented to catch the sun." Numerous other methods are resorted to by different tribes. Jerome, of Prague, travelling among the Lithuanians, who early in the fifteenth century were still Pagans, found a tribe who worshipped the sun and venerated a large iron hammer. "The priests told him that once the sun had been invisible for several months because a powerful king had shut it up in a strong tower; but the signs of the zodiac had broken open the tower with this very hammer and released the sun. Therefore they adored the hammer."* Mr. Frazer gives reasons for thinking that the fire festivals solemnised at Midsummer in ancient times were really sun-charms.

The phenomena of nature were supposed to be at the service of the pious. The thunderbolts of Zeus fell upon the heads of perjurers. Some people still wonder the earth does not open when a man announces himself an atheist. Jahveh just before stopping the sun, pelted the enemies of Israel with hailstones. (Josh. x. 11) So Diodorus Siculus (xi. 1) relates how the Persians when on their way to spoil the temple at Delphi, were deterred by "a sudden and incredible tempest of wind and hail, with dreadful thunder and lightning, by which great rocks were rent to pieces and cast upon the heads of the Persians, destroying them in heaps." Herodotus too (ii, 142) tells how "The Egyptians asserted that the sun had four times deviated from his ordinary course." Sky-pilots cite this as a corroboration of the Jew-book yarn. It is instead a confirmation of the fact that all ancient peoples have similar absurd legends displaying their ignorance of nature and consequent superstition. The power of arresting the stars in their courses, and lengthening the days and nights was imputed to witches. Thus Tibullus says of a sorceress (i. eleg. 2)

> I've seen her tear the planets from the sky,
> Seen lightning backward at her bidding fly.

And Lucan in his *Pharsalia* (vi. 462)

> Whene'er the proud enchantress gives command,
> Eternal motion stops her active hand;
> No more Heav'ns rapid circles journey on,
> But universal nature stands foredone;
> The lazy god of day forgets to rise,
> And everlasting night pollutes the skies.

No modern poet would think of saying like Statius that the sun stood still at the unnatural murder of Atreus. Such an idea found its way into poetry because it had previously been conceived as a fact.

Hence we find numerous similar stories to that of Joshua. Thus it is related of Bacchus in the Orphic hymns that he arrested the course of the sun and the moon. Mr. Spence Hardy in his *Legends and Theories of Buddhists*, shows that arresting the course of the sun was a common thing among the disciples of Buddha. We need not be surprised to find that men were once believed to be able to control the sun when we reflect that to this day the majority of people fancy there is some magnified non-natural man, they call God, who is able to do the same. Seeing the legend of Joshua in its true form as one of numerous similar instances illustrating the barbarity and ignorance of the past, we see also that the whole merit and instruction of the story is taken away by those modern Christians, who speak of it as poetry, or who endeavor to reconcile it with the conclusions of science.

"Rationalistic" explanations of miracles are often the most irrational, because they fail to take into account the vast difference between the state of mind which gave rise to the stories, and that which seeks to rationalise them.

J. M. Wheeler.

I am firmly persuaded that whatever is injurious to the intellect is also injurious to moral life and on this conviction I base my conduct with respect to Christianity. That religion is pernicious to the intellect; it demands that the reason shall be sacrificed upon the altar; it orders civilised men to believe in the legends of a savage race.—*Winwood Reade.*

* *The Golden Bough*, vol. i., pp. 24, 25.

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PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

Once a month or so I propose to write under this heading, and address the members of the National Secular Society directly.

Mr. Robert Forder has tendered his resignation of the secretaryship, and his successor will be appointed before the next Conference. Meanwhile Mr. Forder will fulfil the duties of the office. His great services to the party demand a special recognition. Several Freethinkers have spoken to me on the subject, and I now invite the party to subscribe towards a testimonial, which may be publicly presented to Mr. Forder before he vacates his post. Mr. W. H. Reynolds, the honorary treasurer of the N. S. S., will act as treasurer to this fund. Subscriptions can be sent to him at Camplin House, New Cross, London, S.E., or to the editors of the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer*. All subscriptions will be acknowledged in those journals.

Mr. Forder has given the best years of his life to our work. His health is now precarious, and the testimonial will assist him in the Freethought publishing business to which he is committed. He has many friends, and I believe no enemy; and as the Freethought Party has always been grateful to those who have served it ungrudgingly, I venture to believe that this appeal will elicit a liberal response.

A considerable number of new members have joined the N. S. S. since the Conference. Still there is plenty of room for more. I invite the readers of the *Freethinker* who have not yet joined to do so at once. Let no one say "I am only one." The army is made up of units, and no Freethinker should hold aloof from the only Freethought organisation in the kingdom. Those who think the N. S. S. is far from perfect should help to improve it. Criticism is easy work. What is wanted is co-operation.

Considerable trouble was occasioned by the suicide of poor Mr. Easton in St. Paul's Cathedral. It is thought that the place will have to be re-consecrated or "reconciled," but to me this is a matter of indifference. Mr. Forder's share of the trouble is what I am concerned with. As secretary of the N. S. S. he more than fulfilled his duty. Poor Easton desired to be cremated, and his mother wished his desires to be carried out in everything. This being a novel case, and Sir Henry Thompson being away from England, a lot of running to and fro had to be done. But the difficulties were surmounted, and poor Easton's remains were cremated at Woking, Mr. Forder attending officially, and reading an appropriate piece at the ceremony.

Freethinkers who wish to be cremated, instead of buried, would do well to pay £10 to the Cremation Society in advance. This sum covers everything, and the prepayment saves both trouble and additional expense.

Some persons have been wondering how much poor Easton left me. They appear to think I have suddenly grown rich. The fact is, he had a little money saved, and that goes rightly to his mother. He wished me to have his books, but he forgot he had given them all away before. The paralysis had clearly affected his brain. I received a letter from him about a fortnight before his death, and it was so incoherent that I had to ask for an explanation, which never came.

I am not on the look out for legacies. What I want to see is the N. S. S. better supported. The Executive will do a good winter's work if it is provided with the necessary funds. There is money in hand, but it would be prudent to keep a reserve balance of £200 always in the bank for possible emergencies. I appeal to those who have not yet subscribed to the Central Fund to do so as soon as convenient. In accordance with the resolution of the Conference, the Society's work will have to be more and more centralised, and this is not possible unless the central Executive is furnished with the means.

Mr. Wheeler and I have undertaken to edit the *N. S. S. Almanack* this year. Henceforth this publication will be issued by the Society directly. Any persons who desire to advertise on the cover or at the end of the reading matter, should apply at once. Secretaries must send in information of Branch work, meeting-places, etc., by October 12. All lecturers should also send in their addresses. The Calendar is thoroughly overhauled this year, and the other contents I hope will be found interesting and useful.

G. W. Foote.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

Council Meeting held at the Hall of Science on Thursday October 2. The President, Mr. G W. Foote, in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the secretary reported completion of arrangements for a course of Free Lectures at the East End; and it was also decided that a course should be given at the Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club, the secretary being instructed to take the necessary steps to that end. Satisfactory statements were given as to the work at Hammersmith and Midland Arches. The propaganda at the latter station being concluded for the season, the thanks of the Council were accorded to Miss E. M. Vance for her valuable assistance. Applications for grants were considered; and it was announced that the Committee had exhausted the funds at their disposal for open-air work. Progress was reported as to the Hall of Science Free Lectures. At the suggestion of the President, it was decided that an appeal for funds be made, so that the work of the Federation might be extended. Mr. E. Anderson stated that the West Ham Branch were arranging Tuesday evening Free Lectures; and the death of Mr. J. Fitzgerald, a respected member of West Ham Branch was made known to the meeting. After some further business of minor importance, the Council adjourned till November 6.

Edmund Pownceby, *Secretary*.

MRS. BESANT IN BELFAST.

On Sunday last the Ulster Branch of the N. S. S. held three of the largest meetings of a sceptical character ever held in the North of Ireland. Mrs. Besant gave three addresses: two on theological subjects and one on "Socialism." The greatest difficulty was experienced in obtaining a suitable hall for these lectures, and before St. Anne's Hall was secured a fortnight previously it was thought no hall would be got. The Ulster Hall (minor) was refused insultingly, although it had been let to a prize fighter, and another hall that is let regularly for the ballots in connection with illegal prize lotteries was also refused—prize fighting and gambling not being so obnoxious to orthodoxy as heresy. St. Anne's Hall with a holding capacity of a little over 500, was crowded to inconvenience at each lecture, and many people had to go away without obtaining admission at all. The audiences listened with profound attention, and the discussions were conducted with good humor and entire freedom from personal and disagreeable elements. The usual indefiniteness was exhibited by the Christian speakers, a lack that the audience seemed to enjoy. A very large quantity of Freethought literature was disposed of at each meeting a large stock of *Freethinkers* being exhausted before the end of the second lecture, and the demand undiminished. W. M. Knox.

Obituary.—Mr. J. Fitzgerald of the West Ham Branch, an earnest and genuine Freethinker, died on October 1 after a long and painful illness. I read the funeral service over his remains at Manor Park cemetery on Sunday last, in the presence of a very large gathering of the members of the branch and the friends of the deceased.—R. Forder.

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ANTI-CHRISTIAN SPIRITS.

The *Progressive Thinker* is a well printed and edited Spiritist paper of Chicago, with decidedly anti-Christian tendencies. We were highly amused to see in a recent number, the testimony of departed spirits against religion. Among those cited were Saint Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, who it seems now says, "Religion makes a man a fanatic. When once he has accepted a particular creed as a pathway to heaven, then commences his moral degradation. As I preached, taught, and helped to found the religion of Jesus, I think it my duty to do all I can to overthrow that religion." St. Irenæus (the first to testify to the four gospels) says, "Sir, there is one regret, a deep lasting regret with me, and that is, that I cannot atone for the blood that has been spilt through my efforts either directly or indirectly in formulating this damnable religion." Other spirits give similar testimony, and some it seems were much disappointed to find that after all the time they had spent on religion, they had not gone straight away to everlasting happiness.

HUXLEY'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

There is a strong wish felt that Prof. Huxley would write his autobiography, and that he should include a statement of his own philosophical standpoint. It has been pointed out that though he has at various times told us a good deal of what he does not believe, yet he has been extremely chary of declaring himself in an opposite direction. In his works it is difficult to discover his position, though it is possible he would say that the word *agnostic*, which he himself invented, defines it. Perhaps there is more of himself in the little history of Hume, published in 1878, than in any other of his works; but even there it is difficult to tell how closely sympathy and agreement are yoked. In any case, whether it for ever took the argument out of the mouth of the controversialist or not, a biography of Prof. Huxley written by himself could not be other than a valuable contribution alike to literature and science.—*Athenæum.*

ACID DROPS.

"Give, and it shall be given to you" is skilfully worked up in the *War Cry*. Booth tries to raise the wind by showing that a subscription to the Salvation Army is a good business investment. He gives the case of "A. J. E," who denied herself a threepenny pork-pie during last year's Self-Denial Week Shortly afterwards someone sent her three threepenny bits, so she cleared sixpence on the transaction, or 200 per cent. Good business!

A Scotch boy offered to deny himself going to school for a week, and to send Booth the threepence. From what we know of schoolboys we should say a good deal could be raised in this way.

The headquarters of the Salvation Army are close to our printing-office and some of our compositors happen to dine at the same coffee house as the Salvationists. Very little self denial is discernible, for steaks and chops seem to vanish as if by magic. Jesus Christ would have all his work to do feed 5000 of these ravenous individuals, even during self-denial week.

General Booth's big scheme for the reformation of England will soon be before the public in a book of several hundred pages. As soon as possible we shall criticise it in these columns. Meanwhile we have two notions on the subject; first. that Booth is bidding for capitalist cash; second. that his gigantic scheme will in all probability be a failure, and lead to the wreck of the Salvation Army.

"With London seething mad and miserable all around you," said Booth to a *Pall Mall Gazette* interviewer, "you fellows are full of politics, and such-like trash, that doesn't really matter a straw to anybody, and wouldn't for the world be caught paying any heed to *Souls*—only Social effort, or Sanitation, or anything else with an S you like, but Souls—not you. *I* know you."

Here we have Boothism naked and unashamed. Men's souls are to be saved, from hell of course, or the word has no meaning; and meanwhile the "sovereigns and statesmen" of Beaconsfield's epigram are to go on governing as they please, keeping up huge armies and navies, maintaining all the bad relics of feudalism, and bleeding the people like veal with iniquitous taxes. The fact is, as we have said before, that Booth is one of the best friends of the wealthy and privileged classes, who, if they knew their own interest, would furnish him with unlimited cash.

"London seething mad and miserable all around you" is a fine piece of Boothian humbug. Madness and misery there *is* in London; no one disputes it; but "*all* around you" is a monstrous exaggeration. After reading Booth's nonsense we took a stroll through a great North London thoroughfare, crowded with Saturday-night shoppers. Most of them were working people, and it was pleasant to hear the wives chattering economy with their husbands, and to see the chatter emphasied with laughing faces. Very likely some of the baskets went home less handsomely furnished than they might have been, and some of the talk we overheard might have been more elegant; but Booth's picture of London is as near the truth as a *Moonshine* caricature is like the Grand Old Man.

The death of Mrs. Booth is a blow to the Salvation Army. In some senses she was very decidedly the "General's" better half. She appears to have been a good, kind-hearted woman, with a pleasant fluency of speech and a large share of personal magnetism. Whether she was a true Christian or not depends on the inspiration or otherwise of St. Paul. The great apostle told women to hold their tongues, and added "I suffer not a woman to teach." But Booth knew better. He saw that the female tongue was very persuasive, especially with men, and urged his wife to speak in public against her will and prepossessions. In our opinion the Lasses do more for "the Army" than the male officers, most of whom look as though they would fail in any ordinary occupation.

The *Star* printed a horrid *Police News* sort of picture on Monday. It was a portrait of Mrs. Booth propped up in bed during her last illness, with the folds of the Army flag over her, the words "Blood and Fire" being right above her head. Perhaps our taste is perverted, but to us the thing was disgusting. It was enough to make an old Greek or Roman stare and ask why the world had grown so vulgar in two thousand years.

The simpletons who credit Cardinal Manning's hypocritical protestations as to the tolerance the Catholics would display if they got the upper hand in England, should remember how he hounded on the bigots to exclude Mr. Bradlaugh from the House of Commons. If that is not enough they should just look at the programme of the approaching Catholic Congress at Madrid. Among the questions to be considered are, how to restore the temporal power of the Pope—an impossible thing without war with Italy—and what restrictions should be put on the freedom of the press. The Black Army always did hate a free press, and they will always oppose it wherever they can do so. The light of discussion is fatal to them, and they know it.

Protestants and Catholics continue to hate each other in Ireland with what the Psalmist calls "a perfect hatred." The *Irish Times* advertisement columns—to say nothing of the editorial matter—furnish some capital illustrations of this fact. For instance, there is an "Intelligent Protestant Lad Wanted at Donnybrook to clean boots." Another advertiser wants "A Protestant Boy to milk" Even the blacking must be laid on the boots by a boy of sound views, and apparently it is thought that a Catholic boy would sour a Protestant's milk.

Two Catholic priests have been detained at Philadelphia under the Contract Labor Law. They were engaged as teachers at a Catholic university. At this rate Europe will find it difficult to export its superfluous sky-pilots to America. But we believe the law is being modified.

In an address to working men in connection with the Church Congress, the Dean of Rochester gave a long list of classes of people he would "run in." After reading it carefully, we conclude that three-fourths of the population would be candidates for gaol. What a nice result, Mr. Dean, of eighteen centuries of Christianity.

"Running in," by the way, is a good old religious method. The Church answered heretics in that way when it had the power. But sensible persons, who have no

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religion at all, or only a Sunday one, see that the "running in" business is a mi-take. Schools moralise the people better than gaols—yes, and better than churches.

"How unlovely a spectacle," exclaims Mr. B. P. Neuman in the *Nineteenth Century*, "is many an Independent church engaged in the task of selecting a pastor. The preaching competitions; the over-mastering anxiety to secure a man who will 'draw'; the management of meetings and the manipulation of votes, and, side by side with all this, the stereotyped form of the purest and most spiritual religious phraseology! Commerce tempered by prayer meetings! The tables of the money-changers 'hard by the oracles of God!'"

Mr. Neuman has also a gird at the ministers. He says: "If the pews are reading Cheyne and Driver and Robertson Smith, to say nothing of Kuenen and Wellhausen, while the pulpit is ju-t awake to the fact that some years ago there lived a dangerous heretic named Ewald, it is easy to foresee the result." The result is, of course, that congregations are outgrowing their ministers, and will no longer submit to having clotted nonsense pumped into them as the pure word of God.

The *Medium* is sent to us, with a reproduction of a "Photograph of a Medium and Spirit." The medium's hands are out of sight and the spirit, which is accommodated with a chair, looks remarkably like a doll enveloped in drapery. Our scepticism is confirmed by reading in the "Testimony of one of the photographers," that "Mr. Smith and I each stood beside our cameras, also with our backs towards the cabinet, which was one of the instructions given, as the constant anxious peering of the human eye *disintegrates* the atoms of the built up form, and would prevent it standing long enough to be photographed." As the only "spectators" had their backs turned, how could they be sure the doll was not placed on the chair by the medium?

The mysterious nunnery commonly called the "Nunnery of the Buried Alive" at Naples, which has been closed against outsiders for four centuries, was opened on Saturday by order of the Minister of Justice. In spite of the strenuous oppo-ition of the doorkeeper of the nunnery, the police entered by the windows. Sixteen nuns were found within a state bordering upon insanity. They were covered with rags, and their surroundings were of the most filthy description. Many had forgotten how to speak, and the demeanour of all of them was more that of animals than human beings, but those who were induced to talk expressed themselves as perfectly resigned to their fate.

According to a Dalziel telegram from Berlin, the cause of the raid upon the nunnery was the desire of the parents of a young girl who had entered the convent to recover her. She had been banished to the nunnery on account of a love affair objectionable to her family. The latter, being unable to communicate with her, had complained to the police, and an order from the Minister of Justice for her removal was obtained. She was found to be a mere skeleton, and her parents became half crazed at the condition in which she discovered. The nunnery has been closed and a strict investigation ordered by the Governor of Naples. The facts of this extraordinary case are contained in a special dispatch to the *Tageblatt*, which states that the case is attracting the widest attention at Naples, and it is said all the nunneries in Southern Italy will be visited by the police.

At a late inquest at Faversham, the coroner, Mr. W. J. Harris, upon a juryman named Packman stating he did not believe in oaths, both dismissed him and refused to let him leave the court. Mr. H. Rowden thereupon addressed a letter to the *Faversham Mercury*, pointing out that the coroner had no authority for this high-handed treatment.

The British and Foreign Bible Society report a deficit of over fifteen thousand pounds. Even the Protestant world is not quite so certain as it was that the circulation of Hebrew literature means the advent of the millenium.

Etymologically the words God and Devil have no relation to *good* and *evil*. There is a similarity in spelling and nothing more. This is noted by Dr. Whitney, the great philologist, in the *Century Dictionary*. But the *Christian World* does not like this destruction of a popular fallacy which is so useful to sentimental theology. "We shall be very reluctant," it says, "to abandon the familiar derivation of God. If not correct it ought to be."

If not correct it ought to be! Here is the spirit which inspired the huge mass of Christian forgeries. Miracles and legends "ought to be" true. That was the reason for swearing they were, and by and bye for murdering everybody who said they were not.

The *Harvest*, a Roman Catholic journal, has a story from the pen of Lady Herbert, entitled "What the Crucifix and Scapular can do" It seems that a ship was jammed in field ice and borne down upon by a huge iceberg. In this emergency a sailor held out a crucifix, and the iceberg sheered off like a devil from holy water. The scapular story is similar. A boat was in a snow-storm and driven towards shore. One of the men fastened his scapular on to the rigging, whereupon the vessel slewed round, and they continued their voyage in safety. Lady Herbert is perhaps graduating as a writer of romances. If she displayed more variety in her stories we should predict for her a brilliant future.

Telephonic communication with church has been tried at Birmingham. This is the beginning of the end. The wealthy pious will have their religion turned on to their own houses like gas, and put nothing in the plate when they leave the telephone. Soon they will expect to do their praying through the same instrument by which they get their preaching.

A clerical minority at Trèves oppose the opening of the municipal gymnasium as a lawn-tennis ground for girls. They say the game is unbecoming. Probably they have watched it and caught a glimpse of a girl's ancle, and felt an awful tug at their vow of celibacy.

Father Flavin, of Clonmel, exercised his priestly prerogative and drove some of his flock out of a public house. But one of them got a leg broken, and the priest is charged with pushing him "over the garden wall." So serious is the injury that the man's depositions have been taken and Father Flavin is arrested.

Mr. E. B. Lanin has a long and important article on "Jews in Russia" in the October number of the *Fortnightly*. He details the laws against them and the insiduous persecution to which they are subjected, and which constantly makes them apostatise to Christianity. Mr. Lanin says: "One reads frequently in the Russian newspapers of 'sixty young Jews who, desirous of entering the university, have abjured the law of Moses'; of forty others who became Christians because their business called them outside of the Pale; and scores of others who, for equally valid reasons, are introduced every month into the true fold, where they are as much in their places as eagles in a barnyard."

Mr. Lanin gives his opinion that "Any one of the means employed against the Jews would be enough to convert three-fourths of the Christians of Russia to Shamanism or Buddhism in a week." He has conversed with very many of these "converted" Jews, and affirms, "with few exceptions, not only that they have not the faintest glimmer of faith in Christianity, but they hate the very name, despise its priests, sneer at its ceremonies, and loathe themselves for perjuring their souls by receiving its sacraments and praising the name of its founder. And they bring up their sons and daughters in the same sentiments."

The Americans at Albany boast of baptising three Chinamen. We wonder if the consideration was paid in hard dollars or only in rice.

Theosophy the Religion of Jesus is the title of a two-cent pamphlet issued by the Theosophical Society, New York.

Cuba is infested with bandits. The most famous of them signs his proclamations: "I the king of the country people, and of nearly the whole island of Cuba, Manuel Garcia the First." His followers are good Christians, and think that they ward off capture by repeating this prayer: "O Lord!

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when my enemies [the gendarmes] will pursue me, let not their feet be useful for running; neither their hands take hold of me, nor their eyes see me. Throw them down as thou hast thrown those who wanted to arrest thee on Holy Thursday. Deliver me from them as thou hast delivered Jonah from the whale's belly." They expect their piety to clear them from all sins.

Signor Pecci, the successor to the fisherman at the Vatican, is said to spend his mornings catching birds with nets. Hundreds of birds are caught every morning and distributed among the poor, who bless his Holiness. But what do the birds think of the Vicar of Christ?

The priests are energetically collecting Peter's Pence in Ireland, holding that whether the landlords or the people suffer from the failure of the potato crop, the Church must secure its perquisites in good time.

The Rev. J. S. Rudd, vicar of Freshwater, Isle of Wight, has without assigning any reason, dismissed the master and mistress of the schools, who have been in their position eleven years. The vicar acknowledges "their good moral character and teaching abilities," but the truth is they are not sectarian enough to suit his notions. An indignation meeting has been held, and the vicar burnt in effigy.

The Rev. W. T. Ratcliffe made a curious statement at Colne. He is reported as saying: "Had the habit of independent thinking been more prevalent, Bishop Colenso would never have fallen into the fallacies he did." We always thought Bishop Colenso was sought to be deprived of his charge because he did show himself an independent thinker. But we live and learn.

The *Reading Standard* is sent us with the report of a Christian Evidence lecture, with the usual quotation from a person called "John Stewart Mills" (*sic*). Evidently the lecturer has not read Mill, but has simply got hold of the stock citation which is supposed to prove that non-Christian writer was almost persuaded to be a Christian.

The Sabbatarians of Littlehampton have, with the Catholic Duke of Norfolk at their head, memorialised the directors of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway against permitting any more Sunday excursions like that which recently brought 7000 persons to their town. A counter memorial has, however, been started in favor of the continuance of such excursions, which however they may annoy a few, give health and pleasure to the excursionists, and profit both to the railway and those who entertain them.

Milkmen and mackerel sellers are exempted from the provisions of the Sunday Observance Act of Charles II. But according to a Sheffield magistrate, a milkman is not allowed to call out the fact that he has milk to sell, even though no one complains of him. A case has been stated for a higher court, and it may be found that the Sheffield magistrate is incorrect.

Birchall, the condemned murderer, is growing graver. Religious books are supplied to him, and the chaplain hopes he will make an edifying end. Probably he will be good enough to forgive his victim.

Dr. Parker has declared against sacramental wine altogether. Intoxicants ought to be banished from the Lord's table, but the substitutes for it are vile concoctions, and the City Temple oracle gives his vote for water. Poor J. C.! He turned water into wine, and his followers are turning his wine into water.

Praying and working were both exemplified at Filey on Saturday. A fire broke out, and the vicar of the parish, who is an athlete, pulled off his coat and helped the fishermen to extinguish the flames. But another parson, a holiday visitor, bolted from his lodgings, and having got to a safe distance, pulled out a Prayer Book, fell on his knees, and offered up supplication to heaven. The report does not say that his prayer was answered.

The living of Handsworth parish is worth £2,000 a year, and will soon be worth a great deal more. It has been bought by Mr. Sabin for £20,000. Mr. Sabin secures it for his son, who by virtue of this bargain will be the legal sky-pilot of that parish when the present incumbent pegs out. Meanwhile the sweating business goes on merrily, for no curate of Handsworth Church receives more than £100 a year. Good old Mother Church!

When the younger Mr. Sabin takes the living he will have to swear that he has been no party to the payment of a single farthing for it. Of course he will do it. They all do it.

Colonel Ingersoll, according to a Central News telegram, is going to lecture on "Art and Morality" for the benefit of Walt Whitman. But the bigots are up in arms against him. The Academy of Music and the Union League Club absolutely refused to let him speak within their sacred precincts. However, the Horticultural Hall has been secured, and the lecture will be delivered on the last day of October. No doubt the action of the bigots will only cause a bigger crush at the doors.

Truth had its knife into Reuben May for years and pretty well spoiled his game. Now it has taken up the case of Walter Austin, the pious Finsbury philanthropist, and subjected him to a frightful examination. In the face of this, however, Prophet Baxter gives "friend Walter" an editorial puff in the *Christian Herald*. Birds of a feather—but the proverb is somewhat musty.

Money is being raised for a Catholic Cathedral in Sheffield. By-and-bye we shall doubtless hear of another costly House of God erected amidst one of the filthiest collections of human dwellings in all England. Sheffield wants more soap and less religion.

There is a little nest of Mohammedans in Liverpool, most of them (we understand) being Englishmen, and they are protesting against the proposed representation of a new play by Mr. Hall Caine in which Mohammed is the principal character. How universal is the law that religious people claim not only a right to their own taste, but a right to make other people respect it at the expense of their own.

Lively scenes are expected in Wales. The total arrears of tithes in thirteen Cardiganshire parishes is calculated at £2,278, and the clergy are determined to get it by hook or by crook.

The Mormons have put forth a new profession of faith. Polygamy is excluded, but the inspiration of the Book of Mormon is retained, and that of the Bible "as far as it is translated correctly." This is a very important proviso. But what about the different readings of the originals?

The Mormons also "believe in the gift of tongues, in prophecy, revelations, visions, and healing." Of course this means *faith* healing, or the cure of broken legs without the aid of a surgeon. They further believe in the "literal gathering of Israel, the restoration of the Ten Tribes, and that Zion will be built on this continent," that is, America. Altogether the Mormon profession of faith is a strange comment on nineteenth-century civilisation. It shows that superstition goes on living in an age of science, just as the elephant continues to exist among the newer species of evolution.

One of the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale's boasted "converts" came to our office begging on Tuesday morning. Apparently he had not obtained what he expected from his converter. We regret to say that he made an impression on the susceptible benevolence of our "sub."

The Agnostic Annual, 1891. Stewart and Co.: London.—This publication, edited by C. A. Watts, is in its eighth year. The present number is certainly a good sixpennyworth. Mr. Samuel Laing opens with a capital article on the Bible, with special reference to Mr. Gladstone's recent performances. We regret, however, that Mr. Laing gives currency to the story of the burning of the Alexandrian library by the Caliph Omar. Dr. Bithell writes on Fundamental Theses of Agnosticism. Among the other contributions is one from the pen of Mr. Holyoake against the Blasphemy Laws. Dr. Carus and W. S. Ross discuss Agnosticism. Dr. Hardwicke writes on Androgynous Gods.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 12, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "Where is the Devil?"

Thursday, Oct. 16, Tower Hamlets Radical Club, 19 Redman's Road, Mile End, E.; at 8, "Is the Bible Inspired?" Admission free.

October 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsy; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

R. CHAMBERS.—It is a matter of taste. The reverend gentleman is entitled to his preference. For our part, we would rather own kinship with an ape who defends his female, than acknowledge descent from a cur like Adam, who, directly he got into a scrape, sneaked behind his wife, and cried "It wasn't my fault, she made me do it." Those who sneer at man's animal origin, prove the truth of what they sneer at. As Darwin said, they draw back their snarling muscles and reveal the line of their descent.

E. HANNATH.—Sir W. Ball's *Story of the Heavens* is a good book; so is Lockyer's *Astronomy*, the large edition. You will find that the shape of the world was determined in its plastic state, perhaps two or three hundred million years ago.

J. IRELAND.—Suggestions are not "impudence." We don't belong to the usual tribe of editors. There is no infallibility, and certainly no omniscience, in our office. Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is procurable in your part of the country. Mr. S. Peacock is, as you say, a "jolly brick"—a man of energy, intelligence, honesty, and, rarer still, modesty. Some men with less than a tenth of his ability keep their noses pointed to the zenith. We have not decided about reprinting our Gladstone articles.

F. R. BIRD, 3 Tanners Terrace, Murchison Road, Leyton, will be glad to hear from any Freethinkers in the vicinity who are willing to co-operate in forming a Branch of the N. S. S.

PEACOCK, newsagent, East Street, Walworth, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular publications.

C. TURNER.—No doubt a good Branch might be established at Poplar. If a few friends will join together there, the N. S. S. will furnish assistance.

B. HARRIS.—You miss the point. The women were killed *as* witches, but they were *not* witches. Witchcraft was believed in, and almost if not quite universally. Darwin himself thought this fact disproved the assumption that what everybody believes is true, or has some truth in it.

PRO BONO PUBLICO.—Grammatical rules can be carried to the point of pedantry. There are fine shades of meaning not provided for in text-books, and in such cases a writer must use his own judgment. "If" is not always a sign of the subjunctive, and sometimes when it is there is nothing dubious in the nominal hypothesis.

A. F. A.—The republication of our Gladstone articles is being considered. The Halstead Branch promises well. We intend to print the N. S. S. principles and objects occasionally in our columns, beginning next week, with particulars as to joining.

UNKNOWN.—You have a queer notion of what *investigation* means. Apparently you believe everything you see in print. We are quite aware that the newspaper obituaries tell of persons who lived more than a hundred years. But we repeat our statement, which you don't appear to have the sense to understand, that no centenarian case that has been sifted to the bottom has proved to be real. No doubt you are ignorant of the fact that Sir George Cornwall Lewis, once Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote a work on the subject, maintaining the very assertion you quarrel with. Pray open a dictionary and turn to "investigate" before you write again.

R. J. MURRAY.—We are glad to hear that the Nottingham Branch will carry on outdoor work next spring. Certainly there should be a Midland Federation. But its organisers must be careful. They will succeed if they work hard and have patience. But they will fail if they attempt too much at once, or expect to gallop on the road of progress.

AN Ingersollite says: "I have read the Colonel's new pamphlet with unbounded delight. Would that the Christians would read it too! It would show them the rottenness of a good deal they profess to admire, and that the noblest feelings may animate the heart of a Freethinker."

J. D. (Plymouth) thinks our replies to Mr. Gladstone should be reprinted and bound in cloth for preservation. He promises to take some copies. He would also like to see a selection of Mr. Wheeler's best *Freethinker* articles reprinted in the same way. "Indemnity from loss," he adds, "might be secured by getting promises of support, sufficient to cover expenses, previously to publication." What do other readers say?

A. M. J. WRIGHT.—Your Christian friends must be very hard up for an argument if they trade upon poor Easton's suicide. We have noted hundreds of Christian suicides in our columns, several being those of clergymen. These facts do not count, apparently; but if a Secularist, whose frame is shattered, and his brain injured, by paralysis, shoots himself, that proves the falsity of Secularism! The logic is fit for an asylum. Stay, it is *not* fit for an asylum; it is only fit for a church.

MILLER, newsagent, 76 Holloway Road, London, N., supplies this journal and other Freethought publications.

A. J. FIELD.—Glad to hear of continued success at Finsbury Park. Are you still searching for an indoor meeting-place?

T. A. BRUCE.—The statement was taken from a daily paper. We did not know that the Earl of Devon seceded, as the *Church Times* says, fifteen or twenty years ago. The other names in our paragraph are not affected.

IDA.—There are two English translations of Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*, both published at one shilling. Any bookseller will supply you.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—"Daylight," 5s.; Finsbury Branch, 3s. 8d.; J. Swinburne-Hanham, 10s.; Westminster Branch, 7s. 2d.—R. FORDER.

C. WATKINSON.—Perhaps the present editor is unaware of the fact. It is a long time since Mr. Forder tried the paper in question. Our statement is perfectly correct.

S. SODDY.—Rather hard on the poor devil.

R. WIDDUP.—Technically you are right.

H. F. SMART.—Children frequently ask questions about religion that are enough to flutter a whole college of theologians, and the day is gone by when prophets could send bears to devour them.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Portsmouth Evening News—Nazarene—Yorkshire Post—Lucifer the Lightbearer—Hull Express—Colne and Nelson Times—Cape Argus—Independent Pulpit—Progressive Thinker—Chichester Observer—Kidderminster Shuttle—Globe—Reading Standard—Reading Observer—Daily Telegraph—Independent—Hull Critic—Tocsin—Echo—Medium—Der Arme Teufel—Canterbury Press—Umpire—Freethinkers' Magazine—Harvest—De Dageraad—St. Pancras Guardian.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening. There was one opponent, who spoke courteously, and was carefully replied to. This evening (Oct. 12) Mr. Foote delivers the second lecture of this course. His subject will be "Where is the Devil?" Christians are invited to come and answer the question.

After Mr. Foote's lecture he met a number of ladies and gentlemen upstairs, who formed themselves into a Committee to arrange for a London Freethinkers' Ball. The date fixed upon is Wednesday, November 26. Mr. Anderson acts as secretary, and Mr. R. O. Smith as treasurer. Miss Vance superintends the concert. Other parts of the business are delegated to sub-committees. The tickets are to be one shilling each. Altogether we venture to predict a great success for this gathering.

Several new subscribers to the *Freethinker* have been gained by Mr. Foote's recent visit to Hull. One of them never heard of the paper before, and is very glad he has lighted upon it. This should encourage our friends who circulate extra copies.

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The *Hull Critic* finds space for a vigorous letter, *apropos* of the Church Congress, from the pen of Mr. Naewiger, the Branch Secretary. The subject is "The Church and the Poor." Mr. Naewiger declares that the breach between the Church and the poor is widening, and denounces as hypocrites the high-salaried clergy who meet and chatter about the problem of poverty.

The Hull *Express* gives a very fair report of Mr. Foote's lectures in the Alhambra, and notes that there were large audiences.

A gentleman, whose name we withhold, sends us a very interesting letter about his conversion to Freethought. He is a member of a School Board on the Secular ticket, and and president of a district Trade Union. Years ago he was a perfect bigot, simply owing to his Christianity. He rejoiced at Mr. Bradlaugh's exclusion from the House of Commons, and was delighted at Mr. Foote's imprisonment. But he began to read Freethought publications, and at last, he says, "Mr. Foote captured me, against my will, I own; but one cannot fight against facts." This gentlemen has never heard a Freethought lecture. His change of mind is the result of reading, and, of course, thinking.

Secular Thought reports the annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union, at which letters of encouragement were read from several leading English Freethinkers. Captain Robert C. Adams was re-elected President, and Mr. Risser secretary. The first resolution passed was as follows:—"While it is a source of regret that Mr. Charles Bradlaugh has been compelled to withdraw from the leadership of the Secular Party in England, the Secularists and Freethinkers of Canada send their warmest congratulations to his successor, Mr. G. W. Foote, and wish him every success as President of the National Secular Society." Further resolutions pledged the Convention to support *Secular Thought* and Mr. Watts's lecture propaganda.

Mr. Watts gives an account of his visit to England. He pays Mr. Foote some compliments, which need not be reproduced, and says that as President of the N. S. S. he is "the right man in the right place." Mr. Watts also states that he conveyed the message from the Hall of Science of "admiration and deep affection" to Colonel Ingersoll, and the Colonel replied "Give them my love."

Thomas Gordon, the Scotch Deist, born in 1684, who died in 1750, has a merited place in Mr. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. A portion of Gordon's translation of Tacitus has just been added to the "Camelot Series," with an introduction by Arthur Galton. "In politics, and in theology," says Mr. Galton, "he was a republican and a free-thinker." Gordon wrote very fine English, and Mr. Galton pays a just tribute to his strong, nervous style.

In Sweden Mr. Henry V. Berghall has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment for blasphemy at Jönkoping. It is to be hoped the Supreme Court will over-rule the judgment. Meantime Mr. Berghall is undismayed, and is repeating the lecture for which he has been sentenced.

We are pleased to hear from Captain Otto Thomson that the sale of the Swedish Freethought paper *Fritankaren* is increasing, and that it is especially finding its way among Scandinavian readers in America.

Mr. H. S. Salt, who wrote the Life of James Thomson, and has just issued the Life of another Freethinker (Thoreau), will read a paper on "The New Shelleyism" at the Shelley Society's monthly meeting next Wednesday evening (Oct. 15). Mr. Salt's paper should interest Freethinkers. Anyone is free to attend the meeting, which takes place at 8 o'clock at University College, Gower Street. Mr. Foote hopes to attend and participate in the discussion.

Miss Ada Campbell, the Australian Freethought lecturess is at present in New York where she is proposing to lecture.

That curious paper *The Tuscin* in an article on "Creeds" says "Investigations into the nature of what some people call the Spirit of God, or the universal spirit or the sun's rays—it matters little by what name it is called—have hitherto been characterised, with few exceptions by intense crudeness." Orthodox people will think intense crudeness is displayed in identifying the spirit of God with the rays of the sun.

Kidderminster, the town of Richard Baxter, possesses a paper, the *Shuttle*, which is liberal enough to insert a good Freethought letter on Professor Huxley and the Pentateuch, with the signature "Agnostic."

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for October has as frontispiece, a very good portrait of Judge C. B. Waite, of Chicago, who has written a very able study of Christian Origins, entitled *History of the Christian Religion to the Year* 200. Among notable articles in the magazine is one on "Protoplasm," by T. B. Wakeman, and another on "The Cyrus Story in the Old Testament," by Prof. A. L. Rawson.

The *Independent Pulpit* of Waco, Texas, has interesting articles on Secularisation of Public Schools and Optimism, and an able editorial on Religion. Superstition and Liberalism. It also reprints from our columns Mr. Wheeler's article on Jews and Christians.

De Dageraad of Amsterdam devotes a good deal of its space to book reviews, and in its last number notices Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*, D'Ablaing's *History of Religious Ideas in Mesopotamia*, Dr. Chatelain on the *Alleged Insanity of Rousseau*, and Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Christ and Krishna*.

A Jewish Freethought organisation is to be tried at Liverpool. At this rate the Jews will be Secularised before they are Christianised, despite the thousands a year spent on bringing them to Jesus, and supporting the kind gentlemen who do the bringing.

The Glee-Class advertised on our last page is really in connection with Milton Hall. It has already commenced to meet in the lower hall on Tuesday evenings. As the class becomes fairly efficient it will be utilised on Sunday evenings. This should ensure support. The fee is merely nominal.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures for the Battersea Branch of the N. S. S. on Wednesday, Oct. 15, at 8 p.m., on "The Saviors of Mankind." Some tickets (3d. each) are being sold to defray expenses, and can be obtained at the meeting place. These week-night lectures are a new feature of this Branch, the idea being to engage lecturers who cannot afford to come to a small hall on Sundays. It is to be hoped that Freethinkers in the neighborhood will help to make this experiment a success.

On Thursday evening (Oct. 16) Mr. Foote opens a course of Free Lectures in the East End of London at the Tower Hamlets' Radical Club. His subject will be "Is the Bible Inspired?" On the following Thursday the lecturer will be Mrs. Thornton Smith, her subject being "Secularism." Mr. Moss takes Oct. 23, and "Was Jesus God or Man?" for his subject. Mr. J. M. Robertson winds up on Oct. 30 with a lecture on the "Whitewashing of Christianity."

The London Federation is arranging for another course of Free Lectures at Peckham in the large hall of the Radical Club.

DR. TALMAGE AND "CHESTNUTS."

"Rambler," in *The Canadian Advance*, a Christian journal, referring to Dr. Talmage's recent lecture at Grimsby Park, Ont., says: "An immense and sympathetic audience of thousands greeted him. To say that the great mass went home dissatisfied would be to put it mildly. He talked just fifty minutes and for this received $500, or $5 per minute, and what was given in exchange for this money? Stories that are as old as Methusaleh; hoary-headed old 'chestnuts' that have done service in a thousand forms, from time immemorial. He managed to spend about five minutes in telling the threadbare tale of a man so mean that he utilised a wart on the back of his neck as a collar button. This five minute story netted Dr. Talmage $25. Another of his stock stories was of the man who invited an old friend home to dinner and who notified his wife through the telephone of the fact that Jones would dine with them. In the meantime Jones took his turn at the telephone and heard the indignant housewife cry 'What are you bringing that old fool home to dinner for?' This story, by the watch, cost about $30."

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BIBLE TOMFOOLERY: END OF WORLD: MODERN PROPHECY.

(From the "Liberator.")

If ever a book contained tomfoolery, or silly trifling, the Bible does; and nowhere more so than in its pretended prophecies or foretelling of events long future. This would be amusing enough but for the mischief it does. If all would take the prophets' jokes and their predictions as jests, no harm would ensue. But fanatics and fools regard the Bible all the more solemnly the more it jests and trifles. When the Holy Ghost puts on his cap and bells then it is the dupes of superstition tremble the most.

When Bible writers were bent on the utmost stretch of tomfoolery they sat down and dreamed and manufactured visions, fell into trances, saw the invisible, felt the intangible, heard absolute silence, and allowed their imagination to run riot in grotesque imagery.

If one of them saw God, another would see the Devil; if one figured Behemoth, another dreamt he saw Leviathan; if one saw the Son of God, another would behold a cocatrice, a third a unicorn, a fourth would see beasts overdone with eyes, crowded with horns, and behaving as no circus animals ever behaved. If one prophet foretold the overthrow of a kingdom, another predicted the collapse of an empire, or plunged into foretellings of the end of the world itself, with appropriate music and attendant circumstances.

I must give a few examples of this pious tomfoolery; and the first I mention is the Book of Daniel. It is generally supposed that a man named Daniel lived at the court of Nebuchadnezzar and other kings of Babylon. He was a soothsayer, or Professor of Dreams. The Jews held him up as being the tip-top dream interpreter in the kingdom; and they supposed they glorified their God, their religion and their nation by so doing.

Several hundred years after Daniel's death some Jew wrote a romance, now known as the Book of Daniel—a romance as full of piety, political squibs and Punch like takings-off as can well be imagined. That the book is a romance is plain on its face. Daniel interprets dreams, and even recovers one the king had lost, and expounds the fugitive after bringing him back! Look at the Jew who wrote that stuff, and see how he puts his thumb to his nose and expands his fingers. Hear what he says:—

"You boast of expounding a dream, you unclean gentiles. That is nothing. Any fool can expound a dream when related to him. But my great countryman Daniel could go after a lost dream that the dreamer had forgotten, and restore it first, and then afterwards expound it to the perfect satisfaction of the dreamer! Yea, verily, Amen!"

Not content, the unscrupulous romancer wrote a tale about three of his countrymen, who were put into a fire and came out unhurt, although those who put them in were killed by the heat.

Daniel himself was cast into a den of lions; and the beasts would not eat him.

Nebuchadnezzar became metamorphosed into a nondescript animal, just as many persons in *Arabian Nights* and in Grimm's *Household Tales;* and he ate grass like an ox; and after after all this became king again! Hoodwinked believers have looked for confirmation of this tale in pagan records, in *Æsop's Fables* and nursery books. It is only in romances that such miracles took place.

Well, the tales I have alluded to—the three Jews in the fire, too fireproof to burn; Daniel undevoured in the den of lions, and Nebuchadnezzar's transformation into an ox-eagle-man or man-eagle-ox—those, I say, would be regarded by any impartial critic as more than enough to stamp any book in the world a romance.

This impostor, who wrote in the name of Daniel hundreds of years after Daniel was dead—for even those who escape the fire and dodge the lions somehow do manage to die at last like ordinary mortals—wrote political records in the guise of prophecy, not daring, perhaps, to speak plainly on account of the Antiochian tyrants then ruling his country. He attributed to Daniel a lot of jargon about huge beasts of most unsightly descriptions, and an image he saw in vision, with head of gold, breast of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet of clay.

Out of this stuff modern quacks have manufactured prophecy, predictions of Jesus under the name of the oily one or Messiah; and also predictions of Greek, Roman and other kings and dynasties from the time of Daniel to the very end of the world.

Here you have an exhibition of Bible tom-foolery and also of Christian quackery in trying to expound and apply those so-called prophecies, which were not prophecies at all. Any quack, like the late Dr. Cumming or the living Mr. Baxter, could fix the end of the world from that prediction, and postpone it a hundred times without losing the least credit with the pious rabble.

A note in passing from this topic may put the reader on his guard. No one can read the Daniel romance without perceiving that it was written to glorify the Jews and their religion. Every incident is manufactured to set forth some excellence in their superstition; and that is the design of the whole. "There is nothing like leather" is the motto of the book, and it meets you at every turn. The Catholics could not more industriously sound the praises of their saints than this writer does the virtues of his God and his religion.

And now turn we to Christ. He foretells, according to the gospels, the end of the world; so do his apostles. And here we have predictions that can readily be tested and decided to be either true or false.

He foretells, we are informed, the destruction of Jerusalem; and after describing this event in terrible language, he says: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: then all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in clouds of heaven with power and great glory . . . This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv., 29-34.)

1. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 71. 2. The sun was *not* darkened immediately after; nor has been until now, except in eclipses; the moon has never ceased to give her light as she gave it before; nor has one single star fallen from heaven from that day till now. Rev. iv., 13, shows that the stars were expected to fall upon the earth. Only an astronomer can fully appreciate the absurdity of this part of the prophecy. 3. No powers of the heavens have been shaken since the time mentioned, nor ever will be. 4. No sign of a Son of Man has yet appeared in the heavens; he has not come in the clouds; no trumpet has sounded therefrom, except the thunder; no angels have been seen; no elect have been gathered together and the ends of the earth have not been discovered. 5. That generation passed away, and sixty-subsequent generations have followed them; and still the Son of Man does not appear; his silly predictions have not been fulfilled, though his blind dupes are as stupidly believing as ever. Nothing can open their eyes.

If Jesus ever uttered the words attributed to him, they show him to have been the vainest and most conceited coxcomb that could be imagined. Other insane persons have expected to be kings; but he is probably the only one that expected the universe to be wrecked in honor of his mounting the throne. But if he was a fool for expecting such things to happen, what must be said of those who still expect him to fulfil a promise or a threat that should have been accomplished then in the lifetime of the people who heard it?

Either Jesus is a convicted false prophet; or the New Testament ascribes to him predictions he never uttered. Let the Christians take which alternative they please. There stands the prediction, pledged to be fulfilled then and there; it has never been fulfilled yet, although about 1850 years have fled since it was uttered.

And yet quacks go on expounding Bible prophecy and foretelling the end of the world as if the Bible could be trusted and Christ were an honest and a rational man.

There cannot be the shadow of doubt that the New Testament writers—if they honestly wrote down what they believed—really and literally expected the dead to rise, Christ to appear in the clouds, the general judgment of all mankind; and the total wreck of the universe to take place in their day; they expected to be alive at the time when the angel's trumpet should wake the dead, and when Christ should descend on the clouds of heaven.

Time has falsified all this, fortunately; and the world and the universe go on as if no fanatic had ever trodden the earth's surface.

Jos. Symes.

(To be concluded.)

Sunday school teacher [in Kentucky]—"Johnny, how did the forbidden fruit cause the fall of man?" Johnny—"They made it inter brandy."

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TOLSTOI AND JESUS CHRIST.

COUNT TOLSTOI, following parts of the New Testament, regards love as essentially impure. He seems really to think that there is a love superior to human love; that the love of man for woman, of woman for man, is, after all, a kind of glittering degradation; that it is better to love God than woman; better to love the invisible phantoms of the skies than the children upon our knees—in other words, that it is far better to love a heaven somewhere else than to make one here. He seems to think that women adorn themselves simply for the purpose of getting in their power the innocent and unsuspecting men. He forgets that the best and purest of human beings are controlled, for the most part unconsciously, by the hidden, subtle tendencies of nature. He seems to forget the great fact of "natural selection," and that the choice of one in preference to all others is the result of forces beyond the control of the individual. To him there seems to be no purity in love, because men are influenced by forms, by the beauty of women; and women, knowing this fact, according to him, act, and consequently both are equally guilty. He endeavors to show that love is a delusion; that at best it can last but a few days; that it must of necessity be succeeded by indifference, then by disgust, lastly by hatred; that in every Garden of Eden is a serpent of jealousy, and that the brightest days end with the yawn of ennui.

Of course he is driven to the conclusion that life in this world is without value, that the race can be perpetuated only by vice, and that the practice of the highest virtue would leave the world without the form of man. Strange as it may sound to some, this is the same conclusion reached by his Divine Master: "They did eat, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all." "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

According to Christianity, as it really is and really was, the Christian should have no home in this world—at least none until the earth has been purified by fire. His affections should be given to God; not to wife and children, not to friends or country. He is here but for a time on a journey, waiting for the summons. This life is a kind of dock running out into the sea of eternity, on which he waits for transportation. Nothing here is of any importance; the joys of life are frivolous and corrupting, and by losing these few gleams of happiness in this world he will bask for ever in the unclouded rays of infinite joy. Why should a man risk an eternity of perfect happiness for the sake of enjoying himself a few days with his wife and children? Why should he become an eternal outcast for the sake of having a home and fireside here?

The "Fathers" of the Church had the same opinion of marriage. They agreed with Saint Paul, and Tolstoi agrees with them. They had the same contempt for wives and mothers, and uttered the same blasphemies against that divine passion that has filled the world with art and song.

All this is to my mind a kind of insanity; nature soured or withered—deformed so that celibacy is mistaken for virtue. The imagination becomes polluted, and the poor wretch believes that he is purer than his thoughts, holier than his desires, and that to outrage nature is the highest form of religion. But nature imprisoned, obstructed, tormented, always has sought for and has always found revenge. Some of these victims, regarding the passions as low and corrupting, feeling humiliated by hunger and thirst, sought through maimings and mutilations the purification of the soul. . . .

The story of *The Kreutzer Sonata* seems to have been written for the purpose of showing that woman is at fault; that she has no right to be attractive, no right to be beautiful; and that she is morally responsible for the contour of her throat, for the pose of her body, for the symmetry of her limbs, for the red of her lips, and for the dimples in her cheeks.

The opposite of this doctrine is nearer true. It would be far better to hold people responsible for their ugliness than for their beauty. It may be true that the soul, the mind, in some wondrous way fashions the body, and that to that extent every individual is responsible for his looks. It may be that the man or woman thinking high thoughts will give, necessarily, a nobility to expression and a beauty to outline.

It is not true that the sins of man can be laid justly at the the feet of woman. Women are better than men; they have greater responsibilities; they bear even the burdens of joy. This is the real reason why their faults are considered greater.

Men and women desire each other, and this desire is a condition of civilisation, progress, and happiness, and of everything of real value. But there is this profound difference in the sexes; in man this desire is the foundation of love, while in woman love is the foundation of this desire.

Tolstoi seems to be a stranger to the heart of woman.
—*From "Love the Redeemer," by Colonel Ingersoll.*

"ALL IS FOR THE BEST."

"PRAISE God! from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him! all creatures here below!"
All sorrow is but seeming-woe;
His name be blest!
The end of all things he doth know
To be the best.

Praise God! O spider, when you spy
Entrapped the foolish fluttering fly;
And bid your victim, ere it die,
All thankful raise
To God all-good in heav'n on high,
A song of praise.

Praise God! oh mother! when you see
Your dying babe upon your knee;
And gladly sing with grateful glee
A joyous song.
To grieve o'er what is best would be
Absurd and wrong.

Praise God! O pirate, when you slay
The folk he sends athwart your way;
And let them sing, for well they may,
Since "All's for best."
He bids you speed them on their way
To heav'nly rest.

Praise God! O crafty, rich, and strong,
Ordained to rob the weaker throng;
To you earth's fulness doth belong;
The Lord is good!
May all your victims join your song
In grateful mood.

Praise God! O deaf and dumb and blind!
Blest products of the Master mind;
Rejoice! for he is ever kind,
And knoweth best.
Sounds, speech, and sights, we often find,
Produce unrest.

Praise God! O "Jack-the-Ripper" bold,
From whom your strength and skill you hold;
In whom you "live and move," we're told
In Holy Writ:
Whose mighty arm your knife controlled,
And guided it.

Praise God! O parasites that cling
And live on ev'ry living thing!
O priest! O tapeworm! and O king!
And all the brood!
To God your maker praises sing,
For he is good.

O God—if God there be—we trust
That, after mould'ring into dust,
We all shall rise—if rise we must—
Where all's for *worst*;
Since here, on earth, where "all's for *best*,"
Your work's *accurst*.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Cora—"How meek and lamblike the new minister is!" Dora—"Yes, and what sheep's eyes he casts at us girls!"

John Fryland, a Wisconsin man, sat in a chair under an apple tree, when a swarm of bees settled on him. He kept his nerve for two hours, or until the last one was hived, and he says he did it by repeating the Lord's Prayer backwards. It will be well to bear this in mind and to remember that the Ten Commandments won't do.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. F Millar, "Religion and Civilisation."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Eight Hours Question." Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Saviors of Mankind."

Camberwell — 61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Recent Results in Hypnotism and Mesmerism."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, "Low Wages and Large Families."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mr. G. W. Foote, "Where is the Devil?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7. Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, "The Evolution of Socialism." Tuesday, at 8, Glee class.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. Arthur Lovell, "Signs of the Times."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Uselessness of Prayer."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Salvation."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Freethought in Youth."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand). 11 15, Mr. E. T. Garner, "Man's Soul"; 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Prophecy."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian Sophistry."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Sacred Books."

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Long will lecture.

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Is there a God?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Origin of Species."

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they true?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, I—To be or not to be?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Cresent, 5, tea; 7, concert.

Bradford — Laycock's Temperance Hotel, 3, meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation.

Chester-le-Street — Crown Hotel, 6.30, important business meeting.

Glasgow—Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo Street, 6.30, Mr. Ritchie; "The Finger-post to Heaven."

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, annual general meeting, and collection in aid of Benevolent Fund.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street. — 7; Mr. E. Stanley Jones, "Has God Revealed himself to Man?"

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30 Mr. Riley, "Percy Bysshe Shelley: Poet, Atheist, and Republican."

Newcastle-on-Tyne — 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, fortnightly meeting of members of N. S. S.; 11.30 (and on Wednesday, at 7.30), Sunday Music League.

Nottingham — The Palace, Market Street, Mr. C Bradlaugh; 11, "The Eight Hours Movement: for and against"; 3, "The Right and the Duty to Think"; 7, "The Political Situation."

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Bibbens, "The Spirit of the Age."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, Mr. Pinhorne, "The Sermon on the Mount"; 7, Mr. Hore, "An Evening with Aristotle."

Sheffield Hall of Science Rockingham Street, 7, Mr. Isaac Worster, "Balloons and Parachutes" (with historical illustrations).

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual weekly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Riley, "Has Man a Soul?" Friends are earnestly requested to support these meeting and help to preserve order.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 15, Battersea; 19 (evening) Woolwich; 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park; 30, Tower Hamlets Radical Club.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—Oct. 12 Liverpool.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool,—Oct. 18, Liverpool. Nov. 9, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham — Oct. 12 (morning) Hyde Park; 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Oct 12 (morning) Finsbury Park; 26, Woolwich Nov. 9, Battersea; 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 42.] SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S NEW BOOM.

DEATH is always solemn, and only an unfeeling wretch would intrude on the sanctity of grief. Before the stroke of "the sword that severs all" we stand in mute sympathy with bereaved hearts. Time and, above all, earnest work, will bring an anodyne, and wounds will heal; but meanwhile the sky is darkened, life and its interests lose their savor, the blood flows languidly in the veins, there is a dull pain in heart and head, and the eyes seem to look for something that never comes. Sympathisers are tempted to speak the soft words of condolence that may loosen the spring of tears; but when they find their words in vain, they glide away and leave grief to its sacred solitude.

But when a man chooses to make a parade of his sorrow, and a display of his wounds, he invites criticism rather than condolence. This is our reason for devoting an article to the death and burial of Mrs. Booth. For the lady herself we feel the respect which is due to her for a laborious life in the promotion of what she held to be right and true. We have a certain admiration for her, not as the Mother of the Salvation Army, but as a woman who gave her life to a cause. She may have been mistaken, as we decidedly think she was; but she and her followers quite as decidedly thought the Secular party mistaken, and it is well to recognise energy and earnestness and devotion even amidst the most extreme differences of opinion.

It is to be presumed that Mrs. Booth did not arrange her own funeral. She "assisted" only in the French sense of the word. She was the occasion of the ceremony, but her corpse was dragged hither and thither by those who were bent on making the most of the occasion.

First came the lying-in-state at Clapton, the corpse being brought up for that purpose from Clacton-on-Sea. Not only Salvationists, but the general public, were invited to come and see the dead woman. Thousands did so, many of whom, as we happen to know, care not a straw for the Salvation Army. They saw the long accounts in the daily papers, and such an advertisement would have induced them to go anywhere and see anything. But the collection boxes were no respecters of persons. There was no charge to see the corpse, but there were significant hints that a trifle was expected.

Booth is an inveterate showman. He has a genius for advertising and display, and it did not desert him in his bereavement. The show was admirably planned and executed throughout; nor did the "General" lack the unstinted aid of the press (this being the dull season), and the cordial co-operation of the authorities. Radicals, Socialists, and the unemployed must look to their skulls if they go in procession; but, except for an occasional misunderstanding, Booth has only to intimate his intention of blocking the traffic in the arteries of London and the police are his very humble servants.

After the lying-in-state the corpse was removed to Olympia—already the scene of so many shows, including that of the great Barnum, who commercially is Booth's first-cousin. No effort was spared to score a big success on Monday evening. Officers were ordered up—we presume at the Army's expense—from all parts of the kingdom. The rank and file also were strongly invited, and tickets were available for any number of outsiders. It is calculated that over twenty thousand persons were present, and considering the immense advertising, it does not strike us as a surprising assembly. With regard to the performance we have little to say. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* Tastes differ. What to one man is impressive is to another ridiculous; what is solemn to one man is farcical to another. But we cannot help observing that one part of the performance was calculated to shock every person with any delicacy of feeling. Booth and his kindred stood up to sing around the coffin the hymn they sang around Mrs. Booth's death-bed. Reticence was flung to the winds. The performers seemed to say: "Ladies and gentlemen, you were not present when we sang your Mother to glory, but just look and listen, and you will see how it was done."

Booth will never surprise us after this. We are prepared for anything. The "salvation of souls"—that is, the success of the Army—is to be paramount over everything, over the privacy of affection and the delicacy of sorrow. "Make a show of it" is Booth's advice to those who have any emotion likely to give the Army a fillip.

For a third time the corpse was shifted to Queen Victoria Street, whence the funeral procession started on Tuesday morning. Here again the showman's genius asserted itself. The procession was timed to catch the city employees in their dinner hour. By this means the presence of a tremendous crowd was secured, and the "General" could be seen standing up in his carriage (he occupied it alone) and acknowledging the salutations of the multitude. Ordinary men like to bury their loved ones in peace, and to chew the cud of their private reflections. But Booth is not an ordinary man. Even in a funeral coach he has an eye to business, and his bare head in an open carriage on a foggy day is a typical piece of theatricality.

Booth was followed by the Booth Dynasty. He has known how to marry his family well, from a worldly as well as a religious point of view, and he has managed to put them into all the chief posts. Of course, there will be no mutiny while this plan is carried out, nor, perhaps, while the whole of the Army's property is legally in the family's hands; but the leader's death will cause changes, and his empire will probably split up like Alexander's.

This little family arrangement reminds us of the insults that used to be cast at Mr. Bradlaugh. He had two accomplished and unobtrusive daughters who assisted him in his work, although they were never put into any positions of authority. This fact, however, did not prevent Christians from sneering at the

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"family party." Yet they have no sneers for Booth, who runs a "family party" with a vengeance.

Well, Booth has made the most of his dead wife, and we hope the collections have defrayed the expenses. We do not blame him for being an inveterate showman. He cannot help it. But we do think he trundled that corpse about too glaringly. There are some human feelings which men of all creeds, and no creeds, possess in common, and we doubt if Booth has done the Army any good by flouting them so ostentatiously.

Nothing succeeds like success. Booth has proved that "there is money in it," and money and numbers are too much for the English press. It insults unpopular causes and slavers the successful, and its criterion of success is the cash and plaudits of the hour. Long ago we prophesied that the Salvation Army would succeed in this way. It caters for hysterical people who are sick and tired of the "respectable" forms of religion. But we deny still, as we always denied, that it reforms the thief, the drunkard, and the debauchee. Solitary cases may be adduced, but they prove nothing. The fact remains that, in the mass, the Army is recruited from other sects. Some years ago the Rev. Llewellyn Davies asserted this in a letter to the *Times*. Mr. Davies said he was prepared to prove it in his own parish of Marylebone. He was answered by "Commissioner" Railton, who indulged in the usual vague generalities, which Mr. Davies cut short by asking him to produce the notorious sinners converted in that parish by the Army. Of course they were not produced; for the most part these "converts" exist on paper.

Statistics disprove the Army's pretensions. It boasts of something like two millions. Now if these had been drawn from the moral residuum of England, a serious impression would have been made on the ranks of vice and crime. But what are the facts? Prostitutes are as numerous as ever, the regular thief sticks to his profession, and the drink bill increases.

Revival movements have always boasted of moral successes, but history shows that they make no real impression on the community. The method is unscientific and doomed to failure. A salvation meeting, with its noise and excitement, has as much effect on public morality as a savage's tom-tom has upon an eclipse of the sun. The noisy things in nature are generally futile. Whirlwinds and earthquakes affect the imagination, but it is the regular action of air and water that produces the greatest changes, and the gentle action of rain and sunshine that ripens the harvest. These "spiritual," and nearly always hysterical, agencies for human improvement are based upon a denial of the physical basis of life, and of the scientific doctrine of moral causation. They attract great attention, and their leaders are registered as heroes; but all the while the real work of progress is being done by other agencies—by the spread of knowledge, the growth of education, the discoveries of science, the silent triumphs of art, and the gradual expansion of the human mind. To descend to concrete examples, Arkwright and Watt have done more good than Wesley and Whitfield, Adam Smith than Joanna Southcote, Darwin and Lyell than Moody and Sankey, and Mill and Spencer than Mr. and Mrs. Booth. Agitation is not progress. What is wanted is a new ingredient, and that is furnished by the often obscure men, whose greatness is only known to the few, although their thoughts are the seed of future harvests of wisdom and happiness for the human race.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Buddhism even does not allow that there is a soul distinct from the body. Practically it only recognises the combined being that is seen or is conscious of itself, and that suffers; and it has no explanation beyond."—*G. T. Bettany, M.A., B.Sc., "The World's Religions,"* p. 277.

NOTES ON WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND.

"THOU shalt not suffer a witch to live," is the command said to have been given by God to Moses immediately after the Ten Commandments (Exodus xxii., 18.) Adam Clarke, the great Methodist Commentator says on this, "If there had been no *witches*, such a law as this had never been made," and John Wesley declared "the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible." (*Journal*, May 25, 1768, p. 318, vol iii., works 1856.) Similar threats against witches and wizards frequently occur in the Bible. See (Deut. xviii., 10.11; 1 Sam. xxviii; 2 Chron. xxxiii; Nahum. iii., 4; Matt. iv., 5; Rev. xviii., 23).

The Church at an early period fulminated against witchcraft, sorcery, and magic. Several early trials may be found in W. H. D. Adams's *Witch, Warlock and Magician*. Statutes declaring witchcraft to be felony, without benefit of clergy were passed under Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and that pious witch extirpator James I. Barrington estimates the judicial murders for witchcraft in England in two hundred years at 30,000. The 73rd Canon of the Church of England recognises it by prohibiting the clergy to cast out devils without episcopal authority. Sir Wm. Blackstone in his early edition of his *Commentatories on the Laws of England*, 1765-8, said: "To deny the possibility, nay, the actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery, is at once flatly to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages of the Old and New Testament, and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath, in its turn, borne testimony, either by example seemingly well attested or by prohibitory laws, what least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."*

Mr. F. A. Inderwick, in his *Side Lights on the Stuarts*, p. 125, says, "For centuries in this country, strange as it may now appear, a denial of such demoniacal agency was deemed equal to a confession of Atheism and to a disbelief in the Holy Scriptures themselves." As he says further on, p. 130, "the Church even now requires a belief in the personality of the devil and in the existence of good and bad angels, and it is but a short step further to assert that Satan moves in a mysterious way through the medium of evil spirits having an individuality of their own." As late as 1813 the Church Catechism, as explained by the Rev. J. Lewis, a work which went through many editions, and received the sanction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in answer to the question, What is meant by renouncing the devil? gave the reply, "The refusing of all familiarity and contracts with the devil, whereof witches, conjurors, and such as resort to them are guilty."

It was in the reign of James I., who had, when in Scotland, written his *Demonologie*, that a systematic hunting down of witches, in accordance with Bible law, was entered upon. "Poor old women were walked, swum, shaved, and tortured; the gallows creaked and the fires blazed." It is appalling to think of the hundreds of hapless innocent old women cruelly tortured to death under the influence of this Bible belief.

During the ascent of Puritanism at the time of the civil wars, Matthew Hopkins, of Manningtree, Essex, the notorious "witch-finder," came to the fore, and by his infamous but holy trade caused the judicial murder of about one hundred people in the eastern counties. The test he generally adopted to tell if his victims were indeed contracted to the devil was that of swimming, which James I. recommends with much unction in his *Demonologie*. The hands and feet of the accused were tied together crosswise, the thumb of the right hand to the big toe of the left foot, and *vice versa*. She was then wrapped in a rug and put

* P. 60, 1825 edition.

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into a pond or river. If she sank she was innocent; if she floated, as was usually the case, as her clothes supported her, she was pronounced guilty and hanged forthwith. Dr. Zachary Grey, in his notes to Hudibras, states that between three and four thousand persons suffered death for witchcraft from 1640 to 1660.

In 1664, Sir Matthew Hale, a pious and upright judge, ordered Rose Cullender and Amy Duny to be burnt as witches. Bible-belief betrayed a good man into this atrocity, and has left a stain on a great name. "In New England," says Mr. Inderwick, "the account of this trial and of Sir Matthew Hale's opinion was circulated through the various states, and, coming with the authority and prestige of the Lord Chief Baron, renewed the persecution which was quietly dying out (*Side Lights*, p. 168). A curious instance of the increase of rationalism was that the test of weighing against the Church Bible frequently took the place of the ordeal by water, and thus doubtless many lives were saved.

Two pretended witches were executed at Northampton in 1705, and five others seven years afterwards. In 1716 Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, aged nine, were hanged as witches at Huntingdom. This was the last judicial execution in England, though there was one later in Scotland, at Dornoch in 1722. Juries became less apt to convict and judges to sentence, and in 1736 the punishment of death was repealed, despite the protests of the clergy and the Associated Presbytery of Scotland. Notwithstanding the law, popular investigations occasionally continued. Thus in July 1785, a woman at Mear's Abbey, Northampton, was swum for a witch, but having immediately sunk, was rescued, amid loud cries of "No witch." As late as Sept. 4, 1863, a poor old paralysed Frenchman died in consequence of having been ducked as a wizard at Castle Hedingham, Essex; and on Sept. 17, 1875, an old woman was killed as a witch by a half insane man at Long Compton, Warwickshire.

Those who believe that good alone has been the result of Bible reading, should read something of the history of witchcraft, and remember the computation of Sprenger that during the Christian epoch, no less than nine millions of persons, mostly women, have been butchered for this imaginary offence.

J. M. Wheeler.

CREED AND DEED.

As a matter of fact, is a man more or less likely to steal, or to lie, or to be false to his word or his friend, according as he does or does not lodge or otherwise entertain certain opinions? Where does it begin or end—this puzzling question? No one, surely, will contend that a Unitarian is more likely to commit forgery than a Trinitarian, or that a dairyman who is a Universalist is more certain to water his milk than his rival in trade, who is a black Calvinist. And yet how far may we push this? Where does danger creep in? Sturdy moralists of the Dr. Johnson type have been long accustomed to bid us count our spoons after the visits of Atheists. But do we? It is necessary to ask these questions, painful as they are. There are those abroad, and in high places too, who are interested in maintaining the market value of their wares, and it is only by a critical and even offensive examination into their several pretensions that we can hope to distinguish between the mendacious quacks who vend pills to cure earthquakes, and those wise physicians whose prescriptions can really cool the fevered blood and bid the lawless fancy be still.

It may be said that Agnostics are usually well-to-do, and have besides for the most part been brought up on the "Peep of Day," and the "Fairchild Family." We are told to wait awhile until the poor Agnostic makes his appearance whose childood's hour has known no Isaac Watts, no Mrs. Sherwood. What about one's spoons then? That they may be in danger is certain, but the question is a comparative one. Will they be in any greater danger from the needy Agnostic than from the starving Christian?

M. Bourget in his famous novel *Le Disciple*, has raised this question far above spoons and the mere laws of property. He has imagined a moral monstrosity, justifying his villainies by the negations of a speculative philosophy. Because an amiable old gentleman in his study asserted there was no God, no freedom of will, and that the passions must take their course, the disciple behaves like a rogue, and has his brains most deservedly blown out at the end of the book. Thereupon all the keepers of the hen-roosts begin cackling and screaming; "M. Bourget," say they, "has turned Queen's evidence against the unbeliever. See what will happen if our young men and maidens read Herbert Spencer!"

But villains and even monsters are no new things. Some of the biggest rascals that ever lived were firm believers in a future life and judgment to come.

—"*A. B.*" (*Augustus Birrell*), *in* "*The Speaker*."

A LEARNED JEW ON CHRISTIANITY.

Nearly the whole of the first five centuries of the history of the Christian Church passed away amidst scenes of strife and bloodshed, produced by attempts to enforce the *new* doctrines; and then came the "dark ages," during which ingorance and superstition sat on many a fair land where civilisation and art had reached their temples, long before Christianity was known. No one could take his stand at the opening of the second half of the fifteenth century, and looking back through the vista of the fourteen hundred years passed, could reasonably infer, from the consequences which they have produced, that Messiah's reign had been going on during the whole of this period. If the prophet Isaiah had predicted that the effects of Messiah's advent would be, to let loose the worst and fiercest passions of the heart, to persecute conscience, to banish, to outlaw, and to massacre in the name of religion; to overthrow the monuments of peace, to put out the light of the humanities, and to bring back mankind to a state of semi-barbarism:—such a prophecy might have been considered to be fulfilled, in the condition to which the world had been reduced by dogmatic Christianity, practically dissevered from the ethical element of Mosaism.—*Rev. Professor D. Marks*, "*Sermons*," *2nd series, p. 81.*

GOD'S HOLY NAME.

Schiller had not the courage to tell the whole truth in his weak essay: "The Mission of Moses, respecting the concoction of the name Jehovah—Yao"—which the Egyptian priests only mentioned among themselves. I translate the passage: "Moses harbored one thought, viz., to make the Hebrews acquainted with the god taught in the mysteries of Isis (!) It has been pretty well ascertained that the Egyptian mysteries flourished a long time before Jehovah appeared (*sic*) to Moses in the thorn-bush; it is therefore really remarkable that he (god!) gives himself the very same name (!) which he previously possessed in the mysteries of Isis!" Most remarkable, genial Schiller! A genuine god has only *one* name. An alias is dangerous, and awakens suspicion. Elohim, Yahveh! In case of the divinity, there was certainly no occasion for it.

To a philologist the matter is very simple, and stands thus: The Egyptian priests called God (esoterically)=Iao;* the old Greeks IAΩ=Iao; the Assyrians, Yahu; the Chaldeans יהוה=iaii—*i.e.*, the eternity of eternities, which are *older* than the Hebrew tetragrammaton=יהוה. Yahveh or Jehovah. A claim of originality cannot be set up for the word Jehovah, nor for the *god* bearing that curious name. The Sanskrit root is Dyaus=the air. Thus the divinity of Jehovah-Elohim vanishes into thin air.

Chas. Kroll Laporte.

BUDDHISM AND ATHEISM.

"As to the so-called sacred books of the Buddhists—which it is the fashion nowadays to praise far too highly—let me here express my opinion that they ought not to be reckoned among the Bibles of the world, for true Buddhism is no real religion. It has no God, no Supreme Being, no real prayer, no real clergy. It has no claim to any supernatural revelation.—: *Sir M. Monier Williams*, Speech at Oxford, Nov. 3, 1885.

"Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of atheists never existed, the Buddhist peoples are essentially atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science. Indeed some of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God as supreme ruler."—*Dr. A. Findlater*, art. "Buddhism," "*Chambers's Encyclopædia*," new edition, 1888.

* Or I-ha-ho.

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VERY VAGUE SHEPHERDS.

THE debate on trade morality at the Church Congress cannot be said to have much practical value. It is in dealing with such a topic that the weakness of the average pulpit—the tendency to make religious generalities do duty for sound judgment—is brought into strong relief. Nothing is easier than to preach a sermon in the style of the worthy dignitary of the Church who favored his hearers last week with a catalogue of the evil-doers he would like to punish. There were the men who traded on other people's merits, the luxurious idlers who lived on the labor of better citizens—everybody, in short, who held some comfortable post for which he had not worked. This sort of homily can be manufactured by the yard without the smallest exercise of any practical faculty. Instead of doing good it is apt to excite irritation, and provoke awkward questions. In the list of people who ought to be brought to justice we do not find the clerical pluralist, nor the vicar who leaves his work to a curate with a miserable stipend, nor the professional ecclesiastic who, having obtained preferment by sheer worldliness, cultivates a fine disdain for poor schismatics. It would be well for parsons who discourse about commercial ethics not to lay themselves open to the retort that the Church is a business, that younger sons still enter with as much spiritual fitness as they might display in cotton, and that there is no vice in trade which, at its very worst, is so poisonous to the soul as the cant of a man who wears the uniform of a sacred calling without a spark of its genuine spirit. Clergymen should remember that the organisation to which they belong is not entirely free from reproaches of this kind, before they pass sweeping strictures on the sins of the laity. Suppose a shop-keeper were to turn on the preacher and say, "Why don't you set *your* house in order? You are the servant of an Established Church which grossly underpays some of its most zealous workers, and gives large endowments to idle people; which permits the cure of souls to be bought by the highest bidder, and sold perhaps by a reprobate who inherited the patronage from his father. Don't you think you had better reform the ethics of your own commerce before you preach to us about ours?"—*The Speaker*.

ACID DROPS.

Some candid admissions were made by the Rev. James Owen, the President of the Baptist Union. Speaking to a crowded meeting at Cardiff he said that Christian unity was a dream. "There was nothing in Christendom to indicate it or hold out the prospect of it. The sects hated each other more than they hated sin, and fought against each other more than against an unbelieving world. The church was not a temple, but a Babel, a scene of confusion and strife. It was not a fold, but many folds, and in some of them more dogs than sheep. The infidel critic pointed with the finger of scorn to the wranglings and divisions, and declared that the worst qualities of men were developed when they met under the banner of a religious faith."

The Baptist President stood up stoutly for the voluntary principle in religion, and denounced State inference and State assistance. But he certainly exaggerated the progress of Christianity during the time the primitive Church was a voluntary association. Not more than a twentieth part of the inhabitants of the Roman empire were converted to Christianity in the first three centuries from the death of Christ. It was the patronage of Constantine that secured the triumph of the new faith. Eighteen out of the other nineteen-twentieths of the population were "converted" in a century by the methods of bribery, intimidation, political ostracism, imprisonment and capital punishment.

We see from the *Liberator* that the Melbourne *Evening Standard* has called the attention of the police to a newspaper runner who haunts the streets announcing "a blasphemous publication" called *Letters to Jesus Christ*. We presume this is Mr. Foote's pamplet. Perhaps we shall see from a future number of Mr. Symes's paper whether the bigots have succeeded in suppressing the sale of Mr. Foote's pamphlet in the streets of Melbourne. They certainly will not stop its sale at the *Liberator* office.

The Rev. C. J. Karslake, Catholic priest, of Galashiels, protests against the way in which the clergy are denouncing gambling. He does not, apparently, approve of gambling, but he objects to "false arguments and exaggerations." As to the accusations against bookmakers, that they do not earn their living by the sweat of their brows, the reverend gentlemen said that the same remark could be applied to the ministers themselves.

It seems to us that the clergy never take up any question but they spoil it. Betting is not a thing we are inclined to. We prefer more rational forms of excitement. At the same time we believe it is not true that the majority who do a little betting are simply anxious to get somebody else's money. Probably they would rather win than lose, but what they are primarily seeking is excitement. And we believe you will never stop gambling by legislation or preaching. The only real remedy is the cultivation of a better taste, and the multiplication of more elevating forms of pleasure.

General Kiréef haughtily denied in the *Pall Mall Gazette* that any religious persecution existed in Russia. He is answered by a "Foreign Resident in Russia," who is not so foolish as to give his name. This gentleman says:—"I can testify to having seen Jews turned out of their houses by night, and driven like malefactors in gangs through the snowy streets, in obedience to 'administrative' orders issued against them, for no other crime than that of belonging to the Hebrew race and faith. I have seen husband and wife declared to be living in sin, and their offspring branded with illegitimacy, for having been married by the pastor of the faith which they professed; children torn from their parents for having been baptised under a rite deemed more holy than that of the hated Orthodox Church, while the pastors administering the sacred rite were driven into exile. Even General Kiréef, in the fashionable circles which he frequents in Petersburg, could hardly have failed to hear of the disgrace and virtual exile of a gallant soldier bearing an historic name, not for refusal to join the Orthodox Church, but for bringing up his grandchildren in the Lutheran faith of their ancestors. 'No one in Russia is compelled,' says the General. No, but the hand of the proselytising oppressor rests like Herod's on the new-born babe, and turns the helpless infant into an instrument wherewith to torture the heart of the non-conforming mother, to break down the resolution of the strong man, and to bring grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

What airs the sky-pilots give themselves when they speak of the stage! The Rev. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, addressing a meeting in aid of the Theatrical Mission, said he had sympathy with actors but very little with the theatre. For our part, we have some sympathy with the stage and none with the pulpit. More moral benefit is produced by a good play than by a cartload of sermons. There are moral lessons enough in any one of Shakespeare's plays to give the clergy preaching material until the Day of Judgment.

A pretty quarrel is that between Archdeacon Farrar and Messrs. Cassell. Stung by something he said at the Church Congress, the great publishing firm declare that they have paid him £2,005 for his *Life of Christ*, £4,333 for his *Life of St. Paul*, and £2,400 for his *Early Days of Christianity*. These are handsome figures, far in excess of the real value of the works, which contains a vast quantity of respectable padding. But on the other hand, the Archdeacon asks Messrs. Cassell to be good enough to state *their* profits on the books. They advertised them in a most extraordinary fashion, and the Archdeacon protested against some of their methods as "vulgar and unworthy." This is to his credit, but he did not decline a share of the proceeds.

This at least is very clear. Religious gush pays. It is a capital method of serving the Lord and putting money in your purse. *Our* sympathy is with the poor dupes who were led by the "vulgar and unworthy" advertising to invest their cash in such worthless books as Dr. Farrar's.

From the *War Cry*—"Mrs. General Booth, the beloved Mother of the Salvation Army, Promoted to Glory from Clacton-on-Sea, October 4th, 1890." Promoted to Glory from Clacton-on-Sea is delicious. It beats Sir Timothy Reginald Algernon Bug.

This "Promotion" of Mrs. General Booth is signed by

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Commissioner Railton, who appears to hold the keys of heaven, or else to be on very intimate terms with St. Peter. The impudence of this gentleman is quite superb. Even the Pope of Rome would never undertake to decide whether any soul, even of the greatest saint, had gone to heaven. But Railton is equal to anything.

The Salvationists make nearly all their own things, such as clothes, concertinas, trumpets, tamborines and drums, but it appears that they do not make their own coffins. There would sure to be an immense demand for Salvation coffins. No doubt the General would take weekly payments. Every purchaser would be sure of a front seat in heaven.

After some delay the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's deemed it expedient to hold a special reconciliation service at St. Paul's after the suicide of Edward Easton on Sept. 28 had "polluted and defiled" the building. We do not know if the Holy Ghost has, in the meantime, been absent from the house of God and what was the consequent effect on the services held in the interim. Bishop Temple, in conducting the service, was charitable enough to say "they knew not whether any sin of the deceased contributed to the confusion of the brain." If the Bishop read the report of the inquest he would have learned that Mr. Easton suffered from paralysis, and that he was respected by those who knew him. His Christian insinuation was uncalled for and cowardly.

The Rev. Angus M'Innes, D.D., minister of Clunie, Perthshire, has drowned himself in the Tay. We commend this fact to the attention of the stupid Christians who are still talking about poor Easton.

Mr. Churton Collins has been lecturing before the Working Men's College on the Religion of Shakespeare. He is reported as saying that Shakespeare is characterised by great reverence for religion. This only shows what different notions may be derived from the myriad-minded dramatist. Most pious people who read him find him characterised by a shocking profanity, a profanity irreconcilable with any real belief in religion.

A collector of curiosities at Bombay has a Chinese god marked "Heathen Idol" and a gold coin marked "Christian Idol."

The Rev. Webb Peploe thinks the end of all things is near at hand. All that is wanting is the 144,000 male virgins spoken of in Revelations. It is a long while since addle-headed John of Patmos prophesied the time was near at hand, but the requisite number of virgins have not been gathered together yet.

The Church party has held a big meeting at Exeter to promote the cause of Religious Education. The Bishop of Exeter presided, and the platform was thronged with lesser sky-pilots, prominent Tories, and pious ladies. The Bishop expatiated on the dangers of intellect with "a darkened and defiled conscience." One would think he believes the morals of young people will be destroyed if they are taught the multiplication table without the doctrine of the Trinity or the number of Jacob's sheep. The Earl of Morley followed in a similar vein. The Bishop of London candidly admitted that many school-teachers did not believe the religious instruction they gave. Sometimes they found a splendid schoolmaster who would not say anything about his religious opinions, but he should be put aside for an inferior master who was sound in the faith. Such a declara- is worth noting. It shows that the Church is ready to sacrifice everything else to its own dogmas.

A long speech was made by Mr. A. H. A. Hamilton, who dilated on the way in which Christianity had been attacked and ridiculed by "a man who had occupied one of the highest positions in the State, who aspired to occupy a still higher one, and who might very likely have power to shape the policy of England, to control the education of the country, to appoint Bishops and Deans, and to influence the Church as well as the State." This refers, of course, to Mr. John Morley, and we gain from Mr. Hamilton's speech that the Church party will strain every nerve to prevent Mr. Morley from obtaining power. But we venture to prophesy that they will fail. Mr. Morley is undoubtedly a coming man, and some day or other we hope he will have a hand in wiping the Church of England, as a State religion, entirely out of existence.

The St. Pancras *Guardian* has a gird at the Rev. John McNeill, who wants a big tabernacle like the English Spurgeon. Canny John cannot get the Regent Square deacons to embark in such an enterprise, but he thinks if the Lord would send them a cheque for £50,000 they would be converted. "If the Lord would only pour out his grace upon the world in that fashion," says the *Guardian*, "the conversions would be very rapid; in fact, we fancy such sinners as Messrs. Bradlaugh and Foote, and that swashbuckling controversialist, Bob Ingersoll, would soon come round to Christianity." Of course the *Guardian* is entitled to its joke and free to "fancy," but it does not understand Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote, and Ingersoll. If the Lord were to send us £50,000 we should push the Secular cause with fresh energy, if that were possible, and probably with greater success; and if he wanted the money back, he would have to wait till the morning of the resurrection.

The Bishop's Court at Derry, after investigating charges against the Rev. Mr. Irwin, rector of Kilrea, in connection with one Jane McKeown, finds that he, being a married man but separated from his wife, received the said Jane into his house in the evening and that she stayed with him until the morning. The Bishop has made arrangements for filling Mr. Irwin's pulpit pending the decision of the Diocesan Court in Dublin.

Rumney Parish Church, near Cardiff, has been the scene of a nice little scrimmage between the vicar, the Rev. Morgan Morgan, and his churchwarden. It was all about the blessed trinity of £ s. d. The churchwardens wanted to count the collection and take possession of the trinity. Mr. Morgan objected to this infringement of his holy prerogative.

After the benediction the vicar took up the plate containing the collection bags, and entering the vestry hastily closed the door, putting his back against it to prevent Mr. Bulgin, the people's warden, from entering. That gentleman, however, forced his way into the vestry. The vicar at once dropped the plate on to table, and crammed the collection into his breast pocket. The warden seized the clergyman by the surplice, and an exciting struggle for the possession took place. The choristers, however, rushed to the vicar's assistance, and a disgraceful scrimmage ensued. The vicar was able to escape into the chancel, and thence to the vicarage with the money. It is likely that several cases of assault will arise out of the affair.

The Rev. J. Ramsden, rector of Uffington, has been fined seventeen shillings at the Stamford Police Court for being drunk and disorderly. He appears to be a weighty divine, for it took three constables to convey him to his carriage.

This bibulous parson has an income of £800 a year and a house, and the duty of piloting 462 souls to heaven. Nearly £2 per head is a stiff price. A family of eight would find £15 a handsome addition to its income. The sky-pilot should be settled with, like other pilots, on reaching port.

"I think I have said enough," said the Rev. James Chalmers while delivering an address at Manchester on the needs of Methodism. At that very moment he fell forward, and in a few minutes, without speaking again, he expired. Was this a divine call?

Another minister, the Rev. P. J. Forfar, of Oldham Street Scotch Presbyterian Church, Liverpool, died in the "House of God" on Sunday morning. He was just commencing the communion service when he fell, and he died in an hour without recovering consciousness.

Still another death in church on Sunday! Mr. Thomas Evans, a Calvinistic Methodist deacon, at Chapel Mawr, Denbigh, went to evening service as usual. He was seen to lean backwards suddenly, and it was found that his heart had ceased to beat.

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The church choir of East Barnet threatened to strike if their surplices were not washed by a favorite washerwoman. They gained their point, and now they are "whiter than the snow."

Strikes are extending. They have just had one at a Notting-Hill church. The choir boys struck against the system of fines, and the elders were compelled to surrender. Even religion will not be allowed to sanctify injustice.

In the discussion on betting at the Church Congress, Mr. Sharrock told a good story which did not get generally reported. A bookmaker of whom he knew, who was a regular attendant at church, was one day missed from his accustomed seat. The clergyman met his wife and asked the reason. "John won't be at church to-day," she said. "He has a little betting to do, but he told me he would be with you in spirit."

Wales is more thoroughgoing in its nonconformity than England. It seems that in the gallant little principality there are some seventy Board schools where there is no religious instruction. In England there are only twenty-one, and in most of these the Bible is read, while in many Board schools the Apostles' Creed is taught, though such sectarian teaching is quite contrary to the spirit of the Education Act.

The *Daily News* says of the French priests: "The impudent mendacity which represents them and their Church as living under constant persecution has now ceased to impose on those English and American readers, for whose benefit the reports were well nigh exclusively concocted. Compulsory toleration is about the worst hardship inflicted by the Republic on the Church of Rome in France. Thought is free, religious profession is free, but there is a firm determination to put the priesthood on precisely the same footing as all other Frenchmen in regard to their rights and duties towards their fellow citizens, and towards the State." This is what the Catholic organs have always called persecution. They cry out for toleration and they mean supremacy.

Mr. E. Crossley, M.P., presiding at the Halifax Auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society, pitched into the Rationalists and authors of *Lux Mundi*. There were men, he said, who professed to be Christians, and yet contended that the Book of Daniel was written in the time of the Maccabees. "Such a statement as that was cutting at the very root of the veracity of the Book of Daniel, and could not be allowed upon any consideration whatever." Not even, we suppose, upon the production of strong evidence in its favor, for does not J. C. speak of Daniel as having spoken of the abomination of desolation?

Amid a rigmarole of much nonsense Mr. Crossley gave utterance to one truth. He said "he was afraid we lived in an age when the Bible was never more spread and never less read in proportion to its position and the numbers in which it is distributed." Yet he was appealing for funds to distribute it further. If Mr. Crossley looked more closely into this he might find that the Jew books are comparatively so little read because the world has outgrown them.

Mr. W. T. Stead has a weakness for "knowing" eminent persons. Apparently he had the custody of the late Canon Liddon. Now he tells us of "a leading Freethinker and eminent politician" who once told him that the Atheists, Agnostics and Secularists were all on the wrong tack, and that Booth had done more than all of them put together. Now who is the "leading Freethinker and eminent politician"? He must be one of two, if he is anybody at all—Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Morley. We are sure it was not Mr. Bradlaugh, and we do not believe it was Mr. Morley. May be it was Mr. Stead, who said it to himself, in one of his moments of hallucinative fervor.

A South London Freethinker called one morning on a certain firm doing business with the house he was employed in. The principal of this firm is a fanatical Christian, and having noticed his visitor at a Secular open-air meeting on the previous Sunday, he asked him if he "belonged to that lot." "Yes," was the reply, "I have been a Freethinker for years." "Ah," said the Christian, "I was afraid so. No infidel shall cross my threshold with my knowledge. I won't tell your employer, but if he wants to do business with me he must send someone else." To this the Freethinker replied, "Sir, you may tell anyone. I counted the cost beforehand. This infidel will *not* cross your threshold again. Good morning!"

The *Times* recently had a letter from one "George B.," who was horror-struck at hearing the comments passed upon a German oleograph of the crucifixion exhibited at the West-end of London. One working-man—possibly with a touch of humor—said he thought it had something to do with the Bulgarian atrocities. Another, "a cabby," is reported as saying "I should like just to know now who was there to see the thing done." "George B." was shocked at this display of ignorance in Christian England. But possibly after all the working man and the cabby knew just as much, or a little more, as to the unreality of the crucifixion as "George B." himself.

There are many pious ways of raising the wind, and the Rev. A. Collier, of Chiswick, seems by his extensive advertising to have hit on a successful one. He offers cash prizes of from £5 to 5s. to all correctly counting the letter "h" in the first four chapters of Luke. The entrance fee is only 1s. Apparently this is an easy method of adding to one's income by a simple sum in addition. The question is, how does the Rev. A. Collier pay for his advertisements and devote any surplus to the Church Building Fund, on whose behalf the "easy Biblical competition" is said to be started.

"Consistency," in the *Evening News and Post*, draws attention to the fact that Bibles, Prayer Books, and many religious journals, are printed by "sweating" houses, while Secular journals like the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer* are printed by firms that pay good wages. The *Pall Mall Gazette* also draws attention to the fact, which was set forth in a circular by the secretary of the London Compositor's Society.

Dean Prideaux's *Life of Mahomet*, published towards the end of the seventeenth century, is a sample of learned lumber, yet sometimes it mentions something worth noting. Thus he tells how Al Masaudi exposes "the fraud which the Christians of Jerusalem are guilty of about lighting candles at the sepulchre of our Savior on Easter Eve. For then three lamps being placed within the chapel of the sepulchre, when the hymn of the resurrection is sung at the evening service, they contrive that these three lamps be all lighted, which they will have believed to be by fire from heaven, and then a multitude of Christians of all nations are present with candles to light them at this holy fire, which hath been a fraudulent practice kept up among them for many hundred years."

It appears that the Naples nunnery case has been greatly exaggerated. We gave currency to the newspaper report, and we give the same currency to the correction. It remains true, however, that the Prefect declares the rules of the nunnery to be too severe; in other words, the poor spouses of Christ are subjected to gratuitous mortification and suffering.

The *Times* correspondent still states, however, that the nuns were absolutely isolated, destitute of any occupation, and forbidden all intercourse with friends. Some were apparently in a state of idiocy.

The Great Premier-ship—Noah's Ark.

What are the "net" profits of fishers of men?

Solomon says "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." Yet there are many idle poor who prefer to go to their uncle.

A minister who had been drinking tea at the house of one of his flock, was asked by a little girl what he had been saying before beginning to eat. The minister told her that it was our duty to thank the Deity for his daily mercies. "Oh" said the little one, "my pa just says Goddle mighty, what a supper!"

"George," asked a minister of one of his parishioner's little boys, "Where is your sister Minnie?" "Gone to heaven, sir." "What! is she dead?" "Oh, no, sir; she went to buy a box of matches." "Why, you said she'd gone to heaven." "Well, you said last Sunday that matches were made in heaven, so I thought she went there."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 19, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "Mistakes of Jesus."

October 26, Hall of Science, London.

November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsy; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. MILNER.—The book referred to is included in the so-called Apocryphal Gospels. Hone's edition sells for a few shillings.

S. STANDRING.—The application was remitted to the Organisation Committtee in the usual way, and sanction has been given for a Branch at Tottenham.

A. ANDREWS.—Do you mean that Reuben May, or any such man, has a moral right to get cash from subscribers by pertinacious begging, and to stick to as much of it as he pleases without giving an account? This kind of "charity" no more commends itself to us than it does to Mr. Labouchere.

A. WRIGHT.—Surely the break up of poor Easton's health, consummated by paralysis, is sufficient to account for any "unhappiness" his mother saw. Pious mothers are apt to see great "changes" when their sons turn Freethinkers.

W. WATSON, jun., 120 Upton Park Road, Upton, Forest Gate, E. is frequently at Poplar, and will be happy to hear from C. Turner and others as to forming a Branch there.

HUMANITAS.—Shall appear.

P. W. BALDWIN.—No two persons will express the same thought precisely alike. There is such a thing as hypercriticism.

D. WOODHOUSE.—Jokes are always welcome.

J. R. WILLOCK.—We hope the old lady was satisfied with the answer.

J. NEATE announces a meeting at the Mitford Castle Assembly Rooms, Wick Lane, this evening (Oct. 19) for the purpose of forming a Branch for the district of Bow, Homerton, and Old Ford.

F. WESTERN.—See "Acid Drops."

A. J. FIELD.—It is always a few who do the work in every society. Never mind the other matters; look to your own Branch first. We are sorry, though not surprised, to hear of the refusal of halls for Freethought lectures near Finsbury Park.

HOTSPUR (Motherwell).—Delighted to hear from you as a convert through reading the *Freethinker*. We shall be happy to give publicity to any efforts to form a Branch in your town. Mr. Gilmour is secretary of the Glasgow Branch. See address in Lecture Guide.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION'S FREE LECTURE FUND.—Hall of Science Club and Institute, £4.

W. GILMOUR.—Glad to hear Mr. Bradlaugh's anti-theological lecture at Glasgow was so well attended. Thanks for the cuttings.

QUIZ.—For the facts as to the Alexandrian Library see *Crimes of Christianity*, vol. i., pp. 43, 44, and the references in the footnotes to Gibbon. The library was destroyed by the Christians early in the fifth century, and there is not the slightest proof of the shelves having been refilled. We note your desire to have Mr. Foote's replies to Mr. Gladstone in book form, and a collection of Mr. Wheeler's best articles.

E. HANNATH.—Thanks; but we have seen the report already.

H. STEPHENSON.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

J. H. ROGERS.—We do not know how Mr. Tennyson reconciles the sentiment of "Too late, too late" with "The Larger Hope." (2) Presbyterianism distinctly teaches "eternal torments" in its Confession of Faith, ch. 33 See also *Larger Catechism* answer 29. Many of the Presbyterian Churches in England in the last century became latitudinarian on the subject of the deity of Christ, and some of them fell into the hands of Unitarians.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Federation Francaise Bulletin Mensuel—On and Off Duty—Northern Whig—Society—Church Evangelist—Fritankeren—Western Figaro—Halifax Free Press—St. Pancras Guardian—Cambria Daily Leader—Echo—Colerain Constitution—Belfast Weekly Star—Watts's Literary Guide—Ensign—Portsmouth Evening News—Open Court—Loyal American—Bulletin des Sommaires—Der Arme Teufel.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and Mr. Standring reports a large sale of Freethought literature at the bookstall. Mr. Foote delivers the third of the special lectures this evening (Oct. 19). the subject being "Mistakes of Jesus." This is an entirely new lecture, and should afford the Christian Evidence champions a fine opportunity.

Mr. Forder delivered the third Free Lecture at the Hall of Science, his subject being "Christian Legends." It was a very interesting discourse, and delivered to a good audience. Mr. Foote wound up the course, lecturing to a splendid audience on "Christian and Secular Morality." Some questions were asked, but there was no formal opposition.

Mr. Engstrom declined to send representatives of the Christian Evidence Society for the insolent reason that he would not bring the Secularists an audience. As a matter of fact he never did so; the audience was furnished by the Secular party. The absence of Mr. Engstrom and his colleagues has not affected the meetings, which have been all that could be desired, and the collection at the last was the largest yet taken up.

Mr. S. Standring reports that he has been asked to assist in forming a Branch at Finchley. Mr. Sutcliffe, an active, zealous, business like man, takes the secretaryship of the new Tottenham Branch.

The Assembly Rooms, Old Southgate, have been secured for five Sundays in November. A meeting to make arrangements will be held at Mr. Mison's this evening (Oct. 19) at 7. About £5 will be required for the expenses. Subscriptions can be sent to S. Standring, 9 Finsbury Street, E.C.

The Sunday Lecture Society resumes its afternoon lectures at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, London, to-day (Oct. 19) at 4 p.m. Professor Silvanus P. Thompson, lectures on "Waves of Light." Other lectures, on following Sundays, will be given by eminent scientific and literary men.

The Elsmere Institution, of University Hall, Gordon Square, is organising a number of advanced theological lectures, of which the first series are being delivered by the Rev. J. E. Carpenter in the Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, on "The First Three Gospels and the Early Church."

This Sunday Oct. 19th. a Congress of French Freethinkers is held at the Salle de l'Ermitage. 29 Rue de Jussieu. The means of effecting a complete separation of Church and State will be the principal topic of discussion.

The Belfast *Weekly Star* gives a long account of Mrs. Besant and her recent lectures in Belfast. Of course, her lectures against Christianity are not reported, but much space is devoted to her lecture on "Why We Preach Socialism." We may remark that "We" is misleading. As the lecture was delivered under the auspices of the Belfast Branch of the N. S. S., it seems to imply that the Secular party is committed to Socialism, whereas the Secular party, as such, is purely neutral. Secularists have a right to be Socialists, but Secularism is not identified with any particular form of social agitation.

Since Mrs. Besant became a Theosophist the press has given her plenty of advertisement. You are all right if you have *some* kind of religion. Still, as of old, the conspiracy of silence is against the pronounced Freethought which opposes all forms of supernaturalism, even when they disguise themselves as "supernormal."

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The Hyde Park Branch has for several months conducted lectures at Hammersmith with such success that it is now decided to take that station in hand permanently. The open-air lectures, which will be discontinued at the end of this month, will be resumed next March, and in the meantime lectures will be delivered indoors, commencing with the first Tuesday in November in the Hall of the Hammersmith Club. It is also intended to start an open-air station at Kilburn next March—many promises of assistance having been received from local friends, who will shortly be invited with others to attend a meeting to further consider the matter. In view of these extensions of its work, the Branch has decided to change its name to "The West London" Branch. Friends in Kilburn, or Hammersmith and environs, willing to assist in either district are requested to communicate with either Mr. C. Durrant, 16 Andover Place, Kilburn, or Mr. H. Courtney, 8 Norland Road North, Notting Hill, or with the secretary, Mr. J. F. Henley, 24 Dunster Gardens, Brondesbury.

There are a number of Freethinkers in Walthamstow, many of whom are desirous of doing propagandist work in that district. We have several members of the N. S. S. there, and one of our friends, Mr. H. Maeers, 26 Marion Villas, Union Road, will be pleased to hear from others willing to form a branch.

Mr. E. S. Jones, who has again secured a scholarship at University College, Liverpool, occupied the Branch platform on Sunday evening and delivered an interesting lecture on "Has God Revealed Himself to Man?" He was answered by Mr. George Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society, in a manner which a facetious correspondent calls "not well, but too Wisely."

A gentleman in the West of England orders some of our pamphlets. "I see them advertised," he says, "in the *Freethinker*, a copy of which was put in my letter-box." We hope this fact will encourage the friends who try to promote our circulation.

Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi has a long letter in the *Freidenker* on the persecution of heretics in Germany. It is strange that there should be so little freedom of speech in the land of Goethe, Kant, and Schopenhauer. We cannot help thinking that German Freethinkers would be safer if they kept their propaganda distinct from Socialism. Frau Wilhelmi is an enthusiast who has done excellent work among the more prepared Germans of America. We venture to remind her that Freethought needs workers rather than martyrs.

The National Secular Society's Almanack is in the press. Mr. Wheeler has spent a great deal of labor on the Calendar. In every respect the utmost accuracy is being aimed at. Among the contributors of articles are C. Bradlaugh, J. M. Robertson, R. Forder, G. Standring, A. B. Moss, S. Standring, and the two editors, G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler.

Two fresh numbers of Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances" are now ready—*Jonah and the Whale* and *Bible Animals*. Both have been entirely rewritten, and contain a great deal of matter useful to Bible students as well as the usual exposure of Scriptural absurdities.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
John H. Powe	0	10	6	Samuel Seal	3	0	0
H. Pomeray	0	5	0	Henry Long Jacob	0	10	0
H. C. B.	0	10	0				

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S E.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN GOVERNMENT.—If an angel of the Lord were to strike the balance whether the domain ruled by Severus Antoninus was governed with the greater intelligence and greater humanity at that time or in the present day, whether civilisation and national prosperity generally have since that time advanced or retrograded, it is very doubtful whether the decision would prove in favor of the present.—Theodore Mommsen, *History of Rome*, vol. v., p. 5.

BIBLE TOMFOOLERY: END OF WORLD: MODERN PROPHECY.

(*From the "Liberator."*)

[CONCLUDED.]

And now let us note the leading events foretold, the leading points in the tragedy of the destruction of the universe that ancient and modern saints have gloated over so much. What raptures they have been in over the horrible subject!

They expect Christ to "come down" or descend to earth! Up and down have no meaning out in the universe; but Christ, who made the universe, never knew that. He will appear to all nations at once; "as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matt. xxiv., 27). "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him" (Rev. i., 7).

Nothing could be more paltry and childish than all this. No cloud could be seen beyond 40 or 50 miles probably; no lightning flash would be seen so far; and how far could a man, Jesus or any man, be seen? A couple of miles perhaps. It would take some years for every eye to see Jesus, if he did come—not reckoning the blind eyes.

Oh, this stuff about the end of the world and the coming of Christ is so unspeakably silly that no language can adequately express it. The babies who wrote it were as ridiculous as those innocents who reach after the moon. Christ and his disciples had no idea the world had another side to it. They considered it a small surface that could be seen all at once from a tall mountain or from the clouds. Poor babies! And those are things people worship. If Jesus had been taught geography, we should never have had his predictions of the end of the world. He made them because he knew no better, and because his vanity got the better of the little judgment he had.

The stars shall fall upon the earth! O, gemini! Could the roof of the Exhibition Buildings fall upon a flea? As well as one star, not to name them all, could fall upon the earth. Even the planets, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, are each far larger than the earth, Jupiter being 300 times as big.

Many of the stars are far larger than our sun. Were the sun but pushed away to the same distance as an average-distance star, he would appear to be only as bright as one of them. Distance would not lend enchantment to the view, but the reverse.

And when all this is considered, we see the absurdity of the talk about the stars falling upon the earth as figs from a tree shaken by the wind! This implies that they were supposed to hang on to the firmament, another absurdity of the Bible.

Worse still. Jesus evidently had no conception of gravity. What is it? A magnet attracts bits of iron-filings, say; and they fall in upon it from every quarter; and the earth is somewhat similar—it attracts things to it; and those things near its surface fall to the ground. Jesus thinks because figs fall, the stars may also! Being totally ignorant of gravitation, he had no idea that a thing or a person *falling* towards the earth from a good distance outside the atmosphere, would go round and round the earth as the moon does. The moon can never reach the earth; nor could anything else, except it came down in a straight line.

Poor Jesus thought men could fly up to heaven and fly down again because birds could fly about over our heads. The birds can fly in a dense atmosphere, but not in the upper regions of it, because there it is too thin, and too cold as well. Jesus never knew this.

Thus we show the absurdity of the Bible respecting the end of the world.

And further, the Bible writers expected the heavens would pass away with a great noise and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth and its works to be burnt up. (2 Peter iii., 10.)

This is grandiloquent nonsense. There are no heavens to pass away; and can therefore make no noise in going. There are no elements there to melt The stars are all fervently hot as it is—all not merely melted, but in a state of vapor. And you cannot melt vapor! The earth burning up is another absurdity. It is cooling down. Once it was incandescent; and may be again; but it cannot burn up and be consumed.

And what would become of the refuse? If the earth burnt up, a large quantity of oxygen would be required to burn it; and when the process was complete the earth would be much larger and heavier than before.

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If Jesus and his friends had but known astronomy and the rudiments of chemistry, they could not have made such fools of themselves and others; and this stuff about the Judgment Day would never have been heard of by most people.

The effects of this teaching has been most disastrous and demoralising. It has led people to prepare for it—by neglect of everything earthly, to the enormous enrichment of the priests, who have netted unnumbered millions of money by this gross and ridiculous superstition. It has driven millions mad both morally and intellectually, and millions of others have gone to bed every night for years expecting to hear the midnight trumpet announcing the end of the world.

For nearly 2,000 years the quacks have preached it and grown rich upon the spoil; again and again has the date been postponed; on hundreds of occasions have people been mad enough to go out to meet Jesus from heaven, only to return home in disappointment and despair.

Fortunately, the very Churches are sick of it or treat it as a joke, forgetting that they treat Jesus as a joker in so doing. Never was a greater quack known than Jesus. And if you reject the doctrine of the end of the world, you treat him as a quack.

Whether men should be permitted to preach such rubbish is a question. I think they should: but all rational men should laugh them to scorn. In this way the fanatics may in time be relieved of their nonsense, or at least the next generation produce a smaller crop of them.

When a man preaches the end of the world and begins to expound prophecy, you may be sure he is a rogue who ought to be imprisoned, or a fool that should be sent to an asylum.

Jos. Symes.

THE PROPHET AND THE WIDOW.

Tune—"Lord Seaforth's Strathspey."

Of all the holy men of God
  We read of in the Book,
You'll hardly find Elijah's match
  Who dwelt by Cherith's brook.
We know nought of his parentage
  Or where he went to school;
But if the tale we read be true
  Elijah was no fool.

He never was in love with work,
  He scorned to plough and sow;
But sat upon the streamlet's bank
  Depending on a crow
To bring him wherewithal to fill
  His godly little pod.
Dame Fortune always seemed to smile
  Upon the man of God.

To show his loving kindness in
  The best way that he knew,
The Lord cut off the rain supply
  And settled many a Jew,
And horses, oxen, sheep and goats
  Were dying by the score,
To prove his tender mercy which
  Endureth evermore.

Was this because their ancestors
  Had climbed an apple tree?
Or was't because to gods of wood
  They'd learnt to bow the knee?
Perhaps some "brother in the Lord"
  Will work the problem out,
And rid such simple minds as mine
  Of "philosophic doubt."

The prophet sat beside the brook
  Till it was nearly dry,
When lo! a word came down to him
  From out the cloudless sky,
"Arise Elijah, take your hook.
  In Zarephath you'll find
A buxom widow, young and fair
  Exactly to your mind.

I've told her to supply your wants,
  But mind what you're about,
For nearly all my fav'rite sons,
  Though ever so devout,
Fall victims to the women's wiles
  And set Dame Scandal's jaw
A-wagging at the holy men
  Who so forget the law."

The prophet soon was on his pins,
  His togs were always packed,
His luggage never hampered him—
  He'd none at all, in fact.
When he arrived at Zarephath
  Said he "I'm in a fix,
Where is that widow? Oh! she's there
  Out picking up two sticks.

"What ho! good dame, some water, please,
  My burning thirst to slake;
But first, pray, bring me in thine hand
  A little piece of cake."
"As God the Lord shall be my judge,"
  The widow sadly said,
"I've hardly got sufficient meal
  To make a loaf of bread."

Elijah struck an attitude—
  "Go make the cake," cried he;
"The Lord of Hosts will find the meal
  To feed thy boy and thee."
The widow did as she was told,
  And, says this wondrous tale,
Her meal-tub wasted not at all,
  Nor did her oil-can fail.

And, till God in his mercy sent
  The rain upon the earth,
The prophet made himself at home
  Beside the widow's hearth.
Though holy men have somewhat changed
  This fact remains, at least,
That now, as then, the women-folk
  Sustain the Godly priest.

T. Clarke.

THE JEWS AND THE PIGS.

"The attitude of the Jews to the pig was as ambiguous as that of the heathen Syrians towards the same animal. The Greeks could not decide whether the Jews worshipped swine or abominated them. On the one hand they might not eat swine; but on the other hand they might not kill them. And if the former rule speaks for the uncleanness, the latter speaks still more strongly for the sanctity of the animal. For whereas both rules may and one rule must, be explained on the supposition that the pig was sacred; neither rule must, and one rule cannot, be explained on the supposition that the pig was unclean. If, therefore, we prefer the former supposition, we must conclude that, originally at least, the pig was held to be sacred rather than unclean by the Israelites. This is confirmed by the fact that down to the time of Isaiah some of the Jews used to meet secretly in gardens to eat the flesh of swine and mice as a religious rite (Isaiah lxv., 3, 4; lxvi., 3, 17). Doubtless this was a very ancient rite, dating from a time when both the pig and the mouse were venerated as divine, and when their flesh was partaken of sacramentally on rare and solemn occasions as the body and blood of gods. And in general it may be said that all so-called unclean animals were originally sacred; the reason why they were not eaten was that they were divine."—*J. G. Frazer*, "*The Golden Bough*," vol. ii., pp. 52-53.

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REVIEW.

Congrès Universel des Libres-Penseurs Tenu à Paris du 15 au 20 Septembre, 1889. Compte-Rendu Officiel de la Commission du Congrès. Paris: E. DENTU, 1890; pp. 384. Four Francs.

THOSE who took part in the Freethought Conference held in Paris in the centennial year of the great Revolution, will naturally be pleased to see this bulky momento of the labors of the Congress. Others may doubt if there is any sufficient justification for the great expense attending such a publication. We suppose this will, in part at least, be defrayed by the generous contribution of the Paris Municipality, towards the promotion of the Congress.

The *Comte-Rendu* gives a report not only of the business of the Congress, but of what may be called its diversions in the shape of the reception by the Paris Municipality, the visits to the monuments of Dolet, Diderot, and Voltaire, and to M. Guimet's Musée des Religions; the presentation of the bust of Paine by Mr. Truelove, and the banquet and ball which concluded the affair.

It gives the full list of 235 Societies and Federations represented, with the names of delegates, and an abstract of the papers, reports, and speeches brought before the Congress. Some of these were of considerable value. Others might have been omitted without much detriment.

Among the affirmations of the Congress were that religions had become obstacles to human progress, ("*Toutes les Religions sont Immorales*" is inscribed as a motto on the cover of the report); that the method of observation is the one method of discovering truth; that morals must have in view human welfare, the extension of human life and conscience; and that education must be given without any mixture of the supernatural. Resolutions were also passed in favor of the equality of women in civil and political rights, and in favor of the secularisation of hospitals, funerals, and institutions now partially religious.

It will be seen that the International Freethought Congress of 1889 was like its predecessors, frankly atheistic. Although very much was not done in the way of putting International Freethought on a business footing, the Congress at least brought Freethinkers from all parts of the world into intercommunication, and has left as one of its results the establishment of a new French Federation of Freethinkers. The volume, like all the publications of E. Dentu, is excellently printed, and although we note a few misprints of foreign names, these are neither numerous nor serious.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

Great surprise seems to be manifested because the social question has absorbed so much of the attention of the Church Congress. Yet it is but a harking back to the old lines of the Church of England when such prelates as Latimer protested against the greed of the nobles who were starving the peasantry—perhaps we might say it is a harking back to the still older lines of the Early Church, when Christianity was spread over the Roman Empire quite as much by its Socialism as by its divine inspiration. These were times when a St. Ambrose declared that "usurpation had created private property," and when St. Jerome averred that "every rich man is either an evildoer himself or the son of an evildoer." We need not, however, fear that the bishops of our time will go as far as St. Jerome. They are themselves rich men. But it is quite clear that the regular and irregular priesthood —the bishops and dignitaries as well as officers of the Salvation Army — now admit that Christianity will no longer be accepted by the working classes unless, like the proverbial pill, it is thoroughly well sugared. Hence the rivalry between the Church and the Salvation Army in devising means for making life comfortable for the poor before they attempt to convert them. The old idea of using the Gospel as a social anodyne, by which the working man might be reconciled by the pleasures of hope to the miseries of experience is dead. The Church finds that it is a failure to offer the Catechism instead of bread to labor, or to preach a gospel to the working man the leading idea of which is that he must, in a spirit of Christian self-sacrifice, acquiesce in his own degradation. In our own time a similar attempt to graft the ideas of Socialism on Christian teaching was made not long ago by Kingsley, Maurice, Hughes, and Ludlow without satisfactory results. In Germany the late Baron von Kelleler, celebrated as Bishop of Mayence, started recently a Catholic Socialistic movement. But the main result is that when the priests make the Christian individualist a convert to Socialism, the Socialists soon develop him into a stiff agnostic.—*Weekly Dispatch.*

A quiet animal not in the Ark—a clothes horse.

Mr. Mayhew, in his *London Labor and the London Poor*, gives an account of a conversation on religion with a costermonger-girl, who said, "They do say as God made the world in six days. Now I should have thought it would have taken him a fortnight to make England alone."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7, Mr. T. Thurlow, "The Religion of Jesus and the Test of Death." Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, Mr. Dipper opens discussion on "Trade Unionism: Old v. New."

Camberwell — 61 New Church Road, S.E., 4.30, quarterly meeting; 6, tea and soiree (members 6d., non-members 9d.)

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mistakes of Jesus."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Besant, "The Life of Jesus Christ." Monday, 8.30, social gathering for members and friends.

West Ham — Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 16.30, members' quarterly meeting: 7.30, The President, "Secularism and Christianity."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Poets of Progress."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Norrish, "Christianity and Progress."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "From Creeds and Priests good Lord deliver us."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Freethought in Manhood."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand). 11.15, Mr. J. Rowney, "Genesis"; 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God: Where and What?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Old Southgate—At Mr. Mison's, 7, Mr. Sam Standring.

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "The Origin of Religion."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Man's Place in Nature."

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews March from Egypt."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, I—Who Steals my Purse?"

COUNTRY.

Glasgow — Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo Street, 6.30, Mr. J. Macluskey, "Individualism and Socialism."

Hanley — Secular Hall, 51 John Street, Mr. J. Hooper, 11, "Birth, Life, and Death of Jesus Christ"; 7, "How I became an Atheist and why I remain one." Two children to be named after the evening lecture.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Perpetual Pensions: Now and 1974"; 3, "Hypatia"; 6.30, "Responsibility from a Secular Standpoint." Admission free; discussion invited.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—3, discussion class: 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Daniel."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. H. Smith (of Leeds), "Social and Anti-Social Reforms."

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. Clifton, "Agnosticism: From an Inquirer's Point of View."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, Mr. Hore, "Hypnotism"; 7, Mr. Pinhorne, "City of the Sun."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, 11, "The Eight Hour's Movement, For and Against—by Law or Civilisation, Which?"; 3, "Myths in Religion"; 7, "The Political Situation."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. H. Smith (of Leeds), "Devolution v. Evolution."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E. —Oct. 19 (evening) Woolwich; 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park; 30, Tower Hamlets Radical Club.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool. —Oct. 19, Liverpool. Nov. 9, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Oct. 19 (morning) Battersea Park, (evening) Battersea Secular Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Oct, 26, Woolwich. Nov. 9, Battersea; 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 43.] SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH WANTS A MILLION.

"GENERAL" BOOTH is an enterprising man. He follows up the grotesque advertisement of his wife's funeral parade by the publication of a vast scheme of social reform in which he is prepared to act the *rôle* of regenerator of society. The book in which he sets forth his scheme was hurriedly announced to be on sale on Monday, but on application could not be obtained. Writing, therefore, simply from newspaper advance reports of the contents of the volume, I do not propose to enter into the details of his scheme, even if this were the place to do so. It appears to contain nothing new. Owen, Fourier, Cabet, and others stigmatised as infidels, have sought to establish self-supporting colonies. My friend Mr. E. T. Craig, who has shown what could be done at Ralahine, is referred to by General Booth, but he seems unacquainted with what has been done in German agricultural colonies. He appears, indeed, not to enter upon those root questions of population, heredity and education, which move thinkers like Morison, Huxley and Laing, but simply deals with those palliatives which philanthropists and charitable bodies have long attempted to apply, with nett results extremely dubious to reflecting minds. But "General" Booth is a shrewd, practical man and a capable organiser. He knows what will take, and we may rest sure his schemes will receive all the attention they merit.

What is noticeable is this. In appealing for a huge sum of money Booth finds, after long experience, he must offer something more than promotion to glory hereafter. He has to offer material means to attain secular improvement in this world. He has to offer to improve the condition of the masses. He has to enter on projects for which the Salvation Army was not designed, and from which it for some time kept aloof.

After the divine truths of Christians have been preached for eighteen hundred years, after twenty-five years of the Salvation Army preaching of the Gospel, it has come to this, that "General" Booth draws a picture of the state of vice and wretchedness in England that makes Darkest Africa almost shine in comparison. He tells us that a tenth of the population, or roundly, three millions of people, are submerged in sin. The condition of the homeless, the out-of-workers, the harlots and the drunkards, is depicted as so terrible that no one less than "General" Booth himself, with a million of money and an immense army at his command, can grapple with the problem. What is this but an indictment of the Christian churches and the religion which has left the people in so pitiable a state. It is indeed an indictment of od himself. "General" Booth says, as quoted in the *Daily News*:—

> "I am quite satisfied that these multitudes will not be saved in their present circumstances. All the clergymen, home missionaries, tract distributors, sick visitors, and every one else who care about the salvation of the poor may make up their minds as to that. If these people are to believe in Jesus Christ, become the servants of God, and escape the miseries of the wrath to come, they must be helped out of their present social miseries."

Let the reader consider this. He will see much sound sense in it. Secularists have never ceased urging that the needs of this world must take precedence of all others, and "General" Booth has apparently come round to their opinion. But what does his mixture of theology mean? It means simply this, that God has left masses of his creatures in such a position that they cannot escape "the miseries of the wrath to come," unless the Salvation Army first takes care of their bodies and afterwards of their souls, for Booth is careful to qualify the secular sense of the above by saying that religion is his only hope for the permanent deliverance of mankind from misery either in this world or the next.

Booth wants a million. A good round sum. Perhaps he will get it. Thousand pound cheques are already rolling in. In this wealthy country there are hosts of people with more money than they actually know what to do with, who are lamentably conscious they did not produce their wealth and that they are living in luxury while others are starving around them. To give to any scheme which promises to do good, without investigating the ultimate results of their gifts, offers an anodyne to their consciences, and may even prepare the way to riches eternal, since "he who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." I would far rather see a million spent on the effort to grapple with human misery than in the worship of God. Even if the one proved as chimerical as the other, it should at least offer a better lesson to future generations. The cash asked for by Booth is after all petty compared with the vast revenues annually wasted on religion. But there is always the danger in a secular undertaking conducted under a religious organisation, that the humanitarian will give way to the pious enterprise. This little life is so petty compared with an eternal one, that its misery must appear as nothing in comparison with the chance of eternal misery. The truth is Secularism and Religion will not mix, and Booth's blend will have no more efficacy than others which have preceded it. Either the secularism will destroy the religion or the religion the secularism. Booth's scheme will give fresh *éclat* to the Salvation Army, and make it more than ever the resort of those unfit for the conditions of modern life. But of its ultimate results being for the benefit of humanity I am not over sanguine.

"General" Booth, it must be remembered, is the tortoise on which the Salvation Army world rests. When he, in the cant phrase of the Army, is "promoted to glory," what guarantee have those who made their cheques payable to him that the work will continue? His sons and heirs may have every disposition to carry it on, yet lack that great organising power which their father undoubtedly possesses and which is essential to the success of his schemes. Many without confidence in the schemes themselves will yet look forward to their results with interest and attention.

J. M. WHEELER.

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LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—XI.

On "What is the Bible?"

To Archdeacon Farrar.

Sir,—I propose to discuss your lecture on "The Bible: What Is It?" The lecture was delivered to an audience of young men, on a Sunday afternoon, in the City of London. It is now extensively circulated as a penny pamphlet. Its style is popular—not to say free-and-easy—and my criticism shall be equally informal.

I see by the title-page that you are Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, Archdeacon and Canon of Westminster, and Rector of St. Margaret's. I also observe that you have been offered the Chaplaincy of the House of Commons. Without this, however, your pluralities bring you nearly £1,500 a year, and it is a matter of public information that your various writings have brought you many thousands of pounds. These facts may account for the weight you discover in no very massive arguments; and if, as your Church declares, belief is amenable to will, it is far from difficult to understand the decisive pressure of a handsome income in one of the scales of judgment.

In your exordium you bespeak sympathy on account of "the fatigues of a London clergyman's Sunday." Few men, however, can be persuaded that clergymen are a hard-worked body. Their fatigues are nothing to those of some lawyers and many doctors, nor comparable to those of millions of poor men who work laboriously for a scanty maintenance. Some men work six days and rest on the seventh; others work on the seventh day and rest on the six.

Your opening remarks on the Bible command my assent. The Bible is not a book, but a literature; not the work of one man, but perhaps of a hundred. I cannot, however, agree with your statement that it includes "all that remains of the library and the literature of God's ancient people, the Jews." The New Testament does not fall into this category, and Protestants exclude the Apocrypha from the Old Testament. Perhaps you will call this hypercriticism, but accuracy is a valuable virtue, and a well-paid public teacher should be careful in his statements.

"Many of the sacred books of the world," you say, "were written by single men." This is a sweeping allegation. You instance the Koran, but how many more could you mention, if we exclude the philosophies of Confucius and Lao-tse? Even the Koran was not entirely the work of Mohammed. Sale admits "it is highly probable that he had no small assistance in his design from others, as his countrymen failed not to object to him."

You speak of the Bible as a Jewish book from Genesis to Revelation, and of its composition as covering a period of "something like fifteen hundred years." Allow me to ask the meaning of "something like." Do you assert that any portion of the Old Testament can be dated twelve centuries before the birth of Christ? Are you prepared to maintain this assertion in debate, or even to make it in the presence of competent scholars? Will you also maintain the Jewish authorship of the whole of the New Testament, which is written in Greek? Neither you nor any man knows the real authors of half of the Epistles, and the First Gospel betrays a striking ignorance of Jewish laws, manners and customs.

David and Solomon are spoken of as Bible authors. Do you believe this, or were you following the law of "accommodation"? Would you like to assert the Davidic authorship of the Psalms against Kuenen or Wellhausen, or even against Oort or Hooykaas? Are you ready to break a lance with Renan? And if not, why not? Surely it is undignified to make rash assertions before city young men, which you would hesitate to champion before scholars and critics.

You have yourself admitted, in your Life of Solomon, that his authorship of the Canticles is "in the highest degree improbable." Luther allowed, what subsequent criticism has established, that he did not write Ecclesiastes. Every scholar regards it as a post-exile production, and with this judgment you concur in the work I have mentioned. Canon Cheyne confesses, and you have not disputed his conclusion, that "it is indeed a pure hypothesis that any Solomonic element survives in the Book of Proverbs." In fact, the ascription of a volume of Proverbs to a single man is perfectly ludicrous. Proverbs have well been called the wisdom of many and the wit of one; but the one is found in different ages.

What, then, becomes of your "great King David and King Solomon, authors of the Bible?" Were I of your church, as happily I am not, I should blush to see one of its leaders practising on the credulity of an ignorant audience.

Still, your statement holds good, that the Bible was written by many hands. You declare this to be "an immense advantage." And it is so, if the writing is human. We gather, in consequence, a more faithful idea of the superstition of ages and the growth of mental and moral culture. But if the writing is divine, what advantage is derived from the multiplicity of scriveners? The real author, in that case, is God, who is not susceptible of development; and, being almighty, he could as easily inspire one man to write a hundred books as a hundred men to write one.

You next proceed to declare that "the Bible is not all on the same level of value, it is not all equally sacred, it is not all equally authoritative, it is not all equally divine." I agree with a portion of this; from the rest I dissent. Different parts of the Bible, as of most other books, are of different value, and in that sense of different authority; but how can different parts of a "sacred" volume be of different sacredness, or of different divinity? If you mean that the Bible is partly inspired, and partly uninspired, partly God's word and partly man's, I ask you who is to decide their relative proportions? How is it that the churches do not separate the divine and human elements from each other, and publish them separately or print them in different types? I suspect they dare not venture on such an experiment. The attempt would only lead to acrid and endless discussion; what one party would reject another would retain; and unanimity on this matter could only be produced by the operation of a greater miracle than any which is recorded in Scripture.

"There is the greatest possible difference," you say, "between the morality of some parts of the Old Testament and some parts of the New." Precisely so, and the difference is as great between various parts of either Testament. This is to be expected in human compositions ranging over several centuries, but how strange in a volume inspired by absolute goodness and infallible wisdom! Has the Deity his moments of lassitude and indifference, or is he subject to the darker frailties of mankind?

You approve the method of picking and choosing from the Bible, and refer to reason and conscience as our guides. I acknowledge them as *my* guides, but I deny that they enable me to discriminate in any document the human element from the divine. They enable me to discriminate between true and false, and good and bad; but how am I to tell at what point the true and good rise above human capacity, or at what point the false and bad sink beneath the capacity of the Power you assert to be the ruler of the universe? I have no criterion and you afford me none. I will go still farther, and declare that I never met with a sentence in the Bible which is superior to whatever I have read in the writings of profane poets and philosophers, although I have met with many sentences that Plato or Homer, Bacon or Shakespeare, would never have stooped to write or been base enough to conceive.

You tell me that slavery was permitted in the Old Testament, but is "forbidden by the spirit of the

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New Testament." The *spirit* of a book, however, is never exactly the same to any two readers. All that can be discussed is the *letter*. This is sufficiently voluminous, and I ask you to point to a single passage in the slightest degree reprehending the institution of slavery.

With respect to polygamy you grossly misrepresent Christ's answer to the Pharisees who questioned him on the subject of divorce. Nothing was said on that occasion about polygamy. "May we not marry many wives?" was not the question, and "I do not allow it" was not the reply. *You* have inserted these items, and it furnishes another illustration of your *accuracy*, and of the *critical* character of your audience.

Similar looseness prevails in your treatment of the Bible as an authority. You refer to "things which are no longer binding on Christians." Nay, you say of such things "They are not the Word of God to us." But the "us" is not defined, and the moment you attempted to define it you would be face to face with the fact that you are only speaking for yourself. If there are any portions of the Bible that are not the Word of God to Christians, why do they not plainly specify them? And if such portions are "no longer binding upon Christians," will you state when and why they ceased to be binding. Further, if they are not the Word of God "to us," were they ever the Word of God to others? If they were, you must allow that those who held them to be such were deceived, or that what is the Word of God in one age ceases to be so in another. The first alternative involves the possibility of *your* being mistaken, and the second is either a gross absurdity, or it "makes the Word of God of none effect" by subjecting it to earthly vicissitudes.

It is idle to put these objections aside by remarking that "We do not know'" and "We do not understand." No doubt there are many things you do not know, and many you do not understand; and this is an excellent reason for silence until you are better informed and more sagacious; but it is a very poor reason for expecting inquiry to be dumb and reason to shrink abashed in your presence.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

JOURNALISM AND SCEPTICISM.

A CONFERENCE in connection with the "Christian Association" has recently taken place at Southport, and its otherwise profoundly unimportant proceedings have attracted some measure of public attention in consequence of a discussion which turned upon the question whether newspaper men are in the main a body of sceptics. Of course, the parsons—who can agree upon nothing—disagreed upon this interesting point. The president (Dr. Moore) quietly assumed *his* case, after the manner of his kind, and asked "how it was that newspaper reporters as a rule were sceptics, and that newspapers themselves were managed by sceptics?" The president was checkmated by a Cheltenham parson, who, speaking from alleged experience in connection with a number of provincial journals, contended that these at least "had on their staff a number of reverent, earnest, godly young men who were delighted to give the fairest and best reports of Christian meetings."

The rev. gentleman from Cheltenham must be a singularly ingenuous person. His acquaintance with journalism certainly cannot be of a practical character, or he would not suggest that it rested with the "reverent, earnest; godly," young reporters to decide whether their reports should be long or short. It is the editor or sub-editor who determines that question; and, in London daily journalism at least, the reporter's instructions often specify the number of lines which he is required to furnish.

What are the facts relating to the prevalence of scepticism amongst journalists? To answer this—so far as my own experience enables me to answer it—the matter must be divided into two distinct parts: (1) the management and policy of a journal; (2) the individual opinions of journalists themselves. With regard to the first point, it may be said that everything, or nearly everything, depends upon the influence of a given line of policy upon the circulation of the paper. For example, the professing Christians in this country are vastly more numerous than professing Secularists. Therefore, the editor of a daily paper will give four columns to a report of the proceedings of a Church Congress, while he will not devote four lines to a conference of the N. S. S. But imagine these conditions to be reversed: then you will find the papers competing against one another to furnish the fullest and best reports of our Conferences, while Christ and him crucified would be left out in the cold. There is one class which the editor of a daily paper invariably regards as the class to be considered, catered for, and truckled to; that is the *buying* class, to which the advertiser appeals. When the purchasing class cease to read a paper, the advertisers desert it, since their advertisements are useless. When the advertisers desert a paper, all that that paper requires is a decent funeral. If the Freethinkers of Great Britain could furnish a daily paper with 100,000 readers, capitalists would be tumbling over one another to "fill a long-felt want." When, therefore, —to quote Dr. Moore—it is found "that if some man was announced to make a speech upon agnosticism, the news reporters would all be there, and an account would appear in the next morning's dailies; whereas in the case of a Christian convention, perhaps they would be dismissed with a paragraph;" the simple explanation is that the editor believes that a full report of a lecture on agnosticism will be more interesting to his readers—and will therefore more beneficially influence his circulation and revenue from advertisements—than a full report of a Church convention. In fine, where newspaper proprietors find that the bolstering-up of religion is not commercially profitable, then they drop religion with the celerity usually associated with a hot potato. The newspaper editor believes in one God—the Supreme, Omnipresent ADVERTISER, manifesting Himself chiefly through two channels of revelation, pills and soap. Every "able editor" is concerned chiefly with the service, directly or indirectly, of this majestic Being.

(2). The private opinions of journalistic "as sich" do not affect to any great degree the policy of the papers for which they work. You will find Freethinkers and Socialists galore upon the staffs of important newspapers, writing leaders and other articles which do not express their own ideas, but the views with which the paper itself is identified. For example, a few years ago the editor of a flourishing Tory and Religious organ in the provinces told me that he personally was a Republican and an Atheist. He sold his skilled labor to his employers at the market-price; and, he added, "if the readers are fools enough to believe what I write, so much the worse for them!" I told him I considered intellectual prostitution of that kind to be more detestable than physical prostitution; and that opinion I still hold. It is to be hoped—perhaps against hope—that such cases are rare.

Amongst the rank and file of journalists I have found very few professing Christians, and I know many, who, in private at least, have no hesitation in avowing their Freethought views. But the prevailing tone is one of utter indifference. "A plague on both your houses" the average pencil-pusher would say. Some time ago a large number of journalists assembled at a press-dinner in Birmingham. The editor of the *Daily Post* occupied the chair, and, before the carnage commenced, he asked if any gentleman would volun-

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teer to say grace. He waited amid painful silence for a few seconds, and then remarked that perhaps it would be as well to fall to without further delay. Methinks that little incident fairly typifies the "attitude of the press" with regard to religion. These men wanted their dinner, and woe betide the man—be he aggressive Christian, or aggressive unbeliever—who stood between them and their heart's desire!

GEORGE STANDRING.

THREE FIRE-PROOF JEWS.

Long, long ago, when lies were true, and common things were rare,
By Babel's streams, three castrate Jews did grow on meagre fare;
Quite fire-proof, incombustible, and non-conducting too;
In fact, each eunuch was unique, but for the other two."

The King of Babylon, we read, had made a god of gold,
And set it up in Dura's plain, that all might it behold;
And said, "If any worship not, nor do as I desire,
I'll have him bound both hands and feet, and cast into a fire.

These three young Jewish neuters said, "We'll never bow the knee
To any kind of foreign god, wherever he may be;
In short, O king! we'll only do what Judah's god permits;
And here we may remark that he can lick your god to fits."

The king got mad with rage, and swore a Babylonish swear;
Said he, "I'll show your great I AM how much for him I care:
So light the fire! pile up the wood! and make the furnace hot,
Then tie them up and throw them in—I'll scarify the lot!"

The king could scarce believe his eyes, when shortly he did see
Four people strolling through the flames, where he had thrown but three;
"The fourth must be some fire-clay god—Old Nick himself from hell—
To stand, and make these others stand, this roasting fire so well."

"Make haste! let Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego come out;
Their god's the 'boss,' whate'er his name—of that there is no doubt—
Jehovah, Satan, Yah or Nick, or any name you chose;
So glorify the fire-proof god of these asbestos Jews."

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERLY LOVE.

An American clergyman and contributor to the well-known *Andover Review* resolved some time since to suspend his pastoral duties for awhile and spend some time in personal observations of the habits and ways of the people. His experiment led to the curious discovery that the old cruel prejudice against the colored race had disappeared everywhere, with one exception, and that was the local Young Men's Christian Association. This, he bids us observe, was not in Georgia, or South Carolina, but in the great city of Topeka, in the State of Kansas. It had been asserted that the negroes were not allowed in certain hotels and restaurants, and with a view to test the truth of this statement he took with him a well-dressed and intelligent young negro. At the first respectable hotel which they visited they were treated well and exactly alike. At the next place they determined to separate. It was one of the most fashionable restaurants in the locality; still the negro customer was politely received and promptly served. So was it at another house where rumor had alleged that negroes were absolutely forbidden to enter. Then it was that, encouraged by this liberal treatment, they made bold to enter the City Young Men's Christian Association, and apply for a ticket of membership on behalf of the clergyman's colored companion. Satisfactory references were tendered; but they were of no avail. After some conversation, admission, we are told, was politely refused "on the ground of color, and that only."—*Daily News.*

ACID DROPS.

Principal James Cusack and Principal John Gallagher, together with a pious builder named Guilfoyle, have crusaded successfully against the reading of some of Longfellow's verses by the children in Brooklyn schools. They scented improprieties in the fine "Building of the Ship." Here is one awful passage:

"And for a moment one might mark
What had been hidden by the dark,
That the head of the maiden lay at rest,
Tenderly, on the young man's breast."

Such terrible impurity is not to be allowed to corrupt the youth of Brooklyn. They should read instead, we presume, the sweet, wholesome and edifying story of Lot and his daughters, and other exquisite narratives of the Holy Bible.

The Siena cathedral has been half destroyed by fire. God's own houses are not under proper protection. Surely some of the angels "loafing around the throne" should be told off to watch these places. It strikes a chill into a really faithful Christian to learn that the Siena cathedral was insured to the tune of a million francs. A public-house (another spirit shop) is not obliged to take greater precautions.

During a children's service at the Church of St. Stanislaus, Chicago, one of the candles ignited the altar draperies. Immediately there was a rush for the doors, fifteen hundred adults sharing with the children in the stampede. The fire was quickly extinguished, but scores of children had been trampled on and several very seriously injured.

Now look at this for a moment. Nothing but religion, we are told, can take away the fear of death; and here are persons in a church, engaged in religious service, who, at the cry of "fire," not only rush to the doors in a panic terror, but trample down poor little children in their senseless, cowardly flight.

A new Bishop of Dover has just been consecrated. Several other bishops laid hands on him and gave him a special supply of the Holy Ghost. What they cannot give him is any more honesty and common sense than he had before.

A correspondent of the *Journal de Bruxelles* eulogises Cardinal Manning to the skies. "What an admirable Pope he would have made!" exclaims the writer. So far we quite agree with him. Manning is a born ecclesiastic, and would befit the papal chair. You have only to look in his face to see that he is perfectly ready, if he had the chance, to seize every heresy by the throat and throttle it, and if the heretics were throttled at the same time it would not disturb a single nerve in his body.

We differ from the Brussels writer, however, when he prophesies that the "robustness of the Roman Church" will one day draw the masses to the pale of Catholic Unity. The schoolmaster is abroad, and he is playing havoc with *all* churches.

The Rev. H. R. Baker is giving a series of lectures at Woolwich on Christian Socialism. If his capacity for grappling with the social problem may be judged from the following, he might as well confine his attention to the world to come. He is reported as saying: "It is said that only 5 per cent. of the working people of East London go to any place of worship. If people will not serve God, will lead godless, faithless lives, how can they expect a blessing? When a whole class live without God is it any wonder that matters go wrong with them? Have the working classes ever put this question to themselves?"

The Revision Committee of the Presbyterian Church, sitting at Pittsburgh, America, have made radical changes in their doctrine of fore-ordination. Just fancy mortal men sitting down to revise the eternal decrees of God. Truly

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the spirit of blasphemy is abroad. Where will it end? Jahveh himself may yet be revised away into thin air.

Spurgeon holds on tight to everlasting hell and damnation, and an advanced Baptist in the *Christian World* calls on the Baptist Union to break away from its fear of "the threatenings of a great and godly man, who has lost touch with men and let the world go past him." All this means that people will not stand Hell as hot as they used to.

"Tuesday's ceremony," says "Urbanus" in the *Echo*, "gave many of us the first opportunity of seeing a grand march of the Salvationists. Physically they are a poor lot, and are mostly town born and bred. They are intent on saving souls; they demonstrate to me the absolute necessity of saving bodies."

The great Socialist Congress at Halle received a lengthy communication from the Salvation Army in London, which according to the *Daily News* was "received by the Congress with derisive laughter."

More facts for the Christians who made so much of a single Atheist's suicide! Sidney Clay, a builder's clerk, residing at 216 Euston Road, London, committed suicide by taking cyanide of potassium. In a letter to his wife he said, "God bless you," and "I trust the most High and most Merciful will forgive me this rash deed."—Alfred G. Clark shot himself in a railway carriage. He also prayed "God to forgive the deed."

Orthodox Jews seem as bad as orthodox Christians. Like their London brethren, the New York Freethinking Jews decided to have a meeting and a dance on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. A hall was hired and Mr. Pentecost was engaged to speak, but when the time came the hall was closed for twenty-four hours by order of the Mayor. This little trick was worked by the orthodox Jews. They got coroner Levy to translate the heretic Jews' circular for the Mayor, and this worthy stuffed in a lot of his own composition about dynamite and the destruction of the family and private property. Such a paltry dodge is almost incredible, and the Mayor was a fool to fall into such a trap.

The Cobden Hotel, Birmingham, appears to be a Quaker institution, and according to the *Daily Mail* the servants are required to go to services held in the hotel by the Quakers, where they are kept till nearly twelve at night, whilst they are required to be up next morning at half-past five. No doubt they rise in a godly frame of mind.

It seems that the case of the ritualistic practices of the Rev. Bell-Cox will be brought again before the law courts. We do not like the prospect of conscientious clergymen being imprisoned, and hope that before the case is decided a law will be passed substituting deprivation for imprisonment in the case of contumacious clergymen.

The *Daily News*, in a recent leader, has a good irreverent story about the fellows of a certain college. They held a meeting to dispose of some windfall of college money, and at that meeting certain of the fellows did not attend. "And what did you do then?" was asked. "Oh, we confounded the persons and divided the substance," was the answer.

The Rev. W. H. Bull, vicar of Hook-with-Warsash, Hants, appears to have been following in the footsteps of King David. He is a married man with a grown-up family, but is alleged to have got his young domestic servant into the family-way and then married her to a coachman. A letter from the vicar to the bride, enclosing a £5 note, was opened by the coachman, and the Bishop of Winchester has been made acquainted with the contents of the compromising letter.

The Cape of Good Hope Bank has had to close its doors, and according to the Bishop of Cape Town the whole of the funds available for the clergy were in that bank. The bishop was so affected that he confessed himself unequal to the preparation of his sermon. Apparently he has little confidence that the Lord will provide.

Owing to the elopement of the Rev. Mr. Sanborn, pastor of the Congregationalist church at Eureka (U.S.) with another man's wife, his congregation has broken up and joined the Presbyterian denomination.

A murderer named Austin has been jerked to Jesus at Graham's Town, South Africa. He was duly prepared for the company of Joshua, Samuel and David by the dean, who appeared in full canonicals at the scaffold and read the Burial Service over the yet living man, beginning "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away." The *Cape Mercury* and the *Natal Witness* express themselves disgusted with these farcical proceedings.

At Rugby police court Rev. E. H. Barton, curate of Newbold, was summoned for assaulting his wife. The parties did not appear. Mr. Peagam, representing complainant, asked that the case might be withdrawn as a settlement had been effected. After a brief discussion the case was struck out. Great interest had been excited in the district, rumors of an extraordinary character being afloat. The defendant had been previously summoned by his wife at Droitwich and bound over to keep the peace.

Dreadful floods in Senegal have resulted in sweeping away many towns and villages and the destruction of thousands of lives, apparently of small account to their Maker.

"One in Search of Truth" sends the following pertinent query to the *Twentieth Century*: "Taking it for granted that Christ was the son of God, it is now over eighteen hundred years since there fell from his lips the Lord's Prayer, in which he asked the Father to see to it that 'Thy' (the Father's) 'will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Now, did the Father hear the prayer of Christ? and if so, why did he not answer it? Is he able to enforce his will? Certainly the prayer of Christ has not been answered by the Father up to date, and if the Father did not answer the prayer of his son, what reason have we to hope or expect that he will answer the prayers of any one else?"

The Rev. J. B. Penfold has preached a sermon against scepticism and agnosticism, which has the place of honor in the *Church of England Pulpit*. This gentleman thinks that Professor Huxley and other critics of Christianity are actuated by vanity, and perhaps by a spirit of revenge. It does not occur to him that they are possessed by a love of truth. All the best qualities of heart and head are found in Christians; unbelievers are stupid, or vain, or wicked. Who doubts it? Penfold says so, and he knows, he knows.

At the same time, we observe, Mr. Penfold no longer maintains the inspiration of all the Old Testament, which he calls the Hebrew Scriptures, as though it were not an integral part of the Christian Bible. In other words, Mr. Penfold calls the sceptics names, but he is obliged to make concessions to them. Theirs is the solid victory, and they can afford to smile at his ill temper.

Colonel John Twigg, who has been stationed in India, says: "The spreading of Christianity is a hopeless task. The few converts made come from the lowest and vilest classes, and they take up Christianity only as a matter of profit and greed. To illustrate the character of the converts or native Christians, I can only point to an ayah, or female nurse, in my family. My sister asked her if she ever thought of becoming a Christian. She said 'No;' that the 'Karastans,' as she called them, of India were given to lying and stealing. This ayah denied that we were Christians, simply because we did not commit the crimes prevalent among the native Christians."

It is said that at a Congress of Brahman priests in India it was proposed that Jesus Christ and Mohammed should be acknowledged as incarnations coming after Buddha. Perhaps they may think, however, they have got the first named already in the person of Krishna.

The Postmaster at Calcutta has, it appears, refused to transmit the monthly Freethought journal, the *Cosmopolitan*, through the post. It is surprising if an anti-Christian journal can be suppressed in this way in a country where

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the majority of the people are opposed to Christianity. We hope to hear that Mr. Kavyabisharad, the editor and proprietor, has received an apology from the Postmaster. At any rate we feel sure he is not the man to submit to injustice.

The Southgate friends exhibited on Mr. Hillier's notice board a Religious Tract Society's picture of Latimer and Ridley being burnt by their fellow Christians. They headed it "See how these Christians love one another!" Some of the loving ones obliterated that picture with a tar-brush. Other orthodox pictures have had filth thrown at them. Southgate Christians cannot stand their own productions.

At a meeting of the Trinitarian Bible Society at Leicester the Rev. James Neil denounced the British and Foreign Bible Society for circulating corrupted versions of the Holy Scriptures. Ours is the only true and correct revelation, says the T. B. S., and those who add or take away from it will infallibly be damned.

The *Medium and Daybreak* treats its readers to a rigmarole of absurd bosh, which is pretended to have been uttered by the spirit of Edward Easton, the suicide at St. Paul's. We never met Mr. Easton, but those who have met him find it absurdly fraudulent. The spirit says he will probably give an account of his own cremation another week; that is, we suppose, if the medium can in the meantime learn the particulars.

A pamphlet setting forth the advantages of a certain mining property in Mexico prays "May God grant that foreigners, both capitalists and workmen, may be convinced of the magnificent richness of Quanteinoc." What a beautiful mixture of piety and business. Evidently the Pecksniff race is far from extinct.

Dr. Moore, addressing an annual Conference of the Christian Association at Southport, said the London papers were in the hands of sceptics and Jews, people that really had no interest in Christianity at all, but would like to throttle and destroy it. We fancy Dr. Moore exaggerates. We wish he didn't.

The *Methodist Times* has a high opinion of hymns; it declares that men of genius have written fine poems, but "the conception of the perfect hymn has been beyond them." The perfect hymn is generally produced by men with "no title to genius." Very true, Mr. Hughes, and why? Because, as a great German said, religion is the poetry of unpoetical minds.

"Being Honest with the Bible" is the title of a leading article in the *Christian World*. We cannot see where the honesty comes in. Our contemporary's position is this—We shall make, because we cannot help it, as many admissions as are wrung from us by scientific criticism; but we shall explain all the mistakes in the Bible by saying that there are mistakes in Nature, and faith bids us believe in a wise, good God behind both. Such an argument, if it can be called an argument, would establish the divinity of Mumbo Jumbo.

Water cannot rise above its source, but Robert Buchanan can. His father was a Freethinker and a Socialist missionary in the old Robert Owen days, and the son now rails against the "strange anarchy" of this age, and is going to start the *Modern Review* to put a crooked and perverse generation straight. "We shall speak fearlessly," says Robert, "on every subject, and on only one reverentially—that of Natural Religion, in which I hold to be the hope and salvation of the human race; and we shall endeavor to secure all voices of public opinion, except those of pot-house politicians and professional blasphemers." For our part, we very much doubt if these persons would ever honor Robert Buchanan with copy. A pot-house politician or a professional blasphemer is something above a sneak. Robert Buchanan seems to have forgotten Thomas Maitland; other people have longer memories.

Canon Hegarty, parish priest of Glanmire, County Cork, has a hatred of reporters, and on Sunday last he blazed out against a member of that tribe who sat notebook in hand. The Canon descended the altar steps and demanded the notebook, and as it was not given up he called on the congregation to snatch it away. This failing, he called on a policeman to turn the reporter out, but the cause of all this trouble declined to leave till mass was over. Finally the constable obtained possession of the notebook.

Why this terrible fuss about a reporter? Is Canon Hegarty ashamed of having his utterances published? He stickles for "confidence between a priest and his congregation," but he can hardly be silly enough to suppose that anything said to a churchful of people can be secret.

Pope Pecci has issued another idle circular. He warns Italy of its evil ways in refusing to restore his temporal power and attending to other things in preference to the Church. "To such a pass have we come," he says, "that we have to fear for this Italy of ours the loss even of the faith." We hope the fear is well founded.

The *Tagblatt* maintains the truth, in spite of all denials of its revelations as to the Nunnery of the Buried Alive at Naples, and asserts that the Naples solicitor-general has obtained an indictment against the priests who manage the convent.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, the American authoress, wrote a fierce attack recently on the low-necked dresses of her countrywomen. Still more recently she has written, in conjunction with her husband, the Rev. Howard Ward, a story called *Come Forth*. The gentleman who comes forth is Mr. Lazarus, who is summoned from the tomb by Mr. Jesus Christ. Both personages are described at length with American freedom and gush, and the story is one of love and adventure as well as miracle. In the preface the two pious writers say they mean no irreverence to the Savior. Very likely not. What they mean is to rake in the shekels, and all (even J. C.) is grist for their mill.

Mr. Downes, the editor of *Great Thoughts*, has been lecturing at Halifax on "The greatest personage in history"—to wit, Jesus Christ. He told his audience that the existence of Jesus Christ was "testified to by the heathen writers living in his time." This is absolutely false, and Mr. Downes should know it, as perhaps he does. We challenge him to name a single profane writer, Jew or Gentile, living in the time of Christ, who so much as alludes to him. It is very easy to presume on the credulity of ignorant audiences; has Mr. Downes the courage to answer our challenge?

Baptism may be good for the soul, but sometimes it is dangerous to the body. A sick woman at Perry, Michigan, was persuaded by her relatives to get baptised in the dipping fashion, and she died soon after being taken out of the water. Her child was to have been treated to the same blessing, but was rescued by indignant neighbors.

Archdeacon Farrar is becoming a fine pluralist, and the fact is calculated to repress his best friend's sympathy with his denunciation of sweating publishers. As Canon of Westminster his income is £1,000 a year, the rectory of St. Margaret's brings him another £400, and now he is offered the Chaplaincy of the House of Commons. As the Archdeacon believes that millions of souls are going to hell, one would think he would spend his whole time in saving them from it, when he is so handsomely paid for the work, instead of writing big books for as much extra cash as he can get.

SIR RICHARD BURTON.

Sir Richard Burton, who died on Monday morning at Trieste in his sixty-ninth year, was a great traveller, a great scholar, and a great man. It will be for Mr. Swinburne to sing his elegy. Sir Richard Burton was little known to the general public. He performed his achievements before the recent developments of the art of puffery. As the translator of Camoens and the *Arabian Nights* he will live in the memory of all scholars and lovers of fine English. Judging from certain sentences in his reply to Mr. Stead, who (of all men) suggested a prosecution on account of the *Arabian Nights*, we should say that Sir Richard Burton was a decided Freethinker. He did us the honor of quoting from this journal in his vigorous apology.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 26, at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "General Booth's Bid for a Million; and the Failure of Blood and Fire."

November 2, Nelson; 9, Grimbsy; 16, Birmingham; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the cuttings.

F. W. induced his wife, a thorough Christian, to hear Mr. Foote lecture on "A World Without God." Afterwards she heard the lecture "Gladstone on Moses." Her faith was shaken, and reading Freethought pamphlets finished the work. With her husband she is now a member of the North West London Branch, and their three children will be saved from a superstitious training.

W. MARTIN.—If you will arrange for a meeting at your house, or elsewhere, of persons willing to co-operate in forming a Poplar Branch, we will give it publicity.

H. J. HUDD.—See "Acid Drops."

SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—Christians did at one time universally believe in witchcraft, and witchcraft is still a vital superstition among the vast majority of the human race. For the rest you should read Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. No man can spin truths out of his own head without a knowledge of facts.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Thanks for cutting. The paper has not yet arrived.

H. MILLS.—The Manchester friends must be discreet in speech and firm in action. They must stand their ground.

W. JENKINSON.—All communications for the *Freethinker* must be sent to the editor, not to Mr. Forder.

VOCALISTS and reciters willing to give their services free this Sunday evening (Oct. 26) at the Battersea Branch monthly Concert, please communicate at once with Mr. J. Martin, 32 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea; or on Sunday evening at the hall.

J. F.—The mission paper is below contempt.

W. M. KNOX.—Sorry we cannot find room. Our readers are not curious about Theosophy, nor about Dr. Hanna's views on the subject. Except for Mrs. Besant's conversion we should not have thought Theosophy worth five minutes' criticism.

T. CLARK.—Shall appear.

A. HEMMINGWAY.—See "Sugar Plums." No doubt our paragraphs will bring supporters. Be firm and yet cautious. It is only prudence that makes courage available.

A. B.—Cuttings are always welcome.

S. BARNSLEY, Height Road (opposite police-station), Tottenham, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular publications.

R. WALLER.—We hope the Newcastle Freethinkers will support the candidates in favor of Sunday freedom in the approaching municipal elections. Mr. Foote cannot visit Tyneside before February. Sorry to hear you will have to give up some of your work for the Branch. So much of its success has been due to your energy.

HALTWHISTLE.—The poem has been reported scores of times during the last fifty years.

J. G.—We are obliged for the cutting. Mr. Brockie was a man we respected, but we fancy there was a certain intellectual timidity about him. However, he did good in his way, and no doubt he will be long remembered by many of those he helped to liberalise.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—La Verité—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Lucifer—Open Court—Cape Mercury—Leicester Daily Mercury—Birmingham Daily Mail—Ironclad Age—Progressive Thinker—Loyal American—Portsmouth Evening News—Evening Standard—Manchester Guardian—South Eastern Herald—Thanet Advertiser—Cambrian News—Glasgow Evening News.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the formidable opposition in the opening of the Sunday League season at Shoreditch Town Hall, Mr. Foote had an excellent audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Mistakes of Jesus." Two gentlemen spoke after the lecture. One was a Christian, who admitted that he thought it would be very difficult to answer the lecturer. Some one had lent him a copy of the *Freethinker*, where he saw that Mr. Foote was to lecture, and he came to hear for himself the other side of the question. He meant to think it over, and very likely he would come again. The other speaker was an elderly Atheist, who thought we ought to have a rational moral code in a little volume that even children might read.

Mr. Foote has changed the subject of his lecture for this evening (Oct. 26). The Trinity is a subject that will keep. Instead of dealing with that puzzle, Mr. Foote will lecture on General Booth's new book and his scheme of social salvation. Freethinkers who intend to hear this lecture, to which care and thought will be given, should try to bring some of their more orthodox friends so that they may see the difference between religious and secular reformation, and learn how the religious schemes have utterly broken down.

After Mr. Foote's lecture this evening (Oct. 26) a meeting of the Committee for organising the London Freethinkers' Ball on the last Wednesday in November, will be held in the committee-room upstairs. Every member should attend if possible.

Mr. Bradlaugh lectures at the London Hall of Science on the five Sundays in November. His morning lectures are to be political, and the evening lectures theological. This is his first appearance in London as a lecturer since his illness. No doubt there will be large audiences.

The *Freethinker* is slowly but steadily going up in circulation. Friends who take extra copies and circulate them, or even lend about their own copies after reading them, do us a real service. Thousands of persons, among the millions of this country, would become subscribers to this journal if only once it fell into their hands.

Last week's *Freethinker* sold right out, and we are printing a larger supply of the present number. Altogether, we may smile at the clergy's talk about the decline of Freethought.

Mr. Hillier, a North London friend, took a copy of this journal into a Turkish bath at Whitechapel. On his laying it down it was snapped up by a Hebrew gentleman, who looked like keeping it till the Jews return to Palestine. This suggests a new opening for propaganda.

A writer in the *Leeds Mercury*, describing "Sunday in London," notices the free distribution of back numbers of this "blasphemous journal" in Hyde Park. We have to thank the Hyde Park Branch for its industry in this direction.

The London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures at the Tower Hamlets Radical Club opened well on Thursday, Oct. 16. Mr. Foote discoursed to a crowded and appreciative audience on "Is the Bible Inspired?" Mr. Haines presided, and Mr. Rowney and a few other friends came all the way from Finsbury Park to render any necessary help. Opposition of a courteous character was offered by two Christian opponents.

Mr. Pownceby, the Federation secretary, showed a brave spirit in attending to the business before the lecturer took the platform. Mr. Pownceby's sister was horribly burnt in the recent city fire, and died that very night in the hospital after fearful suffering. Poor Mr. Pownceby had been attending her night and day, and might well have been absent from

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the meeting, but although tired and sorrowing he elected to do his spell of work.

The London Secular Federation's new course of Free Lectures will be given at the Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club on Nov. 6, 13, 20, and 27. The lecturers are C. J. Hunt, A. B. Moss, J. M. Robertson, and G. W. Foote. Freethinkers in the neighborhood should attend and bring as many Christians as possible.

A meeting of Leyton Freethinkers was held on Sunday evening, as a result of the announcement in our columns. It was resolved to start a Branch. Officers and a Committee were elected, and another meeting is to be held this evening (Oct. 26) at 6 o'clock, at Mr. Jenkinson's, Clark's Cottages, Cooper's Lane, Leyton. Secularists in the district are earnestly requested to attend.

Mr. Sam Standring sends us cheering reports of the progress of the movement in Tottenham, Southgate, Edmonton and the vicinity. Indoor meetings are to be held, and the friends are trying to get a chapel which is in the market. In the face of all this, a Christian Evidence Lecturer is holding forth on the "Collapse of Local Infidelity." At this rate we hope it will go on collapsing.

Mr. H. Salt's paper, read before the Shelley Society, on "The New Shelleyism," was in every way admirable, and was appreciated by an excellent audience, some of whom were brought there by the *Freethinker* paragraph. Mr. Salt briefly but adequately sketched the three stages of Shelley criticism. First, he was an incarnate fiend; next, he was a well-meaning but misguided enthusiast, who would have become a respectable Christian if fate had permitted him to outlive the follies of his youth; finally, he is being recognised as a great poet, with reasoned principles that challenge the world's attention. Mr. W. M. Rossetti, who presided, frankly confessed that Shelley was as much an atheist on the day of his death as when he wrote *Queen Mab*. Other speeches were made by G. B. Shaw, G. W. Foote, Ernest Radford, and two ladies, whose names we did not catch. It is to be hoped that Mr. Salt's paper will be published. Mr. Rossetti called it the most important paper ever read before the Society.

Owing to a press of matter we are obliged to hold over the second list of subscriptions to the Forder Testimonial Fund till next week. Meanwhile we beg to press this matter on the attention of Freethinkers. Mr. Forder's long and valuable services to their cause demand a recognition now that he is retiring from the Secretaryship. Every Branch of the N. S. S. should open a subscription list at once. Collecting forms are being printed for this purpose. Individual subscribers who prefer sending direct to London can remit to the Treasurer, Mr. W. H. Reynolds, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E., or to the editors of the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer*. By way of adding practice to precept, we subscribe a guinea ourselves. Next, please.

This afternoon (Oct. 26) Mr. Moss delivers the last Freethought open-air lecture this season in Finsbury Park. We hope he will have a good meeting and be well supported by the local Freethinkers. Unfortunately there was disorder again last Sunday. No doubt the rowdy element is glad of any pretext to assert itself, but for that very reason Freethinkers should be discreet in their language. Calling names very bad policy in a mixed meeting, and those who cannot control their tempers should not put themselves in the way of provocation. Hot spirits will say, "Why lecture your own side?" We answer, "Because it is the honor, dignity, and success of our own side that we care for."

The quarterly meeting of the Camberwell Branch was held in the hall on Sunday, when 200 of the members and friends assembled at tea. Afterwards the visitors from Milton Hall —Miss Vance, Miss Brown, Mrs. and Mr. Galbraithe, Messrs. Roberts, Guest, Drew and Brown—enlivened the proceedings with their dramatic sketch of "Turn him Out." Some songs and dances ended the evening. The members' roll is not quite so large as last quarter, though the balance-sheet shows better than last time, and the outdoor meetings have been most successful.

The Freethought open-air lectures at Denmark Road, Manchester, have been so successful as to alarm the bigots. Two letters have appeared in the Tory *Courier* calling on the Corporation to suppress the meetings, although there is no pretence of obstruction. Nor is this the worst. On Sunday afternoon a disturbance was occasioned by the malignancy of the Rev. Mr. Collar, who has several times visited the Secular Hall and been treated with a courtesy which he seems unable to reciprocate. Mr. Jones, who was speaking on the Secular side, was hustled off the platform and dragged through the crowd. Mr. Collar at this moment pleaded for fair play, but he found it easier to raise a storm of bigotry than to allay it.

Now this Manchester station must be maintained. This afternoon (Oct. 26) the Branch will endeavor to carry out its programme, and the local Freethinkers should support its efforts. A ring should be formed round the platform and kept unbroken. The chairman and the lecturer must be cool and avoid all irritating remarks. If the bigots still resort to violence the duty of the Freethinkers will be to maintain the platform. If a policeman is near he should be called upon to restrain or arrest anyone committing a breach of the peace.

The Newcastle Branch is going to have a Prize-Drawing, and will be glad to hear from any friends who can present books or other valuable articles. The second annual Tea and Concert of the Branch will take place on Boxing Day at the Arcade Assembly Rooms. The Branch is drawing up questions on the Blasphemy Laws to be put to all parliamentary candidates in the district.

At the Catholic Congress at Saragossa Padre Llanas deplored the success of the Freethinking press in Spain, which no doubt he would like to see once again under the control of the Holy Office.

La Vérité opens with a notable paper on *Peuple Athées*, by Dr. C. Letourneau, dealing with Atheistic tribes and nations, and, among its contents, gives also a little biography of M. Emile Pasquier, the Secretary of the French Federation of Freethinkers. *La Vérité* is certainly improving, and we hope its circulation will enable it to maintain a high standard of excellence.

The current number of the *Quarterly Review*, in a notice of Mr. Renan's complete works, describes him as the most influential intellectual force in France. Yet M. Renan was brought up a priest, and has year by year severed himself more completely from the creed of his youth.

Ella E. Gibson tells a story in *The Ironclad Age* of a sea captain who was flogged by the Puritans for kissing his wife on Sunday morning. When about to leave on his next voyage he invited the legal dignitaries of the place on board his vessel to a grand entertainment. As the time arrived for them to depart, he told them he had a painful duty to perform; they had one and all broken the laws of his vessel, that he allowed no one to pass over a chalk mark on the floor of his deck, there before their eyes, without punishment, and he must flog them the same as other transgressors. In vain they protested they did not know no one was allowed to cross that chalk line. He told them that made no difference whether they knew it or not, the laws of his ship had been violated, and they must suffer the penalty. So he had them strung up and forty stripes save one laid on the back of each with a cat-o-nine-tails.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

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WENDELL HOLMES ON HELL.

THE experiences we have had in common lead us to talk over the theological questions which at this time are constantly presenting themselves to the public, not only in the books and papers expressly devoted to that class of subjects, but in many of the newspapers and popular periodicals, from the weeklies to the quarterlies. The pulpit used to lay down the law to the pews; at the present time, it is of more consequence what the pews think than what the minister does, for the obvious reason that the pews can change their minister, and often do, whereas the minister cannot change the pews, or can do so only to some limited extent. The preacher's garment is cut according to the pattern of that of the hearers, for the most part. Thirty years ago, when I was writing in this magazine, I came in for a very pretty share of abuse, such as it was the fashion of that day, at least in certain quarters, to bestow upon those who were outside of the high-walled enclosures in which many persons, not naturally unamiable or exclusive, found themselves imprisoned. Since that time what changes have taken place! Who will believe that a well-behaved and reputable citizen could have been denounced as a "moral parricide," because he attacked some of the doctrines in which he was supposed to have been brought up? A single thought should have prevented the masked theologian who abused his incognity from using such libellous language.

Much, and in many families most, of the religious teaching of children is committed to the mother. The experience of William Cullen Bryant, which I have related in his own words, is that of many New England children. Now, the sternest dogmas that ever came from a soul cramped or palsied by an obsolete creed become wonderfully softened in passing between the lips of a mother. The cruel doctrine at which all but case-hardened "professionals" shudder comes out, as she teaches and illustrates it, as unlike its original as the milk which a peasant mother gives her babe is unlike the coarse food which furnishes her nourishment. The virus of a cursing creed is rendered comparatively harmless by the time it reaches the young sinner in the nursery. Its effects fall as far short of what might have been expected from its virulence as the pearly vaccine vesicle falls short of the terrors of the confluent small-pox. Controversialists should therefore be careful (for their own sakes, for they hurt nobody so much as themselves) how they use such terms as "parricide" as characterising those who do not agree in all points with the fathers whom or whose memory they honor and venerate. They might with as much propriety call them matricides, if they did not agree with the milder teachings of their mothers. I can imagine Jonathan Edwards in the nursery with his three-year-old child upon his knee. The child looks up to his face and says to him,—

"Papa, nurse tells me that you say God hates me worse than he hates one of those horrid ugly snakes that crawl all round. Does God hate me so?"

"Alas! my child, it is but too true. So long as you are out of Christ you are as a viper, and worse than a viper, in in his sight."

By and by, Mrs. Edwards, one of the loveliest of women and sweetest of mothers, comes into the nursery. The child is crying.

"What is the matter, my darling?"

"Papa has been telling me that God hates me worse than a snake."

Poor, gentle, poetical, sensitive, spiritual, almost celestial Mrs. Jonathan Edwards! On the one hand the terrible sentence conceived, written down, given to the press, by the child's father; on the other side the trusting child looking up at her, and all the mother pleading in her heart against the frightful dogma of her revered husband. Do you suppose she left that poison to rankle in the tender soul of her darling? Would it have been moral parricide for a son of the great divine to have repudiated the doctrine which degraded his blameless infancy to the condition and below the condition of the reptile? *Was* it parricide in the second or third degree when his descendant struck out that venomous sentence from the page in which it stood as a monument to what depth Christian heathenism could sink under the teaching of the great master of logic and spiritual inhumanity? It is too late to be angry about the abuse a well-meaning writer received thirty years ago. The whole atmosphere has changed since then. It is mere childishness to expect men to believe as their fathers did; that is, if they have any minds of their own. The world is a generation older and wiser than when the father was of his son's age . . . .

In the more intelligent circles of American society one may question anything and everything, if he will only do it civilly. We may talk about eschatology,—the science of the last things—or, if you will, the natural history of the undiscovered country, without offence before anybody except young children and very old women of both sexes. In our New England, the great Andover discussion and the heretical missionary question have benumbed sensibility on this subject as entirely, as completely as the new local anæsthetic, cocaine, deadens the sensibility of the part to which it is applied, so that the eye may have its mote or beam plucked out without feeling it, as the novels of Zola and Maupassant have hardened the delicate nerve-centres of the women who have fed their imaginations on the food they have furnished.

The generally-professed belief of the Protestant world as embodied in their published creeds is that the great mass of mankind are destined to an eternity of suffering. That this eternity is to be one of bodily pain—of bodily "torment"—is the literal teaching of Scripture, which has been literally interpreted by the theologians, the poets, and the artists of many long ages which followed the acceptance of the recorded legends of the Church as infallible. The doctrine has always been recognised, as it is new, as a very terrible one. It has found a support in the story of the fall of man, and the view taken of the relation of man to his maker since that event. The hatred of God to mankind in virtue of their "first disobedience" and inherited depravity is at the bottom of it. The extent to which that idea was carried is well shown in the expressions I have borrowed from Jonathan Edwards. According to his teaching,—and he was a reasoner who knew what he was talking about, what was involved in the promises of the faith he accepted,—man inherits the curse of God as his principal birthright.

What shall we say to the doctrine of the fall of man as the ground of inflicting endless misery on the human race? A man to be *punished* for what he could not help! He was expected to be called to account for Adam's sin. It is singular to notice that the reasoning of the wolf with the lamb should be transferred to the dealings of the Creator with his creatures. "You stirred the brook up and made my drinking-place muddy." "But, please your wolfship, I couldn't do that, for I stirred the water far down the stream,—below your drinking-place." "Well, anyhow, your father troubled it a year or two ago, and that is the same thing." So the wolf falls upon the lamb and makes a meal of him. That is wolf logic,—and theological reasoning.

How shall we characterise the doctrine of endless torture as the destiny of most of those who have lived, and are living, on this planet? I prefer to let another writer speak of it. Mr. John Morley uses the following words: "The horrors of what is perhaps the most frightful idea that has corroded human character,—the idea of eternal punishment." Sismondi, the great historian, heard a sermon on eternal punishment, and vowed never again to enter another church holding the same creed. Romanism he considered a religion of mercy and peace by the side of what the English call the Reformation. I mention these protests because I happen to find them among my notes, but it would be easy to accumulate examples of the same kind. When Cowper, at about the end of the last century, said satirically of the minister he was attacking,

> "He never mentioned hell to ears polite,"

he was giving unconscious evidence that the sense of the barbarism of the idea was finding its way into the pulpit. When Burns, in the midst of the sulphurous orthodoxy of Scotland, dared to say,

> "The fear o' hell 's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order,"

he was only appealing to the common sense and common humanity of his fellow-countrymen.

All the reasoning in the world, all the proof-texts in old manuscripts, cannot reconcile this supposition of a world of sleepless and endless torment with the declaration that "God is love."

Where did this "frightful idea" come from? We are surprised, as we grow older, to find that the legendary hell of the Church is nothing more nor less than the Tartarus of the old heathen world. It has every mark of coming from the cruel heart of a barbarous despot. Some malignant and vindictive Sheik, some brutal Mezentius, must have sat for many pictures of the Divinity. It was not enough to kill his captive

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enemy, after torturing him as much as ingenuity could contrive to do it. He escaped at last by death, but his conqueror could not give him up so easily, and so his vengeance followed him into the unseen and unkown world. How the doctrine got in among the legends of the Church we are no more bound to show than we are to account for the intercalation of the "three witnesses" text, or the false insertion, or false omission, whichever it may be, of the last fourteen verses of the Gospel of St. Mark. We do not hang our grandmothers now, as our ancestors did theirs, on the strength of the positive command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."—*From "The Atlantic Monthly."*

WEST HAM SECULARISM.

The West Ham Branch held a well-attended quarterly meeting at Plaistow Secular Hall, on Sunday morning. The balance-sheet showed that the subscriptions, donations, and collections made a considerable improvement, and the number of members had increased to 117. By reason of some heavy expenses nothing has been paid off the small balance still owing to the Treasurer, but it was resolved that next quarter's balance-sheet should be clear of debt. For this purpose a number of members expressed their willingness to give 3s. each, the average amount per head required to wipe off the debt. Mr. Long promised half a sovereign if fifty members' names be obtained before next Sunday. Twenty-seven names were immediately handed in. If any other friend desires the honor of being amongst the first fifty, I shall be glad to take his name either on next Thursday or Saturday. In the evening the President ably lectured on the principles and objects of the N. S. S., comparing them with the teachings of Christianity and other creeds, and drew some good opposition.—E. ANDERSON, Secretary.

AN EPISCOPAL MANGLER.

EVERYONE knows how the present Bishop of Exeter treated Newman's "Lead kindly Light." He took another man's work, saw the "fat" in it—we use a vulgar word about a low trick—but decided that, as it stood, the poem was hardly suitable for admission to the "Hymnal Companion"—an honor which its author had no notion of claiming. So the Bishop of Exeter "conveyed" what there was to convey, added a miserable verse of his own, and stuck the result into the "Hymnal Companion."

This injury, *plus* insult, to Newman is well-known. But it is only one out of many manipulations for which the Bishop is responsible. A delicious story appeared the other day in one of the papers published in his diocese—we think it was the *Western Daily Mercury*. The Rev. S. Baring-Gould once wrote a hymn which has become famous. It was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and the burthen of it ran as follows:—

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before."

So it was written, and so it appears in "Hymns Ancient and Modern." But this did not suit the Bishop, who (for reasons that he might usefully explain) objected to the "cross of Jesus" and calmly substituted some words of his own.

Now the story goes that once on a time the Bishop was to preach at a certain church in Devonshire, where they used "Hymns Ancient and Modern." And the service was to be opened by a "processional," and the hymn chosen was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and a cross, of course, was to be carried at the head of the procession. But the Bishop, spying the cross, objected to its use; and the incumbent gave way. Then came a difficulty. The cross was left in the vestry, but its absence would make the burthen of the hymn utterly meaningless. What was to be sung? The Bishop was naturally anxious to coach the choir up in his emended version, and was proposing this, when the incumbent slyly suggested, "Don't you think we might change it to

'With the cross of Jesus
Left behind the door'?"—*Speaker.*

One of the deacons of a missionary church asked the clergyman if he usually kissed the bride at weddings. "Always," was the reply. "And how do you manage when the happy pair are black?" was the next question. "In all such cases," replied the clergyman, "the duty of kissing is appointed to the deacons."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. Barnes, dramatic recitals, comic and classical, interspersed with music.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, free concert by members and friends. Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital: 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7. Mr. G. W. Foote, "General Booth's Bid for a Million; and the Failure of Blood and Fire."

Mile End—Tower Hamlets Radical Club, 13 Redman's Road, Thursday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Was Jesus God or Man?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, a lecture.

Old Ford—"Mitford Castle" Assembly Rooms, Wick Lane, 7.45, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Resurrection Fable."

West Ham — Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus Christ"; 7.30, Mr. John B. Coppock, "The Condition of the Earth's Interior."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. Toleman Garner, "My Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Fall of Man."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, a lecture.

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Fall of Man."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Freethought in Old Age."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand). Mr. A. B. Moss, 11.15, "Inspired Nonsense"; 3.30, "Brain and Soul."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Robert Owen."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Nuts to Crack."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Christian Evidences."

Westminster — Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, III.—Macbeth on Dogs and Men."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. R. S. Bransby, "Secular Education."

Glasgow — Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo Street, 6.30, Mr. R. Shaw, "The Heathen Origin of the Trinity."

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street. — 3, discussion class: "The best means of promoting Secularism; 7, Mr. Gowland, "The Pursuit of Happiness."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, a grand entertainment: dramatic recitals by Mr. C. Conway, and songs by Lawrence Farley. Free.

Newcastle-on-Tyne — 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, Sunday Music League; 3, N. S. S. Branch financial meeting.

Nottingham—Mechanic's Lecture Hall, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "The Inadequacy of Materialism"; 3, "Socialism and the Middle Class"; 7, "Christianity and Woman."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, Mrs. Thornton Smith, 3, "Prayer"; 7, "Forgiveness of Sins"; Miss Stapely will preside at pianoforte.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, Dr. Hardwicke, "Personal Experiences of America and Americans."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, business meeting.

Sunderland—Mr. Chipperfield's, Nile Street, 7.30, Mr. Stansell, "The Poetry of Longfellow."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Manchester — Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, a Freethought meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Oct. 26 (morning and afternoon) Finsbury Park; 30, Tower Hamlets Radical Club. Nov. 9, Woolwich; 13, Peckham Radical Club; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool,—Nov. 9, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Oct. 26 (morning) Mile End Waste. Nov. 3, Reading; 19 and 26 (Tuesday evenings), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Oct, 26, Woolwich. Nov. 9, Battersea; 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 44.] SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

GLADSTONE TACKLES HUXLEY.

MR. GLADSTONE finishes his *Good Words* articles on "The Impregnable Rock of Scripture." His remarks on modern scepticism we shall criticise next week. For the present we deal with his attack on Professor Huxley. Mr. Gladstone calls the Professor "the Achilles of the opposing army," and the description is a good one, only the Professor is never fond of sulking in his tent. Huxley is always ready for battle, and we may look forward to some fine fighting when he answers Mr. Gladstone's challenge. *Good Words*, we presume, will not be open to the sceptical Achilles, but the *Nineteenth Century* is available, and no doubt a dozen other magazines would be glad of his article.

Professor Huxley, it will be remembered, argued that the Mesopotamian plain was one of the worst places in the world for Noah's Flood, since it slopes to the extent of nearly six hundred feet, and a body of water high enough to carry the Ark would rush down in a furious torrent, carrying the floating menagerie with it. Now Mr. Gladstone has made inquiries of "an engineer who is in charge of a portion of one of our rivers," and he is informed by this gentleman that "a fall of one in 3,420 would probably produce a current of two miles an hour." Is that what you call a furious torrent? asks Mr. Gladstone; and he goes on to read Professor Huxley a solemn lesson in circumspection.

Professor Huxley is a practical scientist, and knows what he is talking about. The author of *Physiography* can hardly require a lesson in "elementary hydraulics" from a man so confessedly ignorant of science as Mr. Gladstone, and when Achilles gets on the war-path the G. O. M. will probably spend a very bad quarter of an hour. Perhaps Mr. Gladstone's informant is right enough as to the current of a stream, which is continuous until it joins the sea, and of which the flow is only superficial. But we guess the calculation does not apply to a body of water such as Huxley contemplated, the bottom end of which would move in bulk with terrible force, something like the stream of the broken reservoir that devasted the Johnson Valley. This is a point which escapes Mr. Gladstone's attention.

Like the old parliamentary hand he is, Mr. Gladstone avoids answering Huxley's question as to how such a depth of water was kept *standing* on a sloping plain for several months. This question is more important than the velocity of Noah's Ark, and it is quietly ignored.

Not satisfied with giving Huxley a brave lesson in "elementary hydraulics," Mr. Gladstone breaks a lance with him gratuitously on an outside matter. Two winters ago the Professor got into a discussion with Dr. Wace about the Gadarean swine and the devils that entered them. Mr. Gladstone remarks that on this occasion Huxley "touched lofty ground indeed," as though no one but a parson or the G.O.M. had any right there. "Mr. Huxley, as a physiologist," he says, "disbelieves in demoniacal possession." True, and does Mr. Gladstone *believe* in it? Well, he will not say. "Such a physiological judgment," he mock-modestly declares, "it is not for me to discuss." How clever! But is it ingenuous? This is really the vital point at issue. All the other points are subsidiary. But Mr. Gladstone evades the vital point again, and rebukes Huxley for saying that the bedevilling of the pigs was "a wanton destruction of other people's property." The fact is, Mr. Gladstone says, the people were Hebrews and had no right to keep pigs; and they were treated like smugglers caught with brandy-casks. He forgets two things, however; first, that Jesus was not a Jewish official, and had no legal right to confiscate swine, nor any kind of right to plague them with devils; secondly, that the Jews were not forbidden to keep pigs. Pigs were unclean in Egypt, but they existed there; they were unclean also to the Jews, but they as clearly existed in Palestine. Mr. Gladstone forgets that the Jews were allowed to sell unclean meat to the Gentiles, just as they were allowed to lend them money on usury. So far, therefore, from Professor Huxley's reasoning being "hand-over-head," we think it is Mr. Gladstone who is open to the accusation. He has a wonderful faculty, in these discussions, for pursuing side issues, to the complete neglect of the central points of the problem; and although this may be one of the arts of a rhetorican, it is not likely to convince "the opposing army," or even to make a favorable impression on the indifferentists.

G. W. FOOTE.

DEAD AND RESURRECTED GODS.

ONE of the most able and notable books of this year is *The Golden Bough*, a study in Comparative Religion, by Mr. J. G. Frazer, a disciple of Dr. E. B. Tylor and a friend of Professor Robertson Smith. Mr. Frazer brings to the subject a most extensive acquaintance with savage life, and with the folk-lore and customs of peasantry, those apt illustrations of earlier beliefs. The title is given by the quest upon which Mr. Frazer set out. This was to discover the purport of the strange practice recorded of the priests of Nemi, that each had to slay his predecessor, and be in turn slain by a successor after first plucking the golden bough. To explain this curious and barbarous custom, which survived into the days of the Roman Empire, he travels over many lands and gathers numerous curious relics by the way. The work is indeed an immense storehouse of information on early beliefs and customs. The explanation in question depends on that belief in sympathetic magic which I have gone into in my former articles on the Brazen Serpent and Salvation by Similars (*Freethinker*, Feb. 8, 1885, and Feb. 9, 1890). The priest of Nemi was the Sylvan deity incarnate in a man who it was necessary should be put to death while in the full bloom of his divine manhood, in order that his sacred life, transmitted in unabated force to his successor, might

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renew its youth, and thus perpetually reincarnate itself ever fresh and young; even as nature does in springtime.

In unravelling the mystery of the priests of Nemi, Mr. Frazer has unravelled many other perplexities of early superstition, and in addition, it seems to me, throws much light on the Christian legends, conclusively showing their savage superstructure.

A large portion of Mr. Frazer's great work deals with the myths which surround the phenomena of vegetation. He says (vol. i., p. 278): "Under the names of Osiris, Adonis, Thammuz, Attis and Dionysus, the Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians, Phrygians, and Greeks, represented the decay and revival of vegetation with rites which, as the ancients themselves recognised, were substantially the same, and which find their parallels in the spring and midsummer customs of our European peasantry." All these gods were said to have died and risen again from the dead. Of Adonis, he says (p. 280), "At Byblus, the death of Adonis, was annually mourned with weeping, wailing, and beating of the breast; but next day he was believed to come to life again and ascend up to heaven in the presence of his worshippers. This celebration," continues Mr. Frazer, "appears to have taken place in spring, for its date was determined by the discoloration of the river Adonis, and this has been observed by modern travellers to occur in spring. . . . Again, the red anemone was said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis; and, as the anemone blooms in Syria about Easter, this is a fresh proof that the festival of Adonis, or at least one of his fetivals, was celebrated in spring."

Adonis, according to Mr. Frazer, represented vegetation in general, as Thammuz (Thammuz is still the hot summer month, July of the Jews), represented the corn spirit.

Of the ceremonies used at the festival of Attis, Mr. Frazer says (vol., p. 297): "At the spring equinox (March 22) a pine-tree was cut in the woods and brought into the sanctuary of Cybele, where it was treated as a divinity. It was adorned with woollen bands and wreaths of violets—for violets were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis, as anemones from the blood of Adonis—and the effigy of a young man was attached to the middle of the tree. On the second day (March 23) the chief ceremony seems to have been a blowing of trumpets. The third day (March 24) was known as the Day of Blood: the high priest drew blood from his arms and presented it as an offering. It was, perhaps, on this day or night that the mourning for Attis took place over an effigy, which was afterwards solemnly buried. The fourth day (March 25) was the Festival of Joy (Hilaria), at which the resurrection of Attis was probably celebrated—at least the celebration of his resurrection seems to have followed closely upon that of his death."

When we know that to this day, in Jerusalem, a a figure of Christ is placed on the cross, mourned, buried, and supposed to rise again amid songs of triumph,*—for a description of which the reader may be referred to the *Church Times* of May 11, 1888—can we avoid the conclusion that this ritual is but a continuation of pre-Christian rites.

Mr. Frazer gives numerous instances from all parts of the world of a custom at Easter, May-day or Whitsuntide, of putting, or pretending to put to death, a real or mock king, who in early thought is a man-god. "For we must not forget that the king is slain in his character of a god, his death and resurrection, as the only means of perpetuating the divine life unimpaired, being deemed necessary for the salvation of his people and of the world" (vol i., p. 228). In some cases, as in Babylon, a criminal condemned to death, was mocked, crowned, dressed in kingly robes, scourged and put to death, as substitute for the king. These personages represent the spirit of vegetation. Why then kill him, and above all in spring when his services are most needed? The answer is, the divine life incarnate in a mortal body is liable to the corruption of the medium in which it is enshrined and must hence be detached. As the sun sets in blood in the west before he can rise in the east, and dies in winter to rise again in spring, so must the god of vegetation die ere he can rise again in new glory. The dying and resurrected man-god represents the yearly decay and birth of vegetation. Let it also be noticed that anciently ceremonies were magical charms designed to produce the effect which they dramatically represent, and that customs and ritual are older than the legends which explain them, and the reader may begin to suspect that the Passion Play at Oberammergau may contain links of survival connecting it with the ritual of Adonis and even with the priests of Nemi.

The inference which a Freethinking reader is likely to draw from Mr. Frazer's erudite work is that like other gods, who died and rose from the dead, Christ is but a survival, embodying more primitive ideas and worships, which explain, as no Christian is able to explain, how it is that a god should be put to death. Mr. Frazer does not draw this inference.

But let the reader, if at all attracted to the subject, carefully peruse *The Golden Bough*, which I recommend as the most interesting and instructive work I have read for many a day. J. M. Wheeler.

P.S.—One word on the Golden Bough. The Golden Bough is the mistletoe sacred at our Christmas festival which as Mr. Frazer says, vol ii., p. 366, is "nothing but an old heathen celebration of the winter solstice," even as, I add, Easter is nothing but an old heathen celebration of the vernal equinox. The mistletoe was in my view sacred because it was held to carry over the seed of life from year to year. I do not find this idea definitely expressed by Mr. Frazer, but think it may perhaps commend itself to his notice, and I know no one more competent to give an opinion.

* Similar ceremonies took place in the worship of Mithras—See *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 237, 1890. Mr. Robertson says, "There is every reason to conclude that a similar liturgy was gone through in connection with the burial and resurrection of Osiris."

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—XI.

On "What is the Bible?"

To Archdeacon Farrar.

[CONCLUDED.]

Following the law of "accommodation," which is playing as large a part in clerical interpretation of the Bible as it plays in the morality of Jesuitism, you say "we do not know why it was the will of God to selelect one particular people for his revelations." You also say "we do not know" why he gave the Jews a lower moral code than he has given "us." We do not know, you exclaim, why God "does not give the full day all at once."

This kind of talk is very easy, but you betray its ineptitude when you descend to an illustration. The "boon of anæsthetics" has been "given to men" in this century. Painful surgical operations are no longer necessary; chloroform, ether, or some other substance, takes away all feeling from the patient. Yet our forefathars had to be cut with their senses active and acute; they saw the knife, they felt the incision, they saw the weakening flow of blood. Why was it then, you ask, that God did not reveal the secret of anæsthetics to mankind before; why has he given it to "this particular century"? We do not know, you say; neither do we know why he did not reveal other things in religion and morality.

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Do you not see that you are wrecking your own case, and giving away your own position? The "boon of anæsthetics" came to us from Science, and was at first opposed in the name of Religion. God did not give it to us before this century, because Science had not discovered it. And if the analogy is to be preserved, we must say that God did not give the ancient Jews higher truths, because they were not able to discover them; and that he did give them to later people, because they *were* able to discover them. In other words, what you call the Revelation of God does not lead, but follows, the footsteps of human improvement. What men gain by experience and reflection, after many mistakes and at terrible cost, is claimed by the priests as a gift from their God.

With respect to those features of the Old Testament which place it "very far below the New Testament," I have to remark that I do not believe your Church would ever have admitted their inferior, and I will add *degrading* character, had it not been compelled to do so by sceptical criticism. You shrink, for instance, from the brutalities of king David; but when they were exposed by the sceptical Bayle, it was the critic, and not the king, who was overwhelmed with execration. How cheap, then, is your clerical gibe at those who seek to rob young men of the Bible by "laughing at and ridiculing and sneering at certain passages in it." What can a man of sense do but laugh at stories of talking serpents and jackasses, at whales that entertain men in their stomachs, or at women suddenly turned into pillars of salt? What can he do but ridicule the solemn farce of teaching such things to children as facts of history? What can he do but sneer at those who strive, either openly or surreptiously, to bind the intelligence of to-day in the bonds of ancient ignorance? And how, indeed, can he help sneering at the Pharisees of the Church, who pretend to be the guardians of public morality, and yet insist on the indiscriminate reading, by young as well as old, of a book which contains gratuitous filth and unpardonable obscenity?

Millions of Christians, you say, do *not* believe there was a talking serpent. But you allow that the story is believed by millions of other Christians. They are moved by faith, a principle which you dilute with reason. That you should forbear to laugh at them is natural; they are your own party, they help to maintain you, and you cannot afford to offend them. But the risibility of outsiders is not under the same restraint.

Christians may believe or disbelieve the story of a talking serpent. Such is your declaration. But the story is true or false. If it be true, why should you disbelieve it; and if it be false, why should they believe it? Or is the difference between truth and falsehood of no importance in your religion?

Pardon me for smiling at your advice with respect to the difficulties of the Bible. "Whenever you find a difficulty, lay it aside," is your recommendation. Reading the Bible is like eating fish. Consume what you like, and put the bones and refuse on the edge of the plate. This, however, is precisely the advice of Freethinkers; only they add that when there are bones and refuse, there is nothing miraculous in the fish.

You follow your own advice to the letter. You lay every Bible difficulty "aside." But let me remind you that the difficulties are of your own making, and that you are bound in honesty to deal with them. Blunders, absurdities, fables, legends, obscenities, and brutalities, do not surprise me in ancient writings. I find them in some modern compositions. They only surprise me when I discover them in the Word of God. In other words, they are difficulties on your theory of the Bible, and not on mine.

Instead of dealing with these difficulties, you perform the easy task of citing praises of the Bible by eminent Christians; a most unanswerable reply to the attacks of scepticism!

That Tennyson and Browning, to your knowledge, were amongst the admirers of the Bible, would be an interesting fact if we knew the nature and limits of their admiration. Byron and Shelley were also among the literary admirers of our English translation, as I am in my humbler degree; but they did not accept the book as a revelation from God.

You refer to Carlyle and Ruskin. Now Ruskin is a Christian, and you are citing one of your own party. As for Carlyle, he appears to have set a special value on the Old Testament, which in your opinion is inferior to the New.

With regard to Mr. Peabody, I do not deny that he "gave a million and a half," but I do deny that this is any guarantee of his competence as a Biblical critic. Let me also observe that Faraday, the great scientist, deliberately refused to let his intellect operate in matters of religion, and that this deprives his judgment of all value. On the other hand, the passage you quote from Professor Huxley is nothing to your purpose. You and your like have no replies to his trenchant attacks on your Bible, but you make the most of his admission that the Bible affords children the sight of a "great historical procession" and a glimpse into far-off times. This admission, however, lends no support to your theory, which he has undermined in dozens of articles, that vainly solicit a refutation.

Your remarks on Charles Dickens (I must say it) are perfectly infantine. In a letter to his son, who was going out to Australia, the great novelist spoke of the New Testament as "the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world," and said that "it teaches the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be faithful and truthful to duty can possibly be guided." Upon this you bid young men to "remember Charles Dickens" when they "hear some person ridicule the Bible."

I have three observations to make in reply. First, the very language of Dickens in this passage shows he was in one of those sentimental moods to which he was prone. Secondly, the New Testament is not the Bible. Thirdly, the parts of the New Testament which Dickens recommended to his son are not likely to be the parts which the sceptic might ridicule.

You forget your own admission that "the Bible is not all on the same level of value." I may laugh at its absurdities, I may loathe its brutalities, I may turn in disgust from its obscenities; but this does not prevent me from admiring its beauties, thrilling at its occasional sublimities, and embracing its scattered truths. I smile at the story of the revolution of the earth being reversed to assure King Hezekiah of his recovery from a boil, yet I admire in the same book the prophet's exclamation "Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." I do not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, and I dissent from much of his teaching, yet when he says "Blessed are the peacemakers," I cry, "Amen!" And I marvel that nine-tenths of all the fighting in the world is done by his disciples.

Freethinkers understand you, but you do not understand them. You will never overawe their judgment by reciting the names of lauders of the Bible. They are in the habit of judging for themselves. They know that great names cannot turn falsehood into truth. History shows them that the grossest superstitions have had illustrious defenders.

Nor will you succeed by lying in ambush for their hours of weakness and distress. "The day may come to any of you," you say, "when you are in very great straits, when the brightness of your life is gone, and when you may need consolation; you will find no single book in the world so rich in consolation as the Bible."

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Thus you offer your Gospel of Nerves, which every Freethinker will refuse with scorn, however it may be palatable to the audiences you are accustomed to address. It is a gospel for weaklings and sentimentalists, for the blind, the foolish, and the selfish, for all whose life revolves on the axis of egotism.

Too long has the world been drugged by this gospel of "consolation." The anodyne may have assuaged miseries, but it has helped to perpetuate them. What the world needs is animation, the impulse to remove evils, instead of the patience to bear them.

While you are speaking of "consolation," however, you might condescend to particulars. Do you refer to the "consoling" text—"He that believeth not shall be damned"? Or to the text "Many are called, but few are chosen"? Or to the text, "many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able"? Or to the text, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever"? Or to the text, "God is a consuming fire"?

Perhaps these are not the "consolations" you mean. You may find them in other parts of the Bible. But how can you tell whether a broken-down, miserable man will light on those parts and be comforted? May he not light on the other parts and be terrified?

When John Stuart Mill, in the days of his early manhood, fell into melancholy, and saw the gloom of despair around him, he found relief from another book than the Bible, and a nobler "consolation" than celestial promises. "I was reading accidentally," he says, "Marmontel's *Mémoires*, and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would supply the place of all that they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew-lighter."

You see that "consolation," of the noblest kind, may be obtained from other sources than the Protestant fetish. It is not confined to your "single-book." Many have found it, and many will, in the little volume by Marcus Aurelius, which was rendered into Italian by Cardinal Barberini, who dedicated the translation to his own soul, to make it "redder than his purple at the sight of the virtues of this Gentile."

This perpetual recommendation of a "single book" is a trick of your profession. You imitate the gentleman who said there was nothing like leather. But there are other substances and other books. Who knows where is the specific medicine for a sick soul? A great word of Shakespeare, a lovely line of Shelley, a wise sentence of Marcus Aurelius, a single face in a picture, a piece of Greek statuary wrought by one of the masters of passion, a touch of broken sunlight on a landscape, a poor mother's hungry kiss of her dirty child, a strong hand helping the weak, a smile on a child's pure face; these things have found some men in their grief, lifted them from the Inferno of self-pity, brought them back to the daylight, and put them in touch with their kind.

This may show you that "consolation" is available to those who are so wicked, in your estimation, or so lost to decency, as to laugh at "certain passages" in the Bible. There are more things on earth, sir, (I exclude heaven) than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

G. W. FOOTE.

Some persons being in conversation the other day on religious subjects, one of them said that a certain clergyman, who had long been the shepherd of the flock, had become so haughty that he did not know some of the members of his own church. Another said that he must be a singular shepherd not to know the "sheep" of his own flock. A little girl, who was busy at play, replied, "Mamma, he ought to do as grandpa used to do with his sheep—paint their *noses*."

ACID DROPS.

Hugh Price Hughes has never accepted our challenge as to the truth of his Converted Atheist story, which we were constrained to call "A Lie in Five Chapters." He stands upon his dignity, and the band of worshippers around him flatter his pride amazingly. One of his Sisters once called at Mr. Forder's and bought a copy of our pamphlet. "Dear me," she said, "how shocking! A lie! Mr. Hughes couldn't *tell* a lie." Mr. Forder said nothing; he only smiled; but the smile was more expressive than words.

Lie or no lie, Mr. Hughes is often inaccurate. Indeed, his Methodist brethren had to tell him that he and Dr. Lunn had grossly exaggerated the facts in their articles on the Indian Mission. But of course the Methodist brethren don't care how inaccurate he is when he is opposing Freethought or lauding Christianity.

In the last number of Mr. Hughes's paper, the *Methodist Times*, there is an editorial paragraph from which we take the following: "It reminds us of Shelley's remark to Leigh Hunt, that the world might accept Christianity if that creed was founded upon love and not upon faith." Now Shelley never said anything of the sort. Leigh Hunt's actual words are these: "He said to me in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, 'What a divine religion might be found out, if charity were really made the principle of it instead of faith!'" There is not a word here about Christianity, and the words "might be found out" show clearly enough that Shelley meant something entirely new, differing from all existing systems.

What Shelley really thought about Christianity may be found in a letter of his to Horatio Smith, written only three months before his death: "I differ from him [Moore] in thinking it useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true."

So much for Hugh Price Hughes's attempt to convert Shelley. We advise him in future to stick to anonymous shoemakers. It is much safer.

Here is another of Hughes's little jokes. In his sermon on Mrs. Booth he says "I never heard a woman talk nonsense in public, but I am afraid it is the exception for men to talk sense." This is meant to be complimentary to ladies, but the clumsy silliness of it defeats its object. Women must be soft indeed to be tickled by such canting flattery.

"The Christianity of Christ" is responsible for all sorts of absurdity, from Count Tolstoi's teaching of celibacy and racial sucide down to the less sincere but "paying" rubbish of Hugh Price Hughes. This gentleman, in an article on "General Booth's Social Christianity," says that "Christ fed and healed the body instead of the soul." Indeed! When did the feeding happen, and where is it recorded? We are aware that Jesus multiplied loaves and fishes at a religious picnic, but whenever did he give a mouthful of bread to an ordinary starving man, or a day's work to one of the unemployed? Echo answers, When?

Simonides, the Greek forger, is said to have died poor in Albania. He was a learned man, and marvellously skilled in imitating ancient writings. He might have succeeded in palming off his own copies of portions of the Pentateuch as ancient manuscripts if his parchment had not been too new. At the British Association in 1862 he declared he had written the Codex Sinaiticus. Scholars have not credited him in this particular, though there is one at least, the Rev. J. M. Cotterill, who disputes the genuineness of the next celebrated manuscript of the New Testament, the Codex Alexandrinus.

W. S. Lilly, the short robe Jesuit, is credited with writing the article on Rénan in the *Quarterly*, which, beginning by calling him a great intellectual force, ends by saying he has added nothing to Voltaire, and "one Voltaire is enough." Quite enough for the Catholic Church. Saying that Rénan has added nothing to Voltaire is to say this century has made no advance in criticism on the eighteenth, a flagrant misstatement. The suggestion that Renan is

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included in Voltaire is absurd, and could hardly come from anyone honestly estimating the two great Freethinkers.

The *Speaker* has a scorching article on Archdeacon Farrar, treating his flashy, pinchbeck style with the contempt it deserves. No doubt a candid friend will send the Archdeacon a copy, and give him a bad quarter of an hour. We have sent him our own Letter in the *Freethinker*, under cover, so that it may reach him.

In the *Speaker* article there is a good story of a field-preacher who began his discourse—"Paradoxical as my argument may appear to thee, O Lord, it is nevertheless sound."

We are glad to see the *Speaker* protesting against a growing abuse of the novel and the drama. "The mild Agnostic," it says, "is tiresome enough in novels, but to invent inhuman selfishness and label it as scepticism is neither instructive nor entertaining."

There is something quite pathetic in Mr. Gladstone's belated theology. On Sunday morning he attended "divine service" at Rosslyn Castle, and handed up a note to the officiating clergyman desiring him to ask the prayers of the congregation on behalf of Lady Rosebery. Is there any educated man in England who really believes in this cure for sickness? Or has Mr. Gladstone enough faith in it to put it to the test without the collateral aid of doctors and nurses?

Dr. Talmage's church contains several millionaires, and Dr. Talmage himself, it is stated, makes something like £12,000 a year out of his preaching and lecturing. The interest of the Doctor and his millionaires in the conversion of the heathen is shown to the amount of about £50 a year, and when their own church was destroyed, these burning and shining lights appealed to the public for the money to rebuild it.—*Christian World.*

The flowery Brooklyn preacher has now completed his *Life of Christ*, and, according to *The American Advertiser Reporter*, he is "booming" it in characteristic fashion. About 4,000 papers appeared simultaneously with "an elaborate and illustrated review," furnished by the publishers, and the blushing author preached a special sermon on the "Life of Christ" in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The *Sun* has been letting its light flash upon the Doctor's methods. The book is described as "a rare conglomeration of pernicious nonsense, in which Talmage is held up and displayed and extolled and advertised, while Christ, in the story of his own life, plays a minor part."—*Christian World.*

After months of consideration the Rev. J. McNeill finds he cannot accept the "call" to Westminster Chapel. The trust-deed stood in the way, and the baulked preacher now thinks trust-deeds an invention of the Devil. The intentions of the people who gave the money ought not to hinder its being used by any preacher who would like to lay hands on it—all for the glory of God.

One of the *Joyful News* missionaries in China combines preaching the Gospel with extracting teeth. This appears to be thought an excellent way to John Chinaman's heart, but we expect the number of extracted teeth will far exceed the number of "saved" souls.

Another fact for the Christians who tried to make capital out of poor Easton's case, and especially for Dr. Tristram, who thinks he was not insane because he had renounced Christianity—as though, by the way, that were clear proof of a man's sanity. John Dacey, of 41 Tilson Road, Tottenham, committed suicide by hanging. A letter for his wife was found in his pocket, containing these expressions—"I pray that God will forgive me," "God bless all the little ones."

Minnie Gertrude Allen, of Reading, drowned herself in the Thames. In a letter found in her pocket, addressed to her friend, Kate Dormer, she wrote, "Ask the Lord to forgive me," "Good bye, God bless you," and "God bless them all."

In Brisbane, says the *Boomerang*, detectives occasionally post themselves outside church doors on Sundays. A social philosopher, recognising one of these detectives, inquired lately what the reason of this watchfulness was. The detective answered promptly, "Keeping an eye on embezzlers, bank clerks and bigamists." "But," continued the philosophers, "do these people expose themselves by getting to the front in this style?" "Go easy," replied the detective; "I don't mean that they are under the thumb of the law just now, but I'm identifying them for the future. What is *your* little game?" The philosopher, taken back by this, said, "My little game?" "Yes," said the detective; "as like as not you're dodging round for material for a half-crown paragraph. Good day." "Good day," said the philosopher.

Mrs. N. Sullivan, of Springfield, Ohio, is a member of the Presbyterian Church, and has of late been sitting up at night reading the Bible. The teachings of the old book sunk deeply in her mind. She saw that God was fond of blood, and declared that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. She constructed an altar, and prepared to sacrifice her six-months-old son. She stripped the child, placed it on the altar, and, while reaching for a butcher-knife, relatives opportunely broke in and she was overpowered. She demanded that she be allowed to proceed, claiming that the Lord had commanded her, and delared that she wanted to wash her hands in the blood of the lamb.

The wife of the Rev. Henry Paterson Cameron, minister of Milton Parish Church, Glasgow, has sued for a divorce on the ground of her husband's intemperate habits, cruelty and adultery.

The Rev. C. Radcliffe has to endure eighteen months' hard labor for spoiling the Egyptians at Margate. He "borrowed" some gold rings and kept them, holding that the Lord had need of them. His form of piety was considered out of date by the magistrate.

According to a Dalziel telegram the Nunnery of the Buried alive at Naples has been confiscated by the Governor, and the premises will hereafter be used for school purposes.

A Berlin telegram announces the foundering of a steamer off Cape St. Vincent with a thousand emigrants on board, bound for Brazil. Was their God—as Elijah said of Baal—talking, hunting, on a journey or peradventure sleeping?

South America has had its turn of terrible floods, the Orinoco and its tributaries overflowing their banks and destroying some fifty persons and fifteen thousand head of cattle. At Ciudad, Bolivar, two thousand inhabitants are houseless. God's care does not seem to extend over these districts.

"The *Freethinker*," says "Invisible," in the St. Pancras *Guardian*, "good-humoredly criticises a note of mine, *re* the Rev. John McNeill. Mr. Foote says, if the Lord were to send him £50,000 it would not convert him, but he would use it for the propagation of Secularism, and further, he would not pay it back till the Resurrection Day. Mr. Foote is artful. He knows very well that on the Resurrection Day all hands will be rather too busy to deal in monetary transactions. If Mr. Foote keeps his cheque till the day after the Resurrection, it might get scorched."

"Invisible" is slightly mistaken. If the cheque could be negotiated we shouldn't keep it till the Resurrection Day. If it made no difference to the Lord we should prefer a bankers' draft or bank notes. Solid cash would do as well as either.

Dr. Brauner, a member of the Austrian Reichsrath, recently lost his wife. The lady desired to be cremated, and her wish was respected. But when the ashes were laid in the family vault at Prague the clergy refused to officiate. They will not countenance cremation. Like carrion crows, they are used to corpses, and will have them.

The *English Churchman* of Oct. 23 cites from a Spanish Catholic organ, *La Bandera Catholica*, a wish for the re-establishment of the Inquisition in Spain, ending with

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the following truly Christian utterance: "What a day of pleasure it will be for us when we see Freemasons, Spiritualists, Freethinkers, and anti-clericals writhing in the flames of the Inquisition."

The Catholic and Protestant Churches in Hungary are at daggers drawn because the Hungarian Minister of Public Worship has published a decree providing that in the event of a child of Protestant parents being christened into the Catholic Church, which has hitherto been done at the instance of either parent, the Catholic priest must give notice to the Protestant clerical authorities. The Catholic priests refuse to do this, and the Pope approves their refusal, so it will have to be seen whether Church or State is stronger.

The Reconciliation Service at St. Paul's has led to a long controversy in the *Times* as to the supposed necessity of cleansing from defilement a building consecrated by the Holy Ghost. The Rev. J. S. Brooke says the Cathedral is "dirty," that it is used "as a place to transact business in by men who cannot afford to pay for an office in the city; for assignations made within its sacred walls, and actually where the odds on the racing events of the season have been given and received." If the Holy Ghost hasn't left after this, he probably would not be deterred by a little blood, and if he has, perhaps even the Bishop of London cannot bring him back.

The Pangbourne Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society has been discussing "The Deluge, was it Universal?" Evidently the spirit of inquiry is abroad. Perhaps the P. Y. M. M. I. S. will by and bye discuss the following—"Our Parson: is he as Wise as he makes out?" "The Devil: is he as Black as he's Painted?" "The Bible: is it as Holy Inside as Out?" "The Virgin Mary: did she have Eight Children?"

The younger brood of Presbyterians are getting ashamed of Calvin's creed that there are infants in hell not a span long. It is refreshing to find a few of the older hands trying to stand by the long dismantled guns. Thus the Rev. W. G. T. Shedd, in a text-book on *Dogmatic Theology*, says: "Infants are righteously exposed to the punishment of sin and have no claim on divine mercy."

The Plasterers' Union of New York and Brooklyn refuse to admit Joseph Byron into their Union because he wished to affirm instead of taking an oath. As they control the trade he is unable to obtain work through this disgraceful persecution in the name of religion.

Despite the claims of three millions of English who, according to General Booth, are sunk in destitution, vice, and crime, the Church Missionary Society is going to make another desperate effort for the "poor heathen." Doctors and schoolmasters, as well as ministers, are to be asked to go out to the mission field; and, of course, a lot of extra money will be wanted to pay the piper. Poor heathen! And poor John Bull! who has to support all these religious harpies. If he doesn't mind he'll get the staggers, as sure as his name is Johm.

The London Congregational Union doesn't intend to let General Booth have all the picking of the "Darkest England" bone. Dr. Parker is going to preside at a special meeting of that body on November 25, and a "Forward Movement" is to be inaugurated.

Dr. Parker, by the way, lately said that the pulpit would never be wise until the pews were. This is making the clergy the tail instead of the head, but we don't intend to quarrel with Parker on this point. We are quite willing to take his estimate of "the cloth."

The *Weekly* takes off Joseph Parker's notions of preaching Christianity in the following lines:

Let Dogma and Divinity
And Metaphysics die;
Discourses on the Trinity
Are generally dry.
The pious Congregational
Has found a better way,
And trusts to prove sensational
On Topics of the Day.

At a Church Missionary Society meeting, at Reading, Dr. H. M. Sutton said that the doctrine of the Trinity was the great stumbling-block of Mohammedans. They want it explained, and the missionaries find it hard work. The Mohammedans believe in God, but, as Gibbon said, they worship him without a partner or a rival; and "three times one are one" makes the multiplication table do a tipsy dance in their brains.

Educational establishments are awful places when the clergy are not allowed to rule the roost. According to a recent speech of the Bishop of London, a well-known Church dignitary spoke of the Devil pitchforking children into the Board schools. The Bishop does not consider this a "temperate" expression, yet he deplores our national danger of a godless education. For our part, we view the danger with something better than equanimity. The only people who will really suffer are the clergy who supply artificial wants and require children to be artificially educated so as to grow up their customers.

Parson Diggle is trying to get up central boards of administration for denominational schools with a view to obtaining grants for them equivalent to those accorded the Board Schools. We do not think the nation will readily endorse the endowment of denominational education. But Parson Diggle is worth watching.

Sir Arthur Blackwood has been presiding at a *National* Protestant Congress called to form a union of all *Protestants* in the country against the encroachments of *Romanism*. He is reported as saying, "They were at their wits end so far as human help or human wisdom reached." If Romanism could only be stayed by the wisdom of such men as Sir A. Blackwood, Protestantism would indeed be in a pitiable case. But Rome has, and knows she has, a more formidable enemy than the drivelling Evangelicalism of Sir A. B. She has to meet the armies of Science and Freethought.

The Unitarians, it seems, are bent on a forward movement to reach the "unchurched masses" in the larger provincial towns. They find that confining their attention to the cultured and wealthy classes, they make but little headway, and it is questionable if, with the masses, they serve for anything more than a stepping-stone to Freethought.

The "unchurched masses" constitute a pretty big sea to fish in, but we wouldn't give a high price for the Unitarian catch. Unitarianism has never been popular, and never will be, despite its wealth, learning, and ability. It is "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring," and the people like something decided.

Mark Oldroyd, Esq. M.P., in taking the chair at a lecture on What is Christianity, at Dewsbury, indulged in a deal of rash assertion. He said, for instance "Christianity had liberated the slave, it had exalted woman, and had given us one day in seven of rest." When did it liberate the slave? Slavery existed in Christian countries down to our own times, and Wilberfore admitted infidel France set the example of liberating slaves. How has it exalted woman by commanding her to keep silence in the churches? To claim the Sabbath, which was in existence long before Christianity, is of a piece with the rest of Mr. Oldroyd's ill-founded claims.

A writer in the *English Churchman* wishes to know how advocates of the Higher Criticism, which holds the non-Davidic authorship of the Psalms, reconcile their position with the expression of Christ in Mark xii., 36, "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost," etc. Well, they may well hold that Christ knew no more about the authorship of the Psalms than he did of the shape of the earth. They didn't know everything down in Judee.

Dr. Jayne, the Bishop of Chester, who would rather see England free than sober, finds the Sabbath has become "a day of sluggish and wearisome inactivity and those filthy tipplings which the famous Book of Sports anticipated as one of the results of Sabbatarianism." Dr. Jayne would substitute "recognised and suitable recreations"—of course not taking place at church time. He does not specify them, finding it difficult perhaps to name any that are not likely to prove far more attractive than church attendance.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 2, Queen's Hall, Nelson, Lancashire; at 10.45, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

November 9, Grimsby; 16, Birmingham; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

SPINOZA.—No doubt you are doing good by such lectures and meetings. Still, we hope there will be a re-formation of the Wigan Branch. Glad to receive your good opinion of the *Freethinker*. The paper costs a deal of labor, and is only just beginning to yield a little remuneration.

A. B. MOSS.—When rowdies mean to interrupt and cause disorder the subject is indifferent. We are glad to hear you got on so well.

H. MILLS.—See "Sugar Plums." We are particularly gratified to learn that the *Freethinker* is influencing young men in Manchester.

W. BRADBURN.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. J. GAINES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. R. CLIFTON contrasts the scene at the Lyric Theatre, which he witnessed, with the stampede in the Chicago church. An actor promptly seized the burning material, and with the assistance of other employees stamped out the fire, while the people kept their seats. There seems to be more cowards in God's House than in the Devil's House.

W. H. S.—French papers are welcome. Thanks.

J. HAMPSON (Bolton) writes: "I am pleased to inform you that the *Freethinker* is circulating more freely here. One newsagent, who did not sell any six months ago, now sells eighteen copies weekly. If newsagents will only show a contents-sheet the paper will go. I always see that *mine* exhibits it, or I refuse to take what he has left." We hope Mr. Hampson's example will be widely followed. If *all* our friends lent a helping hand, our circulation may be doubled.

E. POWNCEBY.—Glad to hear the Camberwell friends are helping with the Peckham course of Free Lectures, and that Mr. Ben Ellis is exhibiting posters. Mr. Ellis is a sturdy Freethinker as well as a sturdy Radical, a picked specimen of the best order of working men.

J. F. WATSON.—We have not space to give Cricket Club reports, even when the matches are played on Sunday, though we may give any necessary announcement from time to time in the interest of a Branch.

E. HENDERSON.—Sorry we cannot help you. We have no pamphlet on the subject. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* deals largely with ghost theories. That curate who believes in ghosts should be sent up to London and exhibited.

W. NICHOLS.—You do not explain the reason. Will you give it in confidence?

J. ROBINSON.—See "Sugar Plums." We guess you'll convert the lay helper before he converts you.

G. FRASER.—Glad to see the Reading Branch means business. Mr. Foote could not find time for a visit in October, but he may be able to in November or December.

W. JENKINSON.—We wish the Leyton Branch success, and hope it will be able, as you suggest, to organise open-air lecturing next spring.

J. NEATE.—Sorry to hear the Old Ford effort has not been successful. Still, we are not much surprised. Special efforts of that kind should be made with a background of resources, and with other wise precautions.

W. L. W.—Pleased to hear you take three copies weekly, and that every copy is well thumbed. Huxley accepts the Darwinian theory as no less established than the Copernican astronomy. See his *American Addresses* and his chapter in Darwin's *Life and Letters*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Menschenthum—Freidenker—Freethought—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—La Verité—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Lucifer—Ironclad Age—Progressive Thinker—St. Pancras Gurdian—La France—The Beacon—The Monist—Bournemouth Visitors' Directory—Glasgow Evening News—Mirfield and Ravensthorpe Reporter.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the cold and wet, Mr. Foote had a good audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and apparently gave satisfaction by his analysis and criticism of General Booth's book. Mr. Foote will probably deal with the book at considerable length in these columns.

To-day (Nov. 2) Mr. Foote delivers three lectures at Nelson, a small Lancashire town, where the *Freethinker* has an excellent sale. A Branch will be started after the lectures. There are other small towns within easy distance of Nelson, which will probably contribute to Mr. Foote's audiences.

The London Freethinkers' Ball will take place at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, November 26. The tickets are one shilling each, and are only sold to Secularists or their friends. By this means a "family party" will be secured. Hundreds of the "saints," male and female, will doubtless attend, and we think we may promise them a pleasant evening. There will be a smoking concert in the minor hall for those who don't dance. Mr. Foote will be present, and as he doesn't dance, he will have time for chatting. The balance, after paying expenses, will go to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Look out for the N. S. S. Almanack for 1891. It will be published next week at the old price of sixpence. First of all, it contains an excellent calendar, freshly compiled by Mr. Wheeler, and giving a vast number of "saints' days" for Freethinkers who want to remember, in the business and pleasure of life, some of the noble dead who have helped to purify and brighten the world. Then there is a full account, and an accurate one too, of Freethought work and organisations all over the world. Articles are specially written by C. Bradlaugh, G. W. Foote, J. M. Wheeler, G. Standring, A. B. Moss, W. P. Ball, J. M. Robertson, R. Forder, and S. Standring. Other pages are filled with items of information and grave and gay selections from Freethought writers. The Almanack will be simply invaluable to Freethinkers. Every member of the N. S. S. should order a copy at once.

Mr. Moss closed the afternoon lectures in Finsbury Park on Sunday. He was interrupted by the Christians most offensively, and several of them ran in front of him, mocking and jeering, as he left the park. Fortunately Mr. Moss is none the worse for their charity. Monkey faces and bestial noises don't break bones.

Mrs. Thornton Smith was unable to fulfil her engagement at the Tower Hamlets' Radical Club in consequence of sore throat. Her place was filled by ever-ready Mr. S. Standring. Unfortunately there was a falling off in the audience. We hope there will be a better muster on Thursday, Oct. 30, when Mr. Moss lectures. This copy of the *Freethinker* will be in many of our readers' hands in time to remind them. The place is Redman's Road, Mile End Road; the time 8 o'clock; admission free, and unlimited discussion.

The Battersea Branch will continue its out-door propaganda during the winter, a gentleman having kindly offered to pay all the lecturers. Only in the event of the weather being very unfavorable will any Sunday morning lecture be given in the Secular Hall, close to Battersea Park.

A Branch of the N. S. S. has been started in the Crook district. It numbers eleven members, but the roll should be largely increased. Freethinkers who care for the cause should apply at once to Mr. John Robinson, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law, Durham.

The Sunderland Branch has taken the Albert Rooms, in Coronation Street, and it is to be hoped that all the local Freethinkers will support the venture. Sunderland offers a splendid field for Freethought work.

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Mr. James Rowney lectures at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall this evening (Nov. 2). His subject is "The Resurrection." Freethinkers in the district should give him a cordial welcome.

Mr. Thurlow is paying Reading a visit and delivering six lectures under the auspices of the Branch. The Sunday lectures (Nov. 2) will be given in the Foresters' Hall, and there will be a charge for admission. The other lectures will be given on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, in the Lecture Hall of the Assembly Rooms, with free admission. This will give Freethinkers an opportunity to bring their orthodox friends.

Our paragraph brought plenty of supporters to the Manchester open-air lecture station. A ring was formed around the platform, and Mr. Grange the lecturer was safeguarded from violence. Still, there were many interruptions, and the lecturer had repeatedly to ask for fair play. The Rev. Mr. Collar again behaved disgracefully, shouting "It's a lie," "It's a damned lie," and otherwise showing that beautiful spirit of charity which he taxes Freethinkers with lacking. Fortunately the crowd was large, many copies of the *Freethinker* were sold, and more given away, and Mr. Grange made an impression on the more sensible part of his audience. All the Manchester friends have to do is to persevere.

In the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, Oct. 25, Mr. Holyoake gives an account of Mr. Thomas Scott and his connection with Bishop Colenso, whose proofs he revised. Thomas Scott, one of the lesser known Freethinkers, was one of the most ardent and indefatigable. He issued fully two hundred separate works with the object of spreading his views. Mr. Holyoake gives reasons for thinking that Bishop Colenso was acquainted with the work called *A Few Hundred Bible Contradictions; or, A Hunt after the Devil*, by J. P. Y. This was really written by Peter Lecount, who, as a mathematician, went into the figures of the Ark much as Colenso did afterwards. Accounts of both Scott and Lecount will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

Secular Thought of Oct. 18, continuing its reprints of debates, and gives Mr. Foote's article, "Wait Till you Die," from these columns.

Dr. A. Van der Linde the learned Dutch scholar, and Freethinker, and author of a book on Spinoza, and the Spinozists, has produced a new work on Servetus, in which he enters largely into the heresy in the Middle Ages.

The Rev. Isidore Harris has been preaching at the Berkeley Street Reformed Jewish Synagogue, taking for his text the alleged Messianic prophecy in Isaiah's fifty-third chapter, but, of course, using Friedlander's translation instead of the misleading Authorised Version. Mr. Harris rightly insists that the people of Israel are personified by Isaiah as my "servant Jacob." It is the Jews and not Jesus who are without comeliness, and who are prophesied as living to see their seed, which Jesus never did. The chapter, in short, refers to the persecution and ultimate triumph of Isaiah's own nation.

Some French admirers of Garibaldi propose to erect a statue to him at Dijon, but the project is exciting the bile of clerical France.

M. Renan has been interviewed on the new *Life of Jesus* by Pere Didon, which, in consequence of rumors of its heterodoxy, has been selling largely in France. M. Renan finds the work of the Catholic priest a collection of commonplaces "un recueil de banalities." He finds the learning of Pere Didon very weak, and compares the attempts of any one bound in the priesthood to deal with such a subject to one who has to dance among eggs with a bullet tied to his feet.

Mr. W. P. Ball's new volume is now published in Macmillan's "Nature Series." It is entitled, "Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited?" This is no mere question of biological speculation. It goes to the roots of all the great questions of improving man, whether by means of education and social reconstruction or by the elimitation of the unfit. Mr. Ball's work, which was recommended to the publishers by Prof. G. J. Romanes, has since been highly commended by Mr. Francis Galton, perhaps the most competent authority living on the question with which it deals. We shall shortly review the book in these columns.

The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, has published a new quarterly magazine, entitled *The Monist*. The first number contains a good list of contributions, including papers from G. J. Romanes on Physiological Selection; Alfred Binet on the Immorality of Infusioria; Prof. E. D. Cope on the Material Relations of Sex in Human Society; Dr. Paul Carus on the Origin of the Mind; W. M. Salter on the Relation of the Mind to the Body, and others. *The Monist* is strictly philosophical, and rather heavy for the general reader, but it evidently merits the attention of all who wish to keep themselves abreast of scientific philosophy. An interesting feature is the review of the contents of other philosophical magazines.

Dr. Voelkel's *Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt*, is giving its readers a translation of Col. Ingersoll's *Household of Faith*. Ingersoll's productions seem read in every part of the world.

The next instalment of *Bible Romances* will be published on November 12. It will be a double number. The title will be *A Virgin Mother*. Besides criticising the Gospel story of the Incarnation, and showing its Pagan parallels, the pamphlet will give some curious bits on this very curious subject from early Fathers and Catholic divines.

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ETERNAL HOPE.

THE Christians' book declares that God the Son
  Came down to die, and open up a way—
The only way; wherein lost men may run
  From endless night to everlasting day;
And that this "only way" is closed to all
  Who fail to fix their faith on Christ throughout;
To those whose ears have heard no gospel-call,
  And those who, having heard, remain in doubt.
Yet notwithstanding this specific plan,
  Elastic Christians—those whose "views" are "broad"—
Maintain that, somehow, all the heathen can,
  And will, escape along some other road.
They say that Justice ne'er will damn a man
  Whom neither book nor voice has ever reached
To tell the tale of God's redemptive plan,
  The promise and the threat that Jesus preached.
But why surmise that God will mend his way,
  And cease to be the heartless fiend he is,
When hell is on the teeming earth to-day,
  Whose monstrous woes are no one's work but his!
He, *now*, makes sad and glad just whom he will;
  Oft virtue starves, whilst vice with cates is crammed;
The lord, the slave, the rich, poor, hale, and ill
  Are here now, and the blest, curst, saved and damned.
A God who did the deeds of Bible times,
  And fills, *to-day*, the world with blood and tears,
Is fit to do, *hereafter*, cognate crimes,
  And damn the guiltless through eternal years.
But common-sense refuses to conceive
  A God whose glory grows on sin and pain;
It finds it far more easy to believe
  That gods are merely phantoms of the brain.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Theosophical Father to his infant son and heir, whom he is walking up and down the room at 3 a.m.: "You must be a darned old fool to leave Devachan and reincarnate your Ego here just to keep me awake by bawling with the colic. How many times have you done this before, I should like to know? It's precious little sympathy you'll get from me. You are too old a stager."

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ANOTHER LITTLE FORGERY.

John vii., 8 A.V., reads "Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast." If the reader will turn to the Revised Version he will read in the margin, "Many ancient authorities omit *yet*." What, in the name of the holy pigeon does it matter! exclaims the impatient reader. Thereby hangs a tale. About 270 A.D., a learned Neo-Platonic philosopher named Porphyry wrote a work against Christianity. Like all similar assaults, it was effectually refuted by the process of suppression. All copies extant were burned by order of the Christian Emperor Theodosius, 415, and all that is known of it is what Christian apologists have chosen to mention in their refutations. Sufficient remains to show Porphyry was no fool. Now, Porphyry, so Jerome informs us, cited this passage in proof of the inconstancy of the purpose of the Christians' God. He said he would not go up to the feast, yet he went. Prebendary Scrivener, in his *Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, says it is plain that Porphyry, the foe, and Jerome, the defender of the faith, both found in their copies *not*, not *not yet*. This is the reading of the Sinaitic, and is preferred by Tischendorff and Tregelles. The little change, as Scrivener admits, "could not be accidental." It was due, in fact, to the pious but dishonest zeal of Christians, who could not allow that their idol told a fib, or that their God was differentiated from a donkey in changing his mind, one or other of which appears to have been the case in this matter of going to the feast, so they deliberately falsified the Scripture "all for the sake of Jesus."

LUCIANUS.

SCOTCH THISTLES.

Scotland is at present suffering from a church fever. Church defence meetings, layman's leagues, and disestablishment meetings are the order of the day. In every centre, large and small, the church party is working unceasingly, and the disestablishment party is now on the stump. A plebiscite has been taken in some towns, and in nearly every case the vote has been in favor of the retention of the establishment; in Mid-Calder, for example, it is announced that fully 85 per cent. of all males in the parish of 18 years and upwards have signed in favor of the Established Church. I firmly believe that, if attention is paid to the expressed wish of the majority, the Scottish Church will not be disestablished during the next decade. The establishment has got blind votaries by the thousands who will work night and day for her in the hope that ZION may be preserved in Scotland.

Signs are not, however, wanting that the Scottish people are shaking off their Puritanical notions. During the past summer Sunday orchestral concerts have been held on Portobello Pier, and so great was their success that the largest circus in Edinburgh has been engaged for the coming winter where these Sunday concerts will be continued. In Glasgow, too. some daring spirits have opened a hall where, on Sunday evenings, Secular music is discoursed. The sky-pilots are furious, though impotent. The promoters are within the law, apparently, and defy the men of God.

The Scotch Established Church presbytery held its examinations last week and only one student was plucked, and that, too, for Bible knowledge. A friend of the unfortunate one consoled him with the remark "If to know all about the high jinks of the Patriarchs and the kings of Israel is a virtue, it must also be good to practice them."

For barefaced cheek the Rev. George Wilson, of Saint Michael's Church, Edinburgh, has few equals. A collection was being made on behalf of the poorer clergy and this overpaid functionary had the audacity to tell his hearers (who are chiefly of the working class) that a working man with 18s. a week is really better off than a clergyman with £200 a year. Can impudence go further?

It is reported that upon a recent Sunday, a Scotch Divine forgot his manuscript and despatched the Beadle to the Manse for it. The messenger did not reach the Church again until after the minister had taken his seat in the pulpit. John therefore climbed the steps and handed a parcel to the luckless parson, whispering at the same time, in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the Church:—"Your wife couldnd' fin' your paperie so she's jist sent the book ye copied it oot o'. She says it'll may be dae as weel." R. M. R.

THE NEW MESSIAH IN ILLINOIS.

Of the modern Jesus Christ, Schweinfurth, Dr. Brown says in *Ironclad Age*:—

"I am pained to write you that the grand jury of this country, now in session, have been disturbing Heaven! The whole herd of angels who people that resort, were summoned on Monday last to appear and testify before the grand jury touching the action of the Holy Ghost. Our Lord, as was his custom when on the earth before, went into retirement, and was nowhere to be found. The registrar stated last night that no evidence appeared against our savior; that his angels, who were all good-looking, but without wings, returned to their celestial haunts, and the bill pressed upon the jury by the prosecuting attorney was ignored. Possibly this statement was a ruse to bring the dear Master from his hiding place.

"As 'the blood of the martys is the seed of the church,' so persecution will bind these harmless dolts together, and make them more active in spreading their faith, and in increasing their numbers. Mormonism owes its existence today to the violent prosecutions they have passed through.

"There is no law to prevent a person being a d—d fool if he insists on it, so if these simpletons down in Stillman Valley, several miles from Rockford, and their few imitators elsewhere, wish to believe in the nonsense taught by these donkeys, why let them, that is all. Their teachings are no more ridiculous than what is heard every Sunday, from half a million pulpits, each telling about a *crucified God*, and half of them worshiping his mother!"

WITCHES.

"In 1730 Professor Forbes, of Glasgow, published his *Institutes of the Law of Scotland*, in which he spoke of witchcraft as 'that black art whereby strange and wonderful things are wrought by power derived from the devil,' and added: 'Nothing seems plainer to me than that there may be and have been witches and that perhaps such are now actually existing.' Six years later, the Seceders from the Church of Scotland, who professed to be the true representatives of its teaching, strongly condemned the repeal of the laws against witchcraft as 'contrary,' they said, 'to the express letter of the law of God.'"

—*W. H. D. Adams, "Witch, Warlock and Magician" 1889.*

The law repealing the punishment of witchcraft with death was passed in 1736. The *Scot's Magazine*, Jan. 1744, gives an abstract of the Associated Presbytery for observing the Covenants, dated at Stirling, Dec. 23, 1743, "complaining of several immoralities, and the repealing of the penal statutes against witches which have been repealed by the Parliament, contrary to the express law of God: by which a holy God may be provoked in a way of righteous judgment, to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more, and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others to the same wicked and dangerous snares."

Parson: "Johnny, I am glad to hear that you did not go fishing last Sunday. I want you to tell me why. It was because it was wicked, and you would rather go to Sunday-school, wasn't it?" "No, sir; it was because I couldn't find the worms."

St. Januarius is servile; his blood liquefied for the Bourbon beloved of priests; for Garibaldi, the son of Belial; for Victor Emmanuel, excommunicated by the Pope. He once showed some signs of reluctance when an Atheistic French general occupied the city; but the Frenchman threatened to batter down the Church if the miracle were not performed; and when the tidings of this resolution reached the church, the liquefaction took place. So much better was the living General than the dead Saint.

There is an old negro in Austin, Texas, named Uncle Nace, who is a regular attendant at the church of the Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter. Meeting his pastor the other day, the latter said—

"You seem to enjoy my sermons mightly, Uncle Nace, considering you am so hard ob hearin'," shouted the clergyman.

Uncle Nace nodded understandingly.

"Kin yer hear me when I preaches!" bellowed the colored prelate in Uncle Nace's ear.

The old man shook his head.

"Whaf for den does yer come ter de church?" howled Baxter.

"Bekase hit muses me ter see you cut up dem monkey shines and saw de air wid yer arms."

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REVIEWS.

Evolution: True or False. By C. L. ABBOTT. J. D. Shaw, Publisher, Waco, Texas.—Mr. Abbott has put in brief compass the evidence for evolution derived from palæontology, embryology, geographical distribution, morphology, rudimentary organs, etc. He expresses the result in the endorsement of the theory by the most eminent scientists of the day. Concise and clear, the little work should have a large circulation.

Independence. Stanzas. By G. TH. MEJDELL, Christiania, Alb. Cammermeyer, 1890.—This is a curiosity of literature. The author, perhaps from the paucity of readers in Norway who would appreciate him, resolved to make English the vehicle of his thoughts. He taught himself the language, which he cannot speak, and writes it in a style which reminds of "English as she is spoke." The reader commencing with the first sentences "Moving in ranks and files is the tactics of the mass. Co-operation suits the common herd; at every turn they meet with mates of their own kidney," will be inclined to laugh at the mixture of obscurity and colloquialism. If he reads on, however, he will discover a veritable man beneath this uncouth garb. Mr. Mejdell is a man of ideas, and beginning his booklet with a feeling of amusement, we end it with a sentiment of respect.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Salvation."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Theosophy: its Follies and Absurdities." Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, Benefit Concert for a member (tickets 6d.). Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion. Subscriptions now due.

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11, "Eight Hours' Movement: by Law or Conciliation? In All Trades or Some"; 7, "My Heresy Now and Thirty-Six Years Since."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Problems of Life and Mind."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. R. Rossetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"; 7, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Sa[illegible]son." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. T. Thurlow will lecture.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "The French Revolution."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Capt. C. Pfoundes, "Ethics of Buddhism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3, debate between Messrs. Keen and Clarendon on "The Creation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, IV."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, a concert.

Cardiff—Queen's Chambers, No. 15 Room (second floor), 6.30, Dr. A. C. E. Parr, "The Aims of Socialism."

Glasgow — Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo Street, 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Passages from the History of the Great French Revolution."

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. John Grange, 3, "Does Man Survive Death?"; 6.30, "Thought: the Great Want of the Age."

Hull — Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. J. Sketchley, "Woman: her Position, Past, Present, and Future." Subscriptions now due.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 11.30 committee; 3, discussion class, "Has any Religion a Monopoly of Moral Teaching?"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Printing and Typefounding."

Leeds—Cave's Temperance Hotel, Briggate, 3, important meeting of the Yorkshire Secular Federation.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Wainscot, "Land, Labor, and Capital."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, a lecture on "True and False, Right and Wrong."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, "Mr. Hodder, "Christian Teachings and Practice"; 7, Mr. Malcom, "Can any Good come from Nazareth?"; Miss Payne will preside at pianoforte.

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, musical and other recitals by Mrs. Sidney and gentlemen friends.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a chalk drawing of Mr. Bradlaugh on view.

Stalybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street, 7, committee meeting.

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. R. Weightman, "All about the Devil."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 9, Woolwich; 13, Peckham Radical Club; 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Rusden; 28, Camberwell.

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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 45.] SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE ON SCEPTICISM.

MR. GLADSTONE'S last *Good Words* article is chiefly concerned with Scepticism and its causes. After quoting a jubilant sentence from Mr. Karl Pearson as to the decadence of Christianity, he remarks that we have heard this kind of thing often enough before, and immediately plunges into an historical disquisition on Freethought. Bishop Butler's preface to the *Analogy* is cited to show that "a wave of infidelity was passing over the land" in his day; but, according to Mr. Gladstone, it "dwindled and almost disappeared," and at the time of Johnson's social predominance it had "hardly left a trace behind." Now this is a most amazing blunder. The *Analogy* was first published in 1736. Nearly twenty years later were published the philosophical works of Bolingbroke, which were extensively read and very influential. The works of Chubb and other Deists were widely read in more popular circles. Presently the sceptical writings of Voltaire were translated into English; and it was in the very days of Johnson that Hume's masterly essays on Miracles and Religion saw the light. Surely this is a remarkable "disappearance" of scepticism, and the "hardly a trace behind" is positively ludicrous. As a matter of fact, it was just at this very time that Freethought penetrated to the multitude. Henceforth, instead of merely affecting fashionable and literary coteries, it was destined to influence the working classes, and the movement thus begun never abated to the day when John Bright told the House of Commons that the lower classes cared as much about the dogmas of Christianity as the upper classes cared about its practice.

Mr. Gladstone is similarly mistaken about the results of the French Revolution in England. He says it "generated a distinctly religious reaction," which is quite true, though only half of the truth. The Revolution stimulated advanced thought with the same intensity as it stimulated conservatism in Church and State. Wordsworth and Coleridge went one way, but Byron and Shelley went the other way. Paine's *Age of Reason* was devoured by myriads of readers, and a host of Freethought works swarmed from the press of Richard Carlile and his brave colleagues who, amidst calumny and imprisonment, made such a gallant stand for the freedom of the press. From that time to this there has been no real break in the progress of Freethought.

Were Mr. Gladstone's history as correct as it is false, there would still be no force in his contention that scepticism is subject to mutation or hazard, for no great movement of the human mind ever goes forward with an equable pace. The French Revolution was followed by reaction in France, but its ideas did not cease to operate. Restorations took place, and Napoleon the Little's empire succeeded in less than half a century the empire of Napoleon the Great. But after each disaster the Revolutionary idea gathered fresh strength, and the present Republic has been able to maintain itself against all its enemies. Similarly, if English Freethought has had its moments of rebuff and delay, it has nevertheless advanced in the main, as a stream flows onward with varying, but on the whole ever-increasing, volume and power.

We must also smile at Mr. Gladstone's view of the function of scepticism. He imagines it is designed in "the counsels of God" in the interest of faith. Its purpose is "to dispel the lethargy and stimulate the zeal of believers," and to "admonish their faith to keep terms with reason, by testing it at all points." But as scepticism is impossible without sceptics, and sceptics are liable to damnation, it would seem that Mr. Gladstone's deity moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. One might imagine that faith could be stimulated and enlightened by a less cruel or perilous method. The poor sceptics are like the fire-flies of Sumatra, which are stuck on spits to illuminate the ways at night. "Persons of condition," says Carlyle, "can thus travel with a pleasant radiance," but—it is very awkward for the fire-flies!

Anyhow, we find Mr. Gladstone admitting, what no man in his senses can dispute, a "strong and widespread negative movement among our countrymen during the latter portion of this century." And how does he account for it? Why, in the old-fashioned way, though in a less offensive manner. The main cause of "the growth of negation" is "not intellectual, but moral." Are sceptics, then, less moral than believers? No, says Mr. Gladstone; to say that would be "untrue, offensive, and absurd." "Had I ever been inclined to such a conception," he adds, "the experience of my life would long ago have undeceived me." What, then, does Mr. Gladstone mean? We gather the following points from his rather diffuse explanation.

Unbelievers do not become immoral because they inherit the advantages of the Christian tradition. "Many who have abjured Christianity," he says, "know not that in the best of their thought, their nature, and their practice they are appropriating its fruits." But this argument may be retorted on the Christian. The sceptic might tell him that his practice is determined, not by the doctrines and maxims of his creed, but by the mental and moral atmosphere which is generated by a thousand secular influences of science, art, literature, politics and sociology. The Christian tradition was the same three centuries ago as at present, but what a difference in our ethical ideals as well as in the constitution of society!

Mr. Gladstone would parry this by comparing our condition with that of "the Greeks of the fifth century before Christ, or the Romans at the period of the Advent." But this is a most fallacious test. Had the comparison been challenged a century or two ago—still the best part of two thousand years after Christ—it is very doubtful if an unprejudiced arbiter would have given the palm to Christendom. Europe, as a whole, was far less civilised than Greece or Rome; negro slavery existed in English and French colonies, political freedom was almost unknown, t'

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masses were ignorant and degraded, and the brutality of the poor and the profligacy of the rich were almost incredible. Vast progress has been made in the last hundred and fifty years, but to claim this as in any sense a product of Christianity is to fly in the face of history and common sense.

There is more force in Mr. Gladstone's next suggestion, that scepticism has increased because the world has grown more absorbing. The root of "the mischief" he finds in the increase of wealth and enjoyment. "It is the increased force within us of all that is sensuous and worldly," he says, "that furnishes every sceptical argument, good, bad, or indifferent, with an unseen ally, and that recruits many a disciple of the negative creed." This language is invidious, but it expresses a certain truth. This life and the next have always been in conflict. As the one grows the other dwindles. And as science makes this life better worth living, and humanitarianism ennobles it with an ideal glow, the "world to come" fades from our mental vision. In this sense it is perfectly true that secular progress is in itself an enemy to religion.

Mr. Gladstone would have us rectify "this-worldism" by cultivating the "organ of belief," which is probably our old friend "faith" under an *alias*; and he justly regards himself as possessing a higher development of this organ than was found in the late Mr. Darwin. But when Mr. Gladstone goes on to read the public its duties in regard to belief he runs counter to all the principles which guide him in politics. He declares the presumption to be in favor of what is received, and that "it is doubt and not belief of the things received which ought in all cases to be put upon its defence." What a rubbing of hands there would be in Tory circles if Mr. Gladstone talked in this fashion from political platforms! Then again, he tells us that inquiry is an excellent thing, but it should only be undertaken "when it can be made the subject of effective prosecution." What is this, however, but an ill-disguised plea for handing over religion to professional experts? But this is not Mr. Gladstone's policy in other matters. When he stumps the country he appeals to "the masses," and tells them they are the very persons to form a sound judgment. "Multitudes of men," he complains, "call into question the foundations of our religion and the prerogatives of our sacred books, without any reference to either their capacities or their opportunities for so grave an undertaking." But were a Tory orator to speak thus—as many Tory orators have spoken—of some effete institution, Mr. Gladstone would reply that the people are quite competent to form a judgment on broad issues. And it is just on those broad issues that the "multitudes of men" who think at all do form a judgment. They get hold of certain great ideas in politics, ethics, or religion, and by those ideas they judge institutions, customs and creeds. Such is the inevitable law of the popular mind, and if Mr. Gladstone's religious hopes are based on the expectation that this law is to be reversed, or set aside, in the interest of Christianity, we venture to say he is building on a foundation of sand.

G. W. FOOTE.

SCAPEGOATS.

In the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is found a description of the rites ordained for the most solemn Day of Atonement. Of these, the principal was the selection of two goats. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat"—(Heb. *Azazel*). The goat on whom Jahveh's lot fell was sacrificed as a sin offering, but all the iniquities of the children of Israel were put on the head of Azazel's goat, and it was sent into the wilderness. The parallelism makes it clear that Azazel was a separate evil spirit or demon, opposed to Jahveh, and supposed to dwell in the wilderness. The purification necessary after touching the goat upon whose head the sins of Israel were put corroborates this.* Yet how often has Azazel been instanced as a type of the blessed Savior! And indeed the chief purpose to which Jesus is put by orthodox Christians at the present day is that of being their scapegoat, the substitute for their sins.

The doctrine of the transference of sin was by no means peculiar to the Jews. Both Herodotus and Plutarch tells us how the Egyptians cursed the head of the sacrifice and then threw it into the river. It seems likely that the expression "Your blood be on your own head" refers to this belief. (See Lev. xx., 9-11; Psalms vii., 16; Acts xviii., 6.)

At the cleansing of a leper and of a house suspected of being tainted with leprosy, the Jews had a peculiar ceremony. Two birds were taken, one killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and the living bird after being dipped in the blood of the killed bird let loose into the open air (Lev. xiv., 7 and 53.) The idea evidently was that the bird by sympathy took away the plague. The Battas of Sumatra have a rite they call "making the curse to fly away." When a woman is childless a sacrifice is offered and a swallow set free, with a prayer that the curse may fall on the bird and fly away with it. The doctrine of substitution found among all savages flows from the belief in sympathetic magic.† It arises, as Mr. Frazer says, from an obvious confusion between the physical and the mental. Because a load of stones may be transferred from one back to another, the savage fancies it equally possible to transfer the burden of his pains and sorrows to another who will suffer then in his stead. Many instances could be given from peasant folk-lore. "A cure current in Sunderland for a cough is to shave the patient's head and hang the hair on a bush. When the birds carry the hair to the nests, they will carry the cough with it. A Northamptonshire and Devonshire cure is to put a hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give it to a dog. The dog will get the cough and the patient will lose it."

Mr. Frazer, after showing that the custom of killing the god, alluded to in my article on "Dead and Resurrected Gods," had been practised by peoples in the hunting, pastoral, and agricultural stages of society, says (vol. ii., p. 148): "One aspect of the custom still remains to be noticed. The accumulated misfortunes and sins of the whole people are sometimes laid upon the dying god, who is supposed to bear them away for ever, leaving the people innocent and happy." He gives many instances of scapegoats, of sending away diseases in boats, and of the annual expulsion of evils, of which, I conjecture, our ringing-out of the old year may, perhaps, be a survival. Of the divine scapegoat, he says (*Golden Bough*, vol. ii., p. 206):—

"If we ask why a dying god should be selected to take upon himself and carry away the sins and sorrow of the people, it may be suggested that in the practice of using the divinity as a scapegoat, we have a combination of two customs which were at one time distinct and independent. On the one hand we have seen that it has been customary to kill the human or animal god in order to save his divine life from being weakened by the inroads of age. On the other hand we have seen that it has been customary to have a general expulsion of evils and sins once a year. Now, if it occurred to people to combine these two customs, the result would be the employment of the dying god as scapegoat. He was killed not originally to take away sin, but to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age; but, since he had

* Azazel appears to mean the goat god. The goat, like some other animals, seems to have had a sacred character among the Jews. (See Ex. xxiii., 19; Lev. ix., 3-15; x., 16: xvii., 17; Jud. vi., 19: xiii., 15; 1 Sam. xix, 13-16; 2 Ch. xi., 15.

† See "Salvationly Similars," *Freethinker*, Feb. 9.

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to be killed at any rate, people may have thought that they might as well seize the opportunity to lay upon him the burden of their sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave."

The early Christians believed that diseases were the work of devils, and that cures could be effected by casting out the devils by the spell of a name. (See Mark ix., 25-38, etc.) They believed in the transference of devils to swine. We need not wonder, then, that they explained the death of their hero as the satisfaction for their own sins. The doctrine of the substitutionary atonement like that of the divinity of Christ appears to have been an after-growth of Christianity, the foundations of both being laid in pre-Christian Paganism. Both doctrines are alike remnants of savagery.

J. M. Wheeler.

A DESPERATE POLICY.

Those who have carefully studied the tactics of Christian defenders of the Faith during a lengthened period must have noticed a marked change for the worse during the past five years, not only in the character of the defence offered but in that of the defenders themselves.

Twenty years ago it was no uncommon thing to find men of conspicuous ability and talent engaged in disputation with the leaders of Freethought. Sincere and able men like Father Ignatius; learned and clever dialecticians like Rev. Dr. Harrison or Rev. Dr. Baylee; or courteous gentlemen, who were exceedingly able in their own peculiar line, but not very brilliant in debate like the distinguished mathematician Mr. Browne, M.A., and the Unitarian minister the Rev R. A. Armstrong, B.A. came forth and broke a lance with Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Joseph Symes, or with the Infidel Giant himself the redoubtable "Iconoclast" who since those stirring days of intellectual warfare has developed into the "esteemed member" for Northampton. It is true that there were in those days two or three disreputable individuals of the clerical persuasion who were proficient in the twin arts of lying and abuse, but decent Christians soon became ashamed of such advocates; and better men came forward in due course to supplant them.

The more astute among the clerical party saw from the first that it was a fatal policy to engage in discussion with Rationalists. They knew perfectly well that their creed could only flourish in an atmosphere of Faith; that the wholesome breath of doubt or disputation would cause their hot-house plant to wither away.

And they were right. Even the flabby-minded Secretary of the Christian Evidence seems to have accepted this view at last. At first he was inclined to come to the Hall of Science himself or send a simple-minded parson to beard the Infidel in his den; but now he and his clerical brethren wisely stay away.

But while the Christian Evidence Society has practically retired from platform encounters, the astute gentleman who organises the outdoor advocacy of the doctrines of "the meek and slowly Jesus" enlists in his service each season a number of ignorant and coarse-minded persons who disseminate more lies and slander each week than any other body of men who have the privilege of addressing a public audience. I am now writing of what I have heard myself, and I can confidently affirm that if Freethinkers were disposed to set the law of libel in motion against some of these unscrupulous persons—as Mrs. Besant did against a certain East End parson—several of them would find themselves located in unpleasant quarters for a definite period of their lives. I do not charge all the outdoor speakers with libelling the characters of dead and living advocates of Freethought. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Dick are two notable exceptions, and both of these gentlemen are listened to by Christians and Freethinkers alike with the respect with which their conduct deserves. But of some of the others it may be said that they pursue tactics which are brutal and repulsive in the extreme; and apparently their addresses, so far from receiving the censure of those in authority, get nothing but hearty approval. Let me give a few illustrations of what I mean.

Several of the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers deliver a sort of stereotyped address on "Secularism." Now although I believe that what I understand as Secularism is a good philosophy I am quite aware that it, like every other system, is open to criticism; and anything in the nature of argument against it or even of ridicule would be welcomed by any honest seeker after truth. But when, instead of argument against the principles of Secularism, we have a few isolated passages torn from their context from *The Elements of Social Science*, with a running commentary thereon; passages from which most Secularists utterly dissent; and when following these quotations it is said that Secularists live immoral lives, "or if they don't they ought to," one begins understanding in a small measure, the desperate straits to which these poor advocates are put in order to stay, as they imagine, the growth of Freethought. With a very ignorant audience this kind of policy goes down for a time; until indeed, the Freethought lecturer is heard in his own defence, and then Freethought grows apace again.

But the brutal policy does not end here. It is sometimes pursued to the extent of declaring that this lecturer or that is guilty of a specific crime, and though a casual audience cannot be acquainted with all the actions of a lecturer's life, such charges as these, made as they are without the slightest evidence of their truth, and for the sole purpose of bespattering the reputation of the lecturer against whom they are directed with the mud of slander—sometimes produce an unpleasant result upon an audience, and are certainly calculated to produce disorder.

In fact, in recent years, the Christian Evidence Society's representatives have been reduced to the position of the fishfag. Calling names, however, although it may annoy for a short time, breaks no bones; and most Freethought lecturers of my acquaintance have succeeded in living down most of the prejudices set up against them by the more coarse-minded of the Christians. However, it is to the general enlightenment we have to look for the growth of our principles. Let us by no means follow the example of our Christian brethren. Our policy is to attack what we regard as false beliefs—superstitions. But the characters of the advocates we leave to take care of themselves.

The representatives of the Christian Evidence Society are playing a desperate game; but like the villains of melodrama, they will get their quietus in good time; for the audience—the British public—is watching the play, and truth and justice will triumph in the end.

Arthur B. Moss.

One of the most curious stories of children's imagination is that of the youngster who, looking at the stars, said, "If those big bright nails, Papa, were to come out, with what a thump God Almighty would come down!"

In one of the Portsmouth public schools, a boy who was reading the morning lesson from the New Testament, rendered the verse (Matt. xxi., 38) thus: "This is the hair comb; let us kill him."

Conductor (to Mose Enstein, who is standing): "Fare, please." Einstein: "But I vos nod sidding." "That makes no difference." "Don't id? Vy, dot notice says: 'Shildren occupying seads will be charged full fare.'" "But you are not a child." Yes, I vos; I vos one ov der shildren ov Israel."

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NEWMAN AND GLADSTONE.

Mr. Conway, in one of his letters to the *Cincinattni Commercial*, says that he has good authority for the following story:—"Soon after John Henry Newman had gone off to the Church of Rome, with some of his followers, and the minds of the young men who are now leaders were profoundly agitated by the contrarious winds of doctrine, two of these, who had long been intimate, were engaged in earnest conversation: One of them said to the other, 'What think you of these men who have gone off to Rome? Is there any mental or moral characteristic common to them, any *ethos*, any uniform trait among them?' 'Yes,' replied the other, 'there is one feature they all have—a lack of moral honesty.' The man who asked the question is now the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. He who gave the startling reply is now the Catholic Archbishop of Archbishop of Westminster. About two years after the conversation, Manning had joined the ranks of the class he had so sweepingly impeached.

REVIEW.

The Dulness of Life. By RALPH LANE, Geneva, 1890.—This little brochure of sixteen pages comes to us from Switzerland. As a few able pleas for cheerfulness, individuality, Freethought, and education, it is worth reading. Mr. Lane holds religion responsible for much of our dulness. "It has deprived us of our capacity for happiness, and has left in its place the capacity for dissipation only." "Christians of all sects have in past ages always taught that the highest state was one of gloom and penance." "The Bible contains no cheerful exhortations to happiness and laughter." Religion moreover, as Mr. Lane shows, tends to crush individuality, and thereby the variety and piquancy of life. His observations are thoughtful and well put.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

ACID DROPS.

Cardinal Manning's reply to the Jews who thanked him for his efforts on their behalf was enough to disgust every student of history. His Eminence said there were three indestructible things—Judaism, the Catholic Church, and the World which persecuted both. Now the persecution of the Jews has always been carried on by Christians, and the greatest sinner has been the Catholic Church. The evidence on this point may be found in the eighth chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*. It is complete and damning. Cardinal Manning simply presumes on the general ignorance of the past. Still, the Jews must know the history of their own sufferings, and it almost passes our comprehension how they can listen to such lies from the lips of a Cardinal of the Romish Church. The only explanation we can offer is that priests and rabbis feel they must join their forces against the common enemy—Freethought.

Mr. Hogg is said to have been a frequent attendant at the Sunday evening services at Malden Hall, where he was looked upon as a most emotional, pious and devotional man. He was always one of the foremost in the hymns and responses.—*Daily Chronicle*, Nov. 3.

One Mary Weldon, of the Schweinfurth community, near Rockford, Illinois, says that, as with Mary of Bethlehem, her illegitimate child is the offspring of the Holy Ghost, who does not seem to have improved his methods. If he wants to get up a new incarnation, the avatar should dispense with a mother.

Another murderer gone to glory! Thomas Woodfolk, who murdered a whole family of nine persons in 1887, has just been hanged at Perry, Georgia. He had two trials and was convicted both times, his guilt being transparent. Yet he protested his innocence at the scaffold, and expressed his expectation of going straight to heaven. If the murdered persons are also in heaven, there will be a shindy when he arrives.

Dr. Parker says there are only two difficulties in the way of General Booth's scheme—"the first is the Devil, and the second is human nature." He omits adding that God made both.

General Booth declares that he is getting letters of approval from all sorts of people, and even from "Atheists." Probably the "Atheists" would prove on inquiry to belong to the Hugh-Price-Hughes species. Evidently the astute old showman wants everybody's cash. Even the "Atheist" is invited to shell out, although the General's book says that destitution and vice mean "Atheism made easy."

Archdeacon Farrar "hopes to be able" to send General Booth £50 early next year." Meanwhile he has the good advertisement of his half promise being printed in bold type in the newspapers. We say half-promise, for the Archdeacon only "hopes to be able" to send £50, and may only send £25, or nothing at all.

Succi is going in for a forty-five days' fast at New York. Jesus only did forty days. Yes, the moderns beat the ancients in most things.

Speaking "from experience" the Bishop of Manchester says that Materialism makes men mere pleasure-seekers. Now the Bishop's "experience" was gained at Melbourne, where the leading Materialist is a gentleman called Joseph Symes. Joseph works like ten niggers, and does wonders on a modest salary. Like the lady in Hood's song, his burden is "Work, work, work!" His time for recreation comes once in a blue moon. On the other hand, the Bishop of Manchester works perhaps as quarter as hard for a ten times bigger salary. What a cheek of brass he must have to talk about the spiritual life of men of his kidney, and of the low, grovelling, sensual life of his opponents!

Gedge, the pious solicitor, has had £196,531 out of the London School Board. But pious Gedge now looks rueful. The Board has had enough of it, and pious Gedge loses his appointment.

A. K. H. Boyd in the November number of *Blackwood*, defends the new liturgies of the Scottish Kirk by giving examples of the vagaries of extempore prayers. It was at a wedding-service "wholly extemporised" that the words were heard, "We thank Thee that Thou hast given us wumman to make us koamfortable." Another minister said, "We know there are blessings going to-night, and we put in for our share." One minister praying for the Royal Family, added the qualifying clause "all but Edward, Prince of Wales." This was his way of pronouncing Albert.

Now the winter is upon us, the open-air lectures at New Southgate are of course discontinued. The innocent fact has swollen with pride the breast of a certain Christian Evidence lecturer, who had the almost incredible ill taste to read the Secular Burial Service over the the "dead Branch," and one of his friends reports the proceedings in the *Barnet Press*. As a matter of fact, although the open-air lectures are necessarily discontinued, the Branch is in a more hopeful position, both as regards members and funds, than it has ever been in before.

In the November number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, W. D. McCrackan writes on the legend of William Tell. This story of the Swiss archer who freed his country was, down to recent times, accepted by the Swiss, and the places were shown where Tell shot at his son, and where he leaped into his boat. Yet modern investigation has shown so clearly that the story is a legend without foundation in history or contemporary evidence that the Swiss authorities have ordered it to be taken out of the school books.

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Here is an example for dealing with much earlier legends, those, for instance, concerning Jesus Christ, which, unlike the story of William Tell, have never been accepted by the people among whom the wonderful events are said to have occurred. The story of Tell has been profitable to the Swiss, but the story of Christ, as Cardinal Bembo is said to have remarked, has also been a profitable fable for the priests.

Grays School Board had a stormy sitting the other day. It was all on account of the Rev. F. Haslock, one of the members, who had a pecuniary dispute with the widow of the caretaker of Arthur Street Schools. The matter in dispute was only thirty pieces of silver, but Mr. Haslock did not consent to squaring the account until the chairman and other members had called him a perverter of the truth.

"Separate schools are provided for by the Constitution, and therefore the Constitution must go; the Federation must go, and the Dominion must go before the Church yields her control of the schools." Thus spake Archbishop Cleary at Kingston, Ontario. He is a worthy member of the lying, swindling and impudent Church of Rome.

The Eden Theatre, Paris, has produced a Biblical opera, by M. Saint Saens, entitled, "Samson et Dalila." The music is grandiose, descriptive of Samson's exploit with the foxes and Philistines. The principal feature is a Bacchanalian scene in the Temple of Dagon, where Samson, of course, brings down the house.

On Sunday morning, October 26, divine service was held as usual in the King's Chapel, Gibraltar; but at the end of the service, instead of the ordinary dismissal being played, the captain who officiated as organist struck up "God Save the Queen." This was done in honor of the Governor, who was present. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost took back seats while the Queen stepped in front. But military men have generally put their leaders before their deities.

What a joke! Thirty-two Spanish bishops have been calling on the infant King to put a stop to what they call the unjust treatment of the Pope by the people of Italy. The Queen-mother has wisely told them she would place the matter in the hands of her responsible ministers, who, we may be sure, will not pick a quarrel with Italy in the vain attempt to restore the Pope's temporal power.

The editor of *Great Thoughts* (what an ambitious title!) has some very little thoughts, and all of them his own, on "unbelief." The first half of the article is devoted to proving the unbeliever a fool, the second to proving him a rogue. We take time to decide into which category the writer himself falls. There is a good deal of the fool in his article, and perhaps a spice of the other character. But the problem can wait.

How the Christians are hedging on the question of Inspiration! Dr. Newton, of New York, says the point at issue among Protestants is whether the Bible *is* the Word of God or whether it *contains* the word of God; in other words, whether the clergy may or may not throw overboard as much of the good old freight as will enable them to ride out the storm. It is a neat little trick, but it will not save the ship for ever. Her timbers are worm-eaten, and she must sink eventually.

"Christopher Crayon," of the *Christian World*, is very ignorant of Freethought and Freethinkers. He asserts it is among the destitute and distressed that "secularists and atheists find their converts." But he is greatly mistaken. Freethought is recruited chiefly from the flower of the working classes, and the thoughtful lower middle class. Empty bellies made a poor foundation for thinking, and thinking is necessary to Secularism.

The *Century* for November, in an article by W. W. Rockhill, entitled "An American in Tibet," gives a striking instance of superstition in a Chinese Buddhist priest, whom he met on a pilgrimage to Lh'asa, and who prostrated his body at every two steps. "He carried in his hands a little altar, on which burned some joss-sticks, and this he placed before him in the supposed direction of Lh'asa before making his prostration. He was very cheerful, and told me that he hoped to be able to reach Lh'asa in about two years, as he had only some 1100 miles more to cover."

A very critical youth of six summers was staying with his father at Dolgelly. One morning, while frolicking about, he ran sharply round a corner and came into collision with two clergymen who were weathering it at the same moment. The clergymen, one of whom is a son of the G.O.M., were nearly bowled over. The next day the father, having heard of the incident, cautioned his young hopeful against knocking down gentlemen; and young hopeful replied, "Father, they were *not* gentlemen, they were men who go to church." That youth seems to agree with Sidney Smith that there are three sexes—men, women and clergymen.

Japan has started business on a new system with a constitution and an elective Parliament, and it is proposed that one of the first duties of this body shall be to "establish a new basis of morality suited to the conditions of the country." There is a certain amount of solid sense in this suggestion (says the Sydney *Bulletin*), for the European code of morals is such a lamentable misfit that it is of very little good to anybody. The parson preaches it and expounds it and lives upon it, ends by eloping with a borrowed female to 'Frisco, where he lectures "to men only." The social Purity Society which enforces it, get a cold in its eye through looking through the keyhole at some respectable lady, and finds itself cast adrift—an atom with an inflamed optic wandering loosely through an unsympathetic world. The politician who makes laws for its encouragement gets impaled on the spikes of a back fence while trying to climb over and interview a cook, and is mysteriously connected with the dead infant which is found in the suburbs. Everybody esteems the Ten Commandments, and skirmishes round after somebody else's wife. Everybody values the moral law, and nobody cares a hang for it. And, therefore, what is the good of a code of ethics which everybody admires, and a good many snuffle about, and nobody attends to? If the Japanese Parliament can find some "basis of morality" which is suited to the conditions of the country, it will have made a good start.

Bishop Barry, having specially received the Holy Ghost, may of course be considered as sharing in the counsels of the Almighty. He told the meeting of the S.P.G. at Portsmouth that it was for the sake of Christianity and the rest of the world that God had made England such a mighty empire. This of course explains why the Queen rules over more Hindus and Mohammedans than Christians, and why English law is losing its Christian character.

The Rev. H. Whitehead, speaking at the same meeting seemed to have a different view of the Lord's purposes through the means of our empire. He said: "That the inevitable result of the flood of English education and ideas in India was that it was beginning already among the educated classes to undermine their old beliefs, to destroy and pull down their old customs and civilisation, and to rob the people of their religion and bring them to the gulf of Infidelity and Agnosticism." Both the men of God are, however, agreed that the one thing needful is for the people of Portsmouth to shell out to the S.P.G.

The Rev. W. F. Pettit, of Crawfordsville, U.S.A., is being tried for poisoning his wife. It appears that, like David of old, he fell in love with another woman. The man of God, when his wife died from strychnine, had her body embalmed and the stomach washed out. But this did not remove all traces of the poison.

Christ has appeared again. There is no telling how many "second comings" we are to have. This time he appears in South Dakota. He is a product of the Christian schools for savages, paid for out of the United States treasury. He comes as an Indian. On the first coming our Savior was a Jew. It is hard to see how he should get back here as an Indian savage. But God's ways are not man's ways. Read:—Pierre, S. D., Oct. —Ten Hands, an Indian at Big Foot's camp, was ar yesterday by the authorities at the Cheynne Age hrown into the guard-house for posing as the In *e du Peuple* d of Hezekiah and been performing weird dances, a

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asking their annuities, rations and even money and ponies from the superstitious Indians.—*Ironclad Age.*

Professor A. B. Bruce declares that the Churches will only maintain their influence by "setting forth Christ's ethical teaching in all its alpine elevation." Perhaps so, but the clergy should begin the climbing. When they have reached the level of perpetual snow, and left wife, children, friends, and mammon behind them, the people may begin following, though we suspect that most of them would prefer the snug valleys of human comfort.

According to the *Scottish Review* a new Dutch handbook of religious instruction thus summarises the facts underlying the Gospels: "All that can be said to be historically certain is that there lived among the Jews of the past days, a commanding religious personality, to the partial narrative of whose life various minds felt themselves drawn to contribute."

Prof. Huxley, in his papers on "The Aryan Question and Pre-historic Man" in the November number of the *Nineteenth Century*, says: "There is not the least doubt that man existed in north-western Europe during the Pleistocine or Quarternary epoch."

In a satirical paper entitled "Wanted, a New Religion," *Blackwood* for this month says: "For the new cult to be a complete success it should contain a strong infusion of the supernatural or spookical element, as that sort of thing always draws. Spiritualism or Occultism, in their original forms, may be defunct or out of favor; but humanity is infected as strougly as ever with the same superstitions and the same cravings after the marvellous which formerly made them so popular."

The American soil seems productive of new sects. The latest to our knowledge professes "Koreshanity." What Koreshanity is we do not profess to know, though we have looked over its organ, *The Flaming Sword* of Chicago, dated in the "Year of Koresh 52." So Koresh, or Koreshanity, started in '48 the year of revolutions. It seems like Swedenborgianism in calling Jesus Jehovah, and like Shakerism in calling him "our Mother." It is curious that nearly all the new sects show the influence of woman by making God a female. Possibly they are atavistic recrudescences of the worship of goddesses.

Mr. Bosworth Smith long ago pointed out that the Christians stood no chance with the Mohammedans in converting the Africans. The missionaries of Islam are more earnest, more simple, and more self-denying than their Christian rivals. An instance of their courage is given by Mr. Jephson in his recent book. Three dervishes came to Emin with a message from the Mahdi, calling on the Pasha to embrace the true faith. They were fine-looking Arabs with an exceedingly dignified bearing. They walked into the camp without the least sign of fear, and on being asked what they came for, they replied, "We have come to conduct you by the true path to heaven." Emin's Egyptians threw the brave fellows into prison, inflicted on them horrible tortures, which they bore heroically, and finally beat them to death with clubs.

To say a man is a Mohammedan is to say he is a teetotaller. To say a man is a Christian is to say nothing about his character. Why is this? Because Christianity is such a fantastic creed, and may mean anything or nothing. Christian preachers aim at the stars and hit nothing but space. When they get hold of a reform they spoil it by overdoing. They are now hot against gambling, which, of course, is a practice for which we make no apology. But instead of tackling the vice where it is clearly mischievous, a lot of them are wasting their time in denouncing half-penny whist. By trying to make men perfect saints they leave them sinners. A little common sense on this matter, as on every other, is better than any quantity of religion.

The voyage up a n[illegible]nah in a whale being attested by J. C. (Matt. xii. a mother[illegible]ievers will be delighted to hear from Prof. [illegible]re is a species of whale, *Balæna Mysticetus*[illegible]fully extended, would provide ample [illegible] this no one need trouble themselves how is came to be in the Mediterranean or how it got round to Nineveh.

A Mrs. Vince, of Thorington, has published a farrago of hysterical nonsense about Clacton-on-Sea. This lady is so superior in piety and goodness to the rest of the world that she "dare not leave" the village of Thorington for fear of the pomps and vanities of other places. "I never met with so much infidelity," she says, "as I did at Clacton." She also states that she had to change her lodgings three times, and got into three different houses where there was no copy of the Bible, while she found novels sown broadcast, and was scandalised at the sight of ladies reading this baneful literature.

There was a lively discussion at the Ruridecanal Conference at Maldon, Essex, on the question of Church Reform. Evangelicals and Ritualists went at it hammer and tongs, while the Broad Church minister of Maldon struck in with a proposition that the Church should be made wide enough to embrace all Christian sects, a suggestion which was greeted with a suggestive whistle.

A Vienna telegram says:—"Exhorted by thousands of excited country people, the girl who claims to have witnessed a manifestation of the Virgin Mary in a tree at Luttenberg, has with her foster mother gone to Marburg to demand permission of the Archbishop for the devout to witness the miracle under the tree. At present seven gendarmes are posted around, and do not allow it to be approached." Apparently the authorities are of the opinion which actuated those at the time of the alleged miracles of the Abbé Paris to affix the notice

De par le roi, defense a Dieu!
De faire miracles dans ce lieu.

By order of the King, God is forbidden to do miracles at this spot.

Japan has been suffering from a terrible fire which has rendered from 13,000 to 18,000 people homeless. In their attempt to extinguish the flames no fewer than 157 were injured. Immediately after this the Lord sent floods, but not on the fire. Bridges were swept away, extensive landslips have taken place, and railway lines destroyed. Is the Lord waxing wroth because the Japanese will not have his religion?

Hugh Price Hughes is still silent as to the identity of his Atheist Shoemaker. A young man at Nelson wrote to him on the subject, and Mr. Hughes replied that an explanation might be expected in the *Methodist Times*. Weeks rolled by and no explanation appeared. Whereupon the young man at Nelson wrote to refresh Mr. Hughes's memory, and added that as he spent most of his spare cash on Freethought literature he couldn't afford to take the *Methodist Times* every week on the off chance of finding that long-delayed explanation. Mr. Hughes didn't answer that.

According to Mr. Hughes's last article "a healthy Christian is a Christ-like man." Well, in that case Mr. Hughes isn't a healthy Christian. Jesus often charged his converts to tell no man. Mr. Hughes tells everybody beforehand. He publishes in haste, and makes the convert at leisure.

Renan, says the *Christian Commonwealth*, has fascinated and allured where Ingersoll and Bradlaugh have disgusted. Perhaps so, but are the people who could be disgusted by the earnestness of Bradlaugh, and the wit and geniality of Ingersoll, worth fascinating? And is there not a deal of humbug about our contemporary's criticism? We are not aware that Bradlaugh or Ingersoll ever suggested that Jesus and Lazarus got up that resurrection trick between them. Renan did so, however, in the *Vie de Jesus*, and we should like to know if this is the part our contemporary thinks fascinating.

"Yes," sighed the disappointed mother, "I brought up my son very carefully and piously. As soon as he was old enough I got him to join the church, and made him give me his solemn promise that when he married he would marry a Christian woman." "And didn't he?" "No; he married one of the girls of the choir."

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 9, Hall of Science, Freemason Street, Grimsby; at 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "A World Without God."

November 16, Birmingham; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. JOHNSON.—The reverend gentleman draws on his imagination for facts. Mr. Foote was not in when the reverend gentleman's "convert" called at our office.

N. B. BILLANY.—The date is booked.

R. W. HOLLOWAY.—Yes, this journal will be sent post-free for one year to any address in the United States if you pay Mr. Forder 6s. 6d. We cannot advise you how to evade the vaccination at New York.

TOLEMAN GARNER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. ELDER.—Our readers would hardly be interested in the nebulous utterances of an obscure American. Always glad to hear from *you*.

S. STANDRING.—You are doing a good work. Go on.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—J. Crabtree, 10s.; R. Roberts, 5s.; Three G's, 10s.

F. G.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

T. BIRTLEY.—Jokes are always welcome. The portraits are now sent. Glad to hear the circulation of the *Freethinker* is so rapidly improving in the Chester-le-Street district.

A. H. HUNTER.—We did not keep the letter and cannot furnish the address.

R. ATKINSON.—Sorry to hear the Yorkshire Federation cannot do any indoor work during the winter. We are pleased to learn that the outdoor propaganda during the summer has been successful. The fact is, we take it, there must be several good, strong Branches already existing before a Federation can be much of a reality. During the winter Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Sheffield, and other towns, should be well worked and organised by the local Freethinkers.

W. J. FORD.—Under consideration.

VIGILANCE.—See "Acid Drops."

T. PHILLIPS.—No doubt our propaganda would be very successful among the Durham miners. We hope the Spennymoor Branch will help in this direction.

E. SMEDLEY.—Poor old Robert Owen became a Spiritist in his dotage. Dr. Sexton tried many things. George Chainey is an amiable lunatic. We regard Spiritism as a relic of savage superstition. It is common enough among barbarians today. We never "heard" any "spirits" and don't expect to until our brain addles.

W. WHEELER.—It seems to be a proper work for the political associations.

MARQUIS DE PRESLES.—Mirabaud's *Système de la Nature*, and some of the essays and dialogues of Diderot.

W. J. K.—Papers and cuttings are always welcome.

T. A. HELLSTERN.—We don't understand. What is the ground of objection?

C. Q.—Colenso, of course, was not infallible. We cannot hunt through all his volumes, at the moment, for the point in question, which does not seem of much importance.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the batch of jokes.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Courier—Western Figaro—Portsmouth Evening News—Freidenker—Freethought—Der Arme Teufel—Church Reformer—St. Pancras Guardian—Bombay Guardian—Two Worlds—Manx Sun—Yorkshire Evening Post—The Flaming Sword—Menschenthum—The Progressive Thinker—Maldon Express—Barnet Press—Der Lichtfreund—Protestant Standard—Rochdale Observer—Echo—Portsmouth News.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

"Booth's Book," a series of articles by Mr. Foote, will be commenced in our next issue.

Last week's *Freethinker* ran out of print on Saturday, although we had an extra supply. If our friends will continue to assist us by pushing the paper among their friends and acquaintances, our circulation will soon relieve us from the strain of unpaid labor. We don't want a fortune, but even a Freethought editor must eat to live.

The *Freethinker* goes all over the world, even into Russia, but the censorship of that anything but God-forsaken country seems to be alive now to our wickedness. Still there are ways of circumventing it, and we hope our Russian subscribers will continue to receive their favorite paper.

Mr. Foote visited Nelson, in Lancashire, for the first time on Sunday. His lectures were delivered in the Queen's Hall, a large building, the proprietor of which does not yield to the pressure of local bigotry. Unfortunately the weather was unpropitious. The morning audience was a fair one; the sky clearing a bit, there was a fine audience in the afternoon; but the rain poured down again before the evening lecture and thinned the attendance. Another misfortune was the non-arrival of the parcel of literature, and the loss of the introduction of the *Freethinker* to scores of fresh readers. Still, the day may be regarded as a success. The audiences were most respectable, in the best, not in the cant sense of the word, and every decisive Freethought sentiment was cheered to the echo. Mr. James Crabtree, of Colne, presided at all three lectures and made an efficient chairman.

Nelson is now to have an N. S. S. Branch. The younger Freethinkers mean business, and we must look forward to an active propaganda in the district. The local circulation of the *Freethinker* is rapidly increasing. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Nelson again in the spring, and to have the pleasure of congratulating the new Branch on its prosperity.

The National Secular Society's Almanack could not be got ready by Wednesday. Some delay was occasioned by late corrections. By Monday at the latest, however, or perhaps earlier, copies will be on sale. As the Almanack is now the property of the N. S. S. every member should feel it incumbent on him to purchase a copy. The list of contents will be found in our advertisement columns.

On Wednesday, November 12, at 8 p.m., Mr. W. E. A. Axon will read a paper before the Shelley Society, University College, Gower Street, on "Shelley's Vegetarianism." The meeting will be open to visitors and discussion is invited.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at the Tower Hamlets Radical Club to a large audience. This was the third of the London Secular Federation's free course. Mr. J. M. Robertson winds up on Thursday, November 6.

Mr. Laurence Stevens, of the London County Council, will preside at Mr. Moss's lecture at the Peckham Radical Club on November 13. The subject is, "The Bible and Evolution."

Mr. C. J. Hunt discusses "The Existence of God" with Mr. R. Dunn of the Christian Evidence Society in the Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, Edmonton, this evening (Nov. 9) at 7. Admission 3d. and 6d. The surplus will be handed over to the London School Board for the poor children's free breakfasts.

The Battersea Branch intends giving a Children's Party in December. Donations, sweets, and toys should be sent to Mrs. Dipper, 28 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea.

Dr. Stanton Coit, addressing his South Place congregation on the Holy Ghost last Sunday morning, said, "I would sooner give up the sunlight and go and live in a cave for the rest of my life than enter into any Christian or theological organisation."

The third volume of Renan's *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel* is now out. It extends from the period of Hezekiah to the

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return from the captivity. He deals with the alleged discovery of the law in the time of Josiah, and the work of Jeremiah, whom he characterises as a grand reactionary.

Renan, the great French Freethinker, was brought up for the Church, which he never entered. "I should," he says, "have made a very good priest, indulgent, paternal, charitable, blameless in my life and conversation." Commenting on this, the *Speaker* says that the Church lost at least as much in Renan as she gained in Newman, and adds: "Renan is an old man now. Was the life of Newman himself more blameless than Renan's has been? It is well to note this of a man whom all the forces of orthodoxy have failed to crush during seven-and-twenty years."

An enterprising French journalist has inquired of various leading writers whether they would prefer burial or cremation. Father Hyacinthe cares little, but for others prefers incineration to prevent people being buried alive, which he thinks happens more frequently than people imagine. Alphonse Daudet finds both methods disagreeable. Zola will leave the matter to his relations. Lecomte de Lisle has not made up his mind, and hopes his indecision will last a long time. M. Henri de Bornier would prefer levitation à la Elijah. M. Sarcey prefers cremation if he dies at Paris, and burial if at Nanterre, while. Sardou cries, "Burned, burned!"

Secularists of the district are desired to meet in the Victoria Hall, adjoining the Central Hall, Dundas Street, Spennymoor to-day (November 9) at 6 p.m. for the purpose of forming a Branch of the N. S. S.

Captain Pfoundes lectured at Woolwich last Sunday on *The Ethics of Buddhism*. Buddhism was not to be judged by the representatives of theosophic charlatans. It was a moral system of self-knowledge and self-salvation strongly contrasted with sacerdotal dogmas and the doctrine of atonement by blood. Buddhism, he held, would give a higher sense of duty, and of service to humanity.

From an official statement recently made, it appears that the total sales of Mr. Herbert Spencer's works in Great Britain up to April 18, 1890, amounted to 104,000 copies, exclusive of the *Descriptive Sociology*. This number includes 33,750 copies of the various volumes of *The Synthetic Philosophy*, 39,500 copies of *Education*, and 20,000 copies of *Man versus the State*. The total sales of the authorised American editions of Mr. Spencer's works to date amounted to 164,000 copies. To these must be added the cheap pirated editions.

Thaddeus B. Wakeman in the *Arena* advocates the adoption of the New Era of Science dating from A.D. 1600, "the date of the martyrdom of Bruno, of the publication and public recognition of the Copernican Astronomy, the founding of the East India Company, the first step towards the settlement of America, and of the founding of International Law by Grotius—an era which actually gave to mankind a new heaven, a new earth, and a new brotherhood of the race, entirely independent of the old supernaturalism."

Our friends of the *Freidenker*, Milwaukee, are issuing a new edition of the writings of Carl Heinzen.

Mr. S. P. Putnam has had a seven nights' debate with Elder Evans at Summerville, U.S.A. on the subject of the Bible.

The supreme court of Massachusetts will not permit a man's business to be injured from the pulpit. A physician who is Catholic was divorced and then married. He was consequently excommunicated. His former priest took occasion to inform his flock that he would not administer to any one in sickness who was attended by an excommunicated physician. The effect was to deter many Catholics from employing the physician. He brought an action against the priest for defamation of character and professional injury. The jury found for the physician, the case was carried to the full bench and the verdict was sustained.

A handsome monument, costing over 1,250 dollars, has been erected at Forest Hills Cemetery, near Boston, to the memory of Horace Seaver, who for half a century was editor of the *Boston Investigator*. It is fifteen feet high and constructed of granite. The inscription on the face reads: "Horace Seaver, born Aug. 26, 1810; died Aug. 21, 1889. Editor of the *Boston Investigator* for 50 years, 1839-1889." On the right side are the following quotations from the eulogy delivered by Col. Robert G. Ingersoll at the funeral of the deceased: "Horace Seaver lived for others." "He always sought for light." "He was a friend of all the world and sought to civilise the human race." "There was no taint or touch of malice in his blood." "He had the brain of a philosopher and the heart of a child." "He did not ask God to forgive his enemies, but he forgave them himself." "Sacred are the lips from which have issued only truth." On the left side the following quotations from the works of the deceased appear: "One world at a time." "The right to think freely on all subjects belongs to us naturally, and no government can deprive us of it." On the reverse side of the monument appears the following: "This monument is erected to the memory of Horace Seaver by his friends, in recognition of his great services in the cause of universal mental liberty."

Sunday concerts are spreading in godly Scotland. In Aberdeen the band of the Cameron Highlanders are giving Sabbath afternoon and evening concerts, the prices of admission ranging from 6d. to 2s.

A PULPIT MOUNTEBANK.

DR. TALMAGE is the champion clerical clown of the United States. He has been ridiculed fiercely and scornfully by the American press, but he possesses an abiding faith in the boundless stupidity of his fellow-countrymen, and has continued to feather his own nest by pandering to the ignorant superstition which is not less widely diffused in America than in England. He has recently "boomed" a trumpery "Life of Christ" which he is alleged to have written, and has "nobbled" the press of the United States in a masterly fashion which would turn a company-promoter green with envy. Four thousand papers have published stereotyped "reviews" of his work, illustrated by furnished engravings. The artful dodge has been exposed (see *Freethinker*, page 521), but Talmage doubtless smileth and rubbeth his hands softly together; for how can exposure hurt him among his chosen lambs, the fools?

Talmage speaks to a select circle of fools in this country also, for the *Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* (Phœbus! what a name!) prints every one of his sermons. Noticing that the issue for Oct. 15 contained a discourse by him on "crooked things," I purchased a copy, for Talmage is surely an authority upon anything crooked. As I read the sermon, paragraph by paragraph, a mighty wonder fell upon me. Can it be possible—not that a man can preach such stuff, for there are men who will preach anything if they find their reward for so doing—but that reproduction of the rubbish should be profitable in another land? From his pulpit in Brooklyn Tabernacle, Talmage speaks not only to the congregation in front of him, but to many thousands of the English speaking race far away across the Atlantic ocean. Rightly used, such a power would be of enormous value to humanity. But let us see to what purpose the pulpit mountebank of Brooklyn employs his opportunities.

"The crooked shall be made straight"—thus quotes Talmage his text from Isaiah. Then, as his congregation hoist their long ears to catch every precious word, he goes on to show how the Lord will make, and even now doth make, certain crooked things straight. He suggests that God helps many commercial men out of their financial difficulties—providing, of course, they are church-goers and weigh in heavily when the plate is passed round. "When commercial houses fail, the suspension is advertised," he says, "but of the tens of thousands of men who are every day extricated no public mention is made. Yesterday was Saturday, and I warrant that at the windows of banks, and in counting-rooms of stores, and on every street of every city, God appeared for the deliverance of good men, as certainly as when with his right foot he trod Lake Gallilee into placidity

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and made Daniel as safe among the lions as though they had been house-dogs asleep on a rug before a winter's fire." This is put with some measure of caution; but a little picture which accompanies this section places Talmage's "idea" in a much more vivid light. There is a business man sitting at the desk in his office. He is evidently in great distress of mind, and his clasped hands are raised in prayer. He is in queer Street, from a financial point of view, and doesn't know his way out. But at the open door a telegraph boy is rushing into the room—telegraph boys are in the habit of rushing into the private rooms of merchants—and no doubt the Lord has "wired" a cheque for twenty-five millions of dollars to the embarrassed capitalist.

But the rescue of foundering merchants is nothing compared with what the Lord *can* do, according to Talmage. If our prayers were only fixed up in the right way, the weather would be as much under our control as the fashion of our garments. Here is a paragraph in which Talmage shows how it has been done:—

"It has been my good fortune to know many ship captains. They are in all our services. They leave their vessels on Sunday mornings and join us in worship. I warrant there are enough of them present this morning to take a whole fleet in safety across the Atlantic. Whenever I have heard them testify it has mightily confirmed me in what I knew before, that God answers prayer concerning the weather. And there have been cyclones that started up from the Carribbean sea, sweeping down every sail and every smoke-stack and every mast in their course, which, in answer to specific petition, have been diverted and made to curve around some particular ship, leaving that in calm waters, and then resuming their original path of destruction. The weather probabilities again and again have announced a tempest, and we were all ready for it; but, to the surprise of most people, the next day we saw the announcement that the atmospheric fury had changed its course. The probability is, it struck a prayer and glanced off."

Now is this man, this Talmage of Brooklyn Tabernacle, a fool or a knave? Is he a liar, or is he the victim of almost incredible delusion? Frankly, it is impossible for me to accept the latter alternative, and I am forced to the conclusion that he is a wilful liar, who deliberately sells his falsehoods in the most profitable market..

But this pitiful Talmage himself is the least pitiable element in this matter. What shall we say of the "faithful" who crowd to Brooklyn Tabernacle to have their empty heads stuffed with childish nonsensense by this pulpit mountebank? And what shall we say of a section of our own countrymen, who buy the *Christian Herald* in order to get the Talmage lies when they are three weeks old? Freethought has evidently yet much work to do before its task is accomplished. GEORGE STANDRING.

MAN—FALLEN OR RISEN?

BY ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, LL.D., L.H.D.,
Ex-President of Cornell University.

EVER since the beginning of man's effective thinking upon the great problems around him, two views have existed regarding the life of the human race upon earth, each utterly opposed to the other. The first of these is the belief that man was created "in the beginning," a perfect being, endowed with the highest moral and intellectual powers, but that there came a "fall," as the result of which came into the world evil, toil, sorrow, and death.

Nothing could be more natural than such an explanation of the existence of evil, in times when men saw everywhere miracle and nowhere law. It is, under such circumstances, by far the more easy explanation, for it is in accordance with the appearances of things; men adopted it just as naturally as they adopted the theory that the Almighty hangs up the stars as lights in the solid firmament above the earth, or trundles the sun behind a high mountain at night, or wheels the planets around the earth, or flings comets as "signs and wonders" to scare a wicked world, or allows evil spirits to control thunder, lightning, and storm, and to cause diseases of body and mind, or that he opens the "windows of heaven" to let down "the waters that be above the heavens," and thus to give rain upon the earth.

A belief, then, in a primeval period of innocence, physical perfection, and intellectual strength, from which men for some fault fell, is perfectly in accordance with what we should expect.

Among the earliest known records of our race we find this view taking shape in the Chaldean legends of war between the gods, and a fall of man; both of which seemed necessary to explain the existence of evil.

In Greek mythology perhaps the best-known statement was made by Hesiod: to him it was revealed, regarding the men of the most ancient times, that they were, at first "a golden race," that "as gods they were wont to live, with a life void of care, without labor and trouble; nor was wretched old age at all impending, but ever did they delight themselves out of the reach of ills, and they died as if overcome by sleep; all blessings were theirs; of its own will the fruitful field would bear them fruit, much and ample, and they gladl used to reap the labors of their hands in quietness along with many good things, being rich in flocks and true to the blessed Gods." But there came a "fall" caused by human curiosity. Pandora, the first woman created, received a vase which by divine command, was to remain closed; but she was tempted to open it, and troubles, sorrow, and sickness in every form escaped into the world, hope alone remaining.

So, too, in Roman mythological poetry, the well-known picture by Ovid is but one among the many exhibitions of this same belief in a primeval golden age—a Saturnian cycle—one of the constantly recurring attempts, so universal and so natural in the early history of man, to account for the existence of evil, care, and toil on earth by explanatory myths and legends.

This view we also find embodied in the sacred tradition of the Jews, and especially in one of the documents which form the impressive poem beginning the books attributed to Moses. . . .

On the other hand, appeared at an early period the opposite view—that mankind, instead of having fallen from a high intellectual, moral and religious condition, has slowly risen from low and brutal beginnings. Among all the statements of this theory one is especially noteworthy; that given by Lucretius in his great poem on The Nature of Things. Despite its errors, it remains among the most remarkable examples of prophetic insight in the history of our race. The inspiration of Lucretius gave him almost miraculous glimpses of truth; his view of the development of civilisation from the rudest beginning to the height of its achievements is a wonderful growth, rooted in observation and thought, branching forth into a multitude of striking facts and fancies; and among these is the statement regarding the sequence of inventions:—

"Man's earliest arms were fingers, teeth and nails,
And stones and fragments from the branching woods:
The copper next; and last, as latest traced,
The tyrant, iron."

Thus did the poet prophesy one of the most fruitful achievements of modern science, the discovery of that series of epochs which has been so carefully studied in our century.

Very striking, also, is the statement of Horace, though his idea is evidently derived from Lucretius. He dwells upon man's first condition on earth as low and bestial, and pictures him lurking in caves, progressing from the use of his fists and nails, first to clubs, then to arms which he had learned to forge, and finally, to the invention of the names of things, to literature, and to laws.

During the mediæval ages of faith this view was almost entirely obscured, but at the revival of learning in the fifteenth century it reappeared; and in the first part of the seventeenth century we find that among the crimes for which Vanini was sentenced at Toulouse to have his tongue torn out and to be burned alive, was his belief that there is a gradation extending upward from the lowest to the highest form of created beings.

In the eighteenth century we find this same idea of an outward progress, especially through the three ages of stone, bronze and iron, cropping out in scientific form still more definitely from beneath the vast mass of theological reasoning in Germany, France and England.

The investigations of the last forty years have shown that Lucretius and Horace were inspired prophets: what they saw by the exercise of reason illumined by poetic genius has been now thoroughly based upon facts carefully ascertained and arranged; until Thomsen and Nilsson, the northern archæo-

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logists, have brought these prophecies to evident fulfilment, by presenting a scientific classification dividing the age of prehistoric man in various parts of the world between an old stone period, a new stone period, a period of beaten copper, a period of bronze, and a period of iron; and arraying vast masses of facts from all parts of the world, fitting thoroughly into each other, strengthening each other, and showing beyond a doubt that, instead of a *fall*, there has been a *rise* of man from the earliest indications in the Quaternary, or even, possibly, in the Tertiary period.

—*From the "Popular Science Monthly."*

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Oct. 29. Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mr. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Bater, Courtney, Gordon, Heaford, Killick, Larkin, Reynolds, Standring, Smith, Warren, Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. The Organisation Committee's report, which among other matters, recommended a grant to the West Ham Branch, and the formation of a new branch at Tottenham, was unanimously agreed to. The finance account for the month showed an increase of twelve shillings. The Hyde Park Branch having reported that they had changed their name to the West London Branch, a discussion took place as to the advisability of consulting the Executive beforehand. Mr. Standring moved and Mr. Wheeler seconded "that the change of name of the Hyde Park Branch to the West London Branch be accepted; but that in future Branches be requested to inform the Executive before changing their name." Carried. Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Larkin seconded "that the Secretary communicate with the London Secular Federation, with a view to holding a children's party in January." Carried.

N. S. S. SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Mrs. Holloway, 3s. 6d.; Corporal McKay, 5s.; Barbados Branch, 5s.; B. Dawson, 2s. 6d.; Finsbury Branch, 3s. 8d.; G. Hodge, 5s.; H. Good, 4s.; H. L. Jacob, 5s.; T. Campbell, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.

J. Huband, 9d.; Dr. Duncan £1 1s.; J. Tapp, Junr., 5s.; H. L. Jacob, 10s.; W. J. Birch (per J. M. Wheeler), £5; Mrs. Harrison, 1s. 8d.; W. R., 6d.—R. FORDER, *Secretary*.

A POPE ON THE DEVIL.

Yielding to a report from his inquisitors in Germany, Gregory IX., describes in a bull of the year 1233 the ceremony of initiation practised by certain heretics on whose speedy punishments he insists. With evident good faith he relates how the novice pays the homage of a kiss on the hind-quarter to the devil in the shape of a toad as large as a goose, a duck or an oven, or of a black cat lifting his tail for salutation."—Rev. James Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 147, 1890.

THE GOLDEN BOUGH.

In regard to what Mr. Wheeler says about the misletoe being held sacred, I think its etymology is more convincing. The last syllable *toe* meant in old times an end, or branch; in the Greek, *tao* meant to stretch out. Therefore the plant misletoe symbolised the end, or branch, of the year. Kissing under this old shrub represented the coming together of the old year and the new. The old year was represented as female and the young new year as male by the ancients.

R. SHAW.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
R. Waller	0	2	6	Octogenarian	0	5	0
W. Andrews	0	3	6	J. Burns	0	1	6
A. Hilditch	0	2	6	D. Chatterton	0	0	6
M. A. M.	0	10	0				

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

OBITUARY.—Died on Tuesday, Oct. 28, Antony Hellstern, aged 75. Brought up as a Catholic, he became a hater of the priests and their religion. He died as he had lived, a sturdy Freethinker. Many members of the Dulwich Radical Club followed him to his last resting place, Honor Oak cemetery.

AN EXCELLENT MINISTER.

"How do you like your new minister, Cora?" asked her father.

"Oh, he's just splendid. He draws twice as large congregations as Rev. Oldwun, whom he succeeds."

"I suppose he is much more eloquent and impressive than Mr. Oldwun?"

"N-no. He is rather an ordinary and tiresome speaker, but he's young, handsome and unmarried."

"Oh, yes, I understand," said her father. "The increase in the congregation is made up entirely of young women."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "The Science of Health."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "Man's Soul." Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. Simkins (Christian) has been invited to lecture. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Agnosticism."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Animals and Plants"

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, debate between C. J. Hunt and R. Dunn on "The Existence of God."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "Labor Questions in Parliament"; 7, "Polytheism, Trinitarianism, Monotheism, Atheism."

Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. G. Standring, "Christian 'Evidences.'"

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 6.30, Mr. Jesse Cocks, "Inspiration."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road. N.W., 7, Orchestral Band: 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Most Comfortable Sacrament."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods"; 7, Mr. R. Forder, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments." Collection in aid of Propagandist Fund. Nov. 11, at 8, Mr. J. Long, "God, Hell, and Heaven."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "Liberty and Socialism."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, debate between Mr. A. T. Dipper and Mr. Simkins on "Is the Bible Inspired by God?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3, debate between Messrs. Clarendon and Keen on "Creation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, IV.—The cry is still, 'They Come.'"

COUNTRY.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, meeting to form Debating Class; 6.30, Mr. Cairns, "Rights, Justice, Liberty."

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "The Great Antiquity of Man"; 6.30, "My Adventures in the Wild West of America."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—3, Discussion Class, "How far have the Arts and Sciences Promoted Civilisation?", 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Peres, Daniel v., 28."

Manchester N. S. S. — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Life of Jesus Christ"; 3, "Is Mind the Product of Matter?"; 6.30, "Do Christians Believe in Christ?" Wednesday, at 8, dancing (admission 6d.).

Newcastle-on-Tyne — 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, meeting of members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. R. J. Murray, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

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South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, business meeting.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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BOOTH'S BOOK.

THIS is an age of what the Yankees call "booms." Some man, or some project, gets hold of the public attention, to the exclusion of almost everybody and everything else. A few months ago we had the Stanley boom, and now we have the Booth boom. The "General's" carriage stops the way. Cockney editors find him and his doings "good business"—for the moment; ministers of all denominations are singing his praises, and begging other people to assist his projects; and the Prince of Wales himself contributes a friendly letter to the chorus, if he sends nothing more substantial.

What effect all this shouting must have on "persons of weak judgment" is easy to calculate. They crowd about the celebrity of the hour like moths around a candle. And the climax comes when a gentleman like Mr. Bancroft, the retired actor, promises to give the "General" a thousand pounds, if ninety-nine others will do the same, and artlessly prefaces the promise by saying, "I know nothing of General Booth's scheme in detail." Mr. Bancroft is like many of the ladies and gentlemen who patronise "philanthropy," which usually means giving the poor charity instead of justice. His income is larger than his sense of responsibility. He is willing to give a thousand pounds to a philanthropic scheme, without taking the trouble to see whether it is likely to do good or harm to society. It is this loose haphazard "philanthropy" which makes some of us positively sick of that prostituted word.

General Booth's book has been puffed in an unprecedented fashion, and has enjoyed an extensive sale. He is a splendid advertiser himself, and he is assisted by Mr. W. T. Stead, who thoroughly understands the art of "booming." If these two gentlemen could not make a book "go," it must be a hopeless drug in the market. Copies have been sent north, south, east, and west, apparently by Mr. Stead. Even the editor of the *Freethinker* is asked to "accept a copy," and assured by Mr. Stead, who has "had some little share in the compilation," that he "will find the book well worthy" of his "attentive consideration."

Long before the arrival of Mr. Stead's judicious present we had bought a copy of the book and given it our "attentive consideration," and the readers of the *Freethinker* shall have the benefit of our reflexions. We need not assure them that we have gone through the book in another fashion than most of our editorial contemporaries, who have simply given a few "plums" from Booth's storeroom, chiefly extracted with a pair of scissors, and devoted as much head to their criticism of his scheme as would suffice to pilot a goose across a three-acre common.

First, as to the title-page of the book. An ordinary author would sign himself "William Booth," but this one is "General" even on a title-page. *In Darkest England* is an obvious plagiarism on Stanley, and *The Way Out* is suggested by his long travel through the awful Central African forest. Still, we have no right to complain. It concerns Mr. Stanley rather than ourselves; and, in any case, it is less objectionable than attracting publicity by the locomotion of Mrs. Booth's corpse.

In the preface General Booth acknowledges the "valuable literary help" of a "friend of the poor, who, though not in any way connected with the Salvation Army, has the deepest sympathy with its aims, and is to a large extent in harmony with its principles." The friend is Mr. Stead. This gentleman has "written up" the scheme in the manner of "the born journalist," that is, in the fashion of the "Modern Babylon" and the adventures of Eliza Armstrong. He contributes the descriptions, the gush, the hysterics, the sentences crowded with adjectives and adverbs. Sometimes he writes a whole chapter, unless our literary scent misleads us; sometimes he interpolates the General, and sometimes the General interpolates Stead. One result of this twofold authorship is that the book is twice as big as it should be; another result is that it often contradicts itself. For instance, the General states in the preface that he has known "thousands, nay, I can say tens of thousands," who have proved the value of *spiritual* means of reformation, having "with little or no temporal assistance, come out of the darkest depths of destitution, vice, and crime, to be happy and honest citizens and true sons and servants of God." Elsewhere (p. 243) he speaks of them as "multitudes." Yet in the very next paragraph of the preface Mr. Stead breaks in (if we mistake not) with the assertion that "the rescued are appallingly few," a mere "ghastly minority."

This little contradiction may throw light on the rumor that Booth has been urged into this scheme of temporal salvation. Once upon a time he was down on "Commissioner" Smith, whose tendencies in this direction were obtrusive; and how long is it since we quoted his statement in the Rules and Regulations, that the members of the Salvation Army had nothing to do with the world, its politics, its business, or its pleasures? The hand is the hand of Booth, but the voice seems the voice of Stead.

Here is another contradiction, and this time a vital one. The General curls his upper lip (p. 18) at those "anti-Christian economists who hold that it is an offence against the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to try to save the weakest from going to the wall, and who believe that when once a man is down the supreme duty of a self-regarding Society is to jump upon him." Without dwelling on the fact that this is a shocking and perfectly gratuitous libel, probably meant to pander to Christian prejudices, we content ourselves with drawing attention to a contradictory declaration (p. 44) that "In the struggle for life the weakest will go to the wall, and there are so many weak. The fittest, in tooth and claw, will survive. All that we can do is to soften the lot of the unfit and make their suffering less horrible than it is at present. No amount of assistance will give a jellyfish a backbone. No outside propping will make some men stand erect." Thus

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the General, or Mr. Stead, joins hands with the "anti-Christian economists" in the doctrine that it is useless to try to save the weakest from going to the wall. Of course he does not endorse the policy of jumping on them, but that policy is merely a production of his own pious imagination.

This contradiction we say is vital. The first statement is a sneer at Natural Selection, the second is a frank admission of its supremacy. They represent two antagonistic philosophies. They mark the parting of the ways between the Christian and the Evolutionist. They are as incompatible as oil and water, and no thoughtful man would attempt to reconcile them. But Booth (or isn't it Stead?) combines incompatibles with the alkali of sentiment. And this failure to discern the distinctiveness of opposite first principles shows the book to be the work of sciolists, and vitiates its scheme of social reform from beginning to end. No work can succeed without a knowledge of materials, and every effort at improvement has in it the elements of success or failure as it recognises or ignores the special laws of human nature, and the more general laws of biology that lie behind them.

An amusing contradiction occurs in another place (p. 14), to which we call attention in order to show the chaotic character of the writing; and this time, we judge from the style, it is Stead contradicting Stead. Speaking of the harlot, he says—

"But there, even in the lowest depths, excommunicated by Humanity and outcast from God, she is far nearer the pitying heart of the One true Savior than all the men who forced her down, aye, and than all the Pharisees and Scribes who stand silently by while these fiendish wrongs are perpetrated before their very eyes."

The theology of this passage is worthy of the wild exaggeration with which it closes. The poor harlot is "outcast from God," but near the "pitying heart" of Christ; in other words, God the Father is on the side of injustice and cruelty, and God the Son on the side of justice and mercy. One person of the Trinity is played off against the other, and it is not for us to settle the difference between them. We leave the matter to the second thoughts of Mr. Stead, or the divine illumination of General Booth.

Indeed, the entire theology of this book is worthy of Bedlam, and especially of the criminal lunatic department. A personal Devil is seriously trotted out (p. 159) for the laughter of intelligent men and women, and even of decently educated children. Prosperous people, we are told, see something strange and quaint in the language of the Bible, which "habitually refers to the Devil as an actual personality," but Hell and the Devil are certitudes to the Salvationists who work in the slums.

Well, if the Devil is so active, what is God doing? Apparently nothing. Booth is going to reform our drunkards, or try to if we give him the money, but he candidly admits (p. 181), perhaps in a moment of forgetfulness, that the confirmed toper will drink himself "into a drunkard's grave and a drunkard's hell," unless he is "delivered by an Almighty hand." It is God alone, then, who can save the most fallen. Their fate lies in his hands. And what does he do for them? The answer is to be found in General Booth's appeal. A million of money, and the co-operation of a multitude of men and women, are requested for the purpose of saving at least *some* of the poor wretches who are beyond the power of self-help, although "the Almighty hand" could easily pluck them out of their degradation. Nor does Booth expect that *all* will be saved by his scheme, however well-supported and successful. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the God he worships will allow men and women to perish whom he might promptly save; yes, allow them to perish in this world, physically, intellectually, and morally, and afterwards torment them for ever and ever in Hell. And it is this God, this incredible monster of wickedness, in whom General Booth trusts, and whom he bids the Atheist look up to with admiration and love. Nay, he regards "trust in Jehovah" (p. 241) as the chief credential of the Salvation Army for carrying out an enterprise which is to cost a million sterling. Let the worshippers of Jehovah support him then. As for the Atheist, he will necessarily regard this insane theology as a rottenness at the very heart of the experiment.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be continued.*)

THE BIBLE AND IMMORTALITY.

THE fact that in the writings attributed to Moses, and said to have been dictated to him by God for his chosen people, the doctrine of a future life for man is completely ignored, has given rise to much controversy. On the one hand Bishop Warburton argued that since the Jews were without this support of moral order they must have been under the immediate direction of God himself. On the other hand it was argued by Voltaire and the Deists, that the fact that so important a truth was unrevealed to the chosen people, was a sufficient proof that their alleged divine revelation was no revelation at all.

What makes the matter more noticeable is the abundant evidence that the belief in immortality and future rewards and punishments existed among the Egyptians long before Moses, who is said to have been learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. This has led Mr. Froude in one of his *Short Studies* to suggest that Moses deliberately ignored this doctrine. A Freethought writer at the Antipodes has improved on this by explaining that Moses had observed that the doctrine of a future state possessed not the smallest power to affect the practical conduct of men, to make them better or keep them from crime. Moses saw that men were only really influenced by direct proximate and physical causes, that though the Egyptians held and taught the doctrine of post-mortem rewards and punishments, experience proved daily that if it affected the conduct of anyone, it certainly did not that of the criminals who most needed control, and that the only effect produced on the otherwise harmless was to make them superstitious and uncharitable. Moses, then, it is argued, deserves honor for wisely substituting temporal and immediate for distant and fictitious rewards and punishments, even though he failed to see that human law was more efficacious in preventing crime than an imaginary deity, as unnecessary in ethics as Laplace found such a supposition to be in astronomy.

But Moses probably deserves no credit, for he had no hand in the matter. There is no particle of evidence that he was possessed of all the wisdom of the Egyptians. The writings ascribed to him were composed by priests long after they had forgotten the things of Egypt, if they had ever been there. To Solomon also they ascribed the greatest contempt for the doctrine of immortality. In Ecclesiastes iii. he declares:

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I perceived that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?"

The Psalmist, too, avers (xlix., 12) that man is like the beasts that perish. And again in Ps. cxlvi., 4, it is said on the very day man goeth to the grave his thoughts perish.

In spite of the evidence that the Egyptians, and other nations believed in immortality, not to mention Plato, it is declared that Christ brought immortality

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to light. Setting aside, for a moment the fact that nothing at all has really been brought to light on the subject, for, notwithstanding our spiritist friends, the mass are notoriously as much in the dark about it as the savages who first surmised from their dreams that ghosts must exist; it would seem, then, that Christian immortality is the only immortality worth considering, and consequently the argument from the general consent of men must be given up. But what assurance of the immortality of our *souls* can be given by the resurrection of Christ's *body*, allowing for the moment that it did resurrect?

The reader who will attentively regard the passages of the New Testament bearing on the subject will find that it is the resurrection of the body and not the immortality of the soul which is taught there,* and he will also notice that if the soul is as alleged naturally immortal and set at liberty from its trammels by death, this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead becomes an absurdity. When Christ was crucified it is said many *bodies* of saints that slept arose. The usual expression of the New Testament is the resurrection of the dead, which of course meant the resurrection of that which is liable to death, not of that which never dies. According to the account in Luke, Jesus after his resurrection expressly declared he was no spirit. "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And it is recorded that instead of explaining the doctrine of the soul's immortality he ate broiled fish and honeycomb, which a soul without organs of digestion scarcely would have done. How such a resurrection—even suppose it built on proper evidence instead of upon undated and unverifiable reports contradictory to each other on every important point—could established the natural immortality of those who do not rise from the dead after three days, is one of the many puzzles of modern theology. It is easy to see that the supposed resurrection was a type to the early Christians, who believed that the end of all things was at hand when those who were dead would come forth out of their graves, and they who were alive and remained would be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. iv., etc.)

The earliest Fathers of the Christian Church held a most literal and materialistic view of the resurrection. They look forward to drinking the new wine of the kingdom and partaking of the marriage supper of the Lamb in most literal fashion. They naturally objected to cremation. Only gradually did the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the soul's natural immortality become the accepted creed,† and now the more philosophic view has virtually supplanted that of Jesus Christ, bishops can calmly argue in favor of cremation without seeing that that sanitary practice will, in the imagination of the masses, give the *coup de grace* to the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection.

J. M. Wheeler.

A man who was sleeping on one of the seats of the Thames Embankment, says a contemporary, was wakened up and interviewed as to General Booth's scheme for the reformation of the residuum. Here is part of the conversation that ensued: "What's the pay?" "I don't know that there'll be any pay, but you'll get at least your board and keep.' He grunted again: "If a man does his work he ought to get paid for it; it's worth it." "Well, but isn't it better to work for your board and lodging than sleep out here on the Embankment?" "I don't know but it is. Any bloomin' drink?" "No, nothing to drink." "That won't do; it won't do for me. A drop of gin is better than all the preaching I ever heard in my life."

* The word translated *soul* is also rendered *life*.

† Pearson *On the Creed*, art. xi., says: "We can no otherwise expound this article teaching the resurrection of the body, than by asserting that the same bodies which have lived and died shall live again; that the same flesh which is corrupted shall be restored."

THE EVIL THE CHURCH DOES.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

The Christian Church, in both its great branches and all its particular subdivisions, as an organised, authoritative institution, is a curse to the world.

This remark is not meant to apply to religion, in itself, nor to Jesus of Nazareth. It is meant to apply only to the organised Church; to the Church as an authoritative institution; an institution that presumes to decide what is true by a majority vote; an institution that exercises its power to reward its subservient members with wealth, honor and offices, and to punish its recalcitrant members with poverty, ostracism, excommunication.

Before proceeding to prove the foregoing declaration I will explain what I mean by the Church.

There is no real, tangible thing corresponding to the word Church. The Church has no identity, no locality; it has no dimensions—no length, no breadth, no thickness; it is not something you can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch; you cannot talk to it, feed it, put it in prison, or cut off its head; you cannot say of it: "See, there it goes; it is green, it is white, it is black; it is long, it is short." The Church is not a thing; it is an idea. It is like the Government; it exists only in imagination.

When a number of individuals assemble and by majority vote decide that something pertaining to politics shall be done, this assembly of individuals is called the Government. When a number of individuals assemble and by a majority vote decide that something pertaining to religion shall be done, that assembly of individuals is called the Church. But there is no such identical thing as the Government or the Church.

It would be well if every one could understand this, for it would then be quite plain that such words as Government and Church are merely convenient expressions, invented for the purpose of shifting responsibility from persons to an alleged something which does not exist.

To illustrate: A custom house officer goes through a traveller's baggage and either steals his goods or compels him to pay down a sum of money to keep his goods from being stolen. The custom house officer is really nothing more nor less than a common highwayman, but he satisfies his conscience by the reflection that he is an officer of the Government. But when you clearly understand that there is no such thing as a Government; when you clearly understand that the custom house officer is an individual employed by a number of other individuals to rob travellers, you also clearly understand that the custom house officer is just a common, every-day thief. In Italy there are bandits. They have their captains, their lieutenants, and their privates. In this country we have bandits also, with their captains, lieutenants, and privates; but we call our bandits protectionists; we call their captains members of Congress, their lieutenants collectors of ports, and their privates custom house officers. We appeal to the superstition of the people by throwing over these bandits the sacred name of Government, the stealing is called collecting customs duties, and what is a crime in Italy becomes a virtue in America. But to the clear thinker the only difference between the two systems is that in Italy the bandits are few and weak, while in America they are many and strong.

If I were not confined by a time limit, I might illustrate the subject more fully, but I must content myself with merely suggesting that the clubbings by policemen are essentially as criminal as any other clubbings; the burglaries committed by sheriffs are essentially the same as any other burglaries; the murders committed by hangmen are essentially the same as any other murders. To say that these club-

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bings and burglaries and murders are done by the Government deceives nobody but the ignorant and superstitious, for there is no such thing as the Government. The Government cannot club you, nor rob you, nor kill you. You can only be clubbed, or robbed, or killed by a man. A policeman is a man, hired by other men to club you; a sheriff is a man, hired by other men to rob you; a hangman is a man, hired by other men to murder you. If you do not believe what I say, start out to hunt for the Government and see if you do not run into the arms of a politician—and a politician is generally a man beside whose true biography the written life of Robin Hood or Dick Turpin would be a Sunday-school book.

What is true of the Government is true of the Church, and when I speak of the Church I mean those clergymen and laymen who meet together and do things, and then, in order to escape responsibility, when they have separated claim that they have done nothing, but that the Church has done everything.

In the first place, this imaginary thing called the Church is a curse to the world, because in the name of the Church clergymen and laymen will get together and do things that no one of them would do alone. Just as a policemen who, in his own proper person and acting on his own responsibility, would not hurt a dog, will, in the name of the Government, break open his neighbor's head; just as a sheriff, who, on his own account, would not steal a pin, will, in the name of the Government, burglarise his neighbor's house; just as a hangman, who if left to himself, would not kill a sparrow, will, in the name of the Government, kill his neighbor—so a clergyman, who, as an individual, would not lie or treat anyone unkindly, will, in the name of the Church, subscribe to statements he does not believe and cruelly cut the acquaintance of his best friend. Where is there a creed on earth that expresses the individual opinions of men who made it or subscribed to it? There is not one; and this means that a hundred or a thousand clergymen will get together, and in the sacred name of the Church declare that they believe what no single one of them believes. For themselves they are truthful. For the Church they will lie. Where is there a clergyman who would say to one who differs with him in opinion: "Depart, sir; you are a heretic; you shall not sit in my parlor, nor eat at my table, nor travel in the same coach with me?" There is not one. But a hundred or a thousand clergymen will get together and excommunicate a man whose only offence is that he will not sign his name to a creed he does not believe. In their personal relations they are kind, but in the sacred name of the Chuch they are as cruel as Calvin's God.

In the second place, the Church is a curse to the world because it tries to paralyze the brain. It forbids men to reach conclusions contrary to the creed, notwithstanding that no thinking person in Church believes the creed. The moment a clergyman begins to question the creed and to honestly state his doubts, that moment he begins to be treated like a criminal. Promotion is impossible to him. His name is left off all committees. He begins to receive the cold shoulder. He is made to feel that he is unwelcome whenever the Church comes together. He is regarded with suspicion. He is treated as a traitor. The iron is thrust into him. His feelings are lacerated. More than one honest clergyman has died without ever having been struck, or stabbed, or shot. Died from contumely, and coldness, and ostracism.

(To be concluded.)

"Christian Evolution" is a phrase we see in the *Christian World*. Evolution we know, but what is *Christian* Evolution? Is there also a Buddhist Evolution, a Brahmin Evolution, and a Mohammedan Evolution? And if not, why not?

ACID DROPS.

Hugh Price Hughes has been figuring largely at the anniversary meeting of the West London Mission. "Sister Mary" spoke too, and "Sister Annie," and "Sister Lily," but nothing was heard of the Sister who converted the Atheist Shoemaker.

Come now, Hugh Price Hughes! Open confession is good for the soul. Don't go to the grave—for you will go some day—with a five-chapter lie on your conscience. Make a clean breast of it. Tell the truth and shame the Devil.

Poor Spurgeon is fallen on evil days. He sees the Ark of God in danger and its holy champions rushing into the enemy's arms. Reviewing a recent book by Mr. Gladden, who says that theology is dropping the doctrine of original sin, he valiantly stands up for this derelict, and stoutly objects to any "flavoring of the modern school." Nevertheless the modern school is winning, and it will be succeeded by a still more modern school, which will drop some more doctrines of the good old creed.

"As the world grows in mass," says Cardinal Manning, "it grows in malice; and if our forecasts are true, I might even say—forasmuch as what is foretold is certain—the warfare of the world against all who believe in God will grow in spread and in power, for its final conflict, and its final destruction."

These be big words, containing a good deal of sound and fury. "Mass" and "malice" are pretty alliteration, but very little else. The world is growing more populous, because science and civilisation enable more people to live, but the statement that it grows in malice is only the language of a disappointed priest. As to the "final conflict," it has always been coming, and what is more, it has always been going on; but whether the world or the Church will eventually triumph is a matter of opinion. Cardinal Manning is sure the Church will win, but his feeling of certitude is a subjective fact which may be out of harmony with the objective reality. He backs the Church. We say it is ten to one on the world.

According to a correspondent of the *Christian World* this is how a minister in one of the Western States of America spoke at a lady's funeral: "I don't know whether this woman has gone to heaven or not. I'm rather afraid she hasn't. But when I don't feel certain, I always give the corpse the benefit of the doubt." Evidently this sky-pilot is not so sure in such matters as the Salvation Army bosses, who officially notified the "promotion" of Mrs. Booth "to Glory from Clacton-on-Sea."

Bishop Ryle, of Liverpool, in his triennial visitation charge to the clergy of his diocese, says: "We live in perilous time. Partly from the spead of infidelity and partly from the facilities afforded by railways for Sabbath travelling the Devil is getting more help in his campaign against the Lord's Day than he has done since the reformation." He urges their motto must be "No surrender"; in other words, No interference with our Sunday monopoly.

Bishop Ryle is "amazed, pained, troubled, grieved, and astounded," that even clergymen are found to assist in breaking the fourth commandment, and still more so doubtless to find they received some countenance from his brother "father in God," Bishop Jayne, of Chester.

According to the Dean of Achonry "in 115 churches in London that ought to be Protestant vespers were offered for the dead." The Dean is alarmed at the progress of Popery, but the people think Catholic mummery no worse than Protestant mummery.

Another death in God's house. Mary Warner, a widow, suddenly slipped from her seat in Moseley Church, Leicester, on Sunday afternoon, and when picked up was discovered to be dead.

Swift defined a nice man as a man with nasty ideas. What a satire he would write on pious Mr. Coote and the

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Rev. Dr. Lunn. These gentlemen belong to a Viligance Society, and appear to have smut on the brain. If there is any nastiness in London they will find it out, and if they cannot find it they will make it. Seeing the advertisement of a Rabelais Exhibition in London, they scented a tid-bit, and the two pious worthies visited it together. They paid a shilling each and saw all they could for their money, even walking into the inner room where the most Rabelaisian pictures were only to be seen by gentlemen who presented their cards. Some of the ladies on the walls of this room had very little on; in fact, they were very much as they left the hands of their maker. Coote and Lunn exploited the show and went out groaning. Subsequently they repaired to a magistrate and obtained an order for the seizure of certain of the pictures; and now these French illustrations of a great French writer are to be adjudicated upon by a stolid English "beak."

Such fussy morality will make sensible men smile, if it does not make them groan at the hypocrisy of Protestant England. Piccadilly and the Haymarket at night make foreigners wonder at us. What must they think of us, then, when they read of a seizure of pictures in an art exhibition? And what is the result of the Coote-and-Lunn advertisement? Why this. Booksellers tell us that crowds of people are inquiring for copies of Rabelais. Many of them care nothing for literature, but are simply in quest of something blue; and as you cannot suppress a great classic, a large number of persons will probably read Rabelais who are quite unfit to read him, and will revel in the blueness which belonged to his age without appreciating the profound wisdom which was all his own. Surely it would be better for Messrs. Coote and Lunn to mind their own business, but if they *must* crusade against the improper why don't they begin with the Bible?

Father M'Fadden, of Glena, rebuked his congregation for intimidating and persecuting each other on account of paying "rint," and while he was speaking a pair of scissors was snipping round a girl's dress at the waist. Such is the power of religion in controlling men's passions.

The chairman of the Wellingborough School Board has been telling his colleagues that the Bible is the best code of morality. Well now, we undertake to find whole chapters, and scores of passages, which this gentleman would never have the courage to read aloud to his own children.

We are glad to hear, however, that the Board's fresh action in this matter, as well as the chairman's language, is due to the fact that religious education in the schools is frequently shelved. This is a rock on which religious education will ultimately split. The teachers won't give it.

In his first address for the season, before the Society for Ethical Culture, Sunday, Oct. 19, Prof. Felix Adler said: "I am an Agnostic, but I am, nevertheless, convinced of the existence of the beautiful and the good." The significance of that sentence is not quite clear to me. What has Agnosticism to do with "the existence of the beautiful and the good?" Might not Prof. Adler as pertinently have said: "I am an Agnostic, but I believe in the existence of the sun and the moon?" Probably the speaker had in mind the idea that he was an Agnostic, but, nevertheless, believes in something that may somehow be regarded as God. The beautiful and the good are well known facts, before which the most positive Atheist need not hesitate nor doubt. Agnosticism pertains to the existence of God, but it has no relation to the existence of the beautiful and the good.—*Twentieth Century.*

Says the historian Buckle:—"The clergy, with a few honorable exceptions, have in all modern countries been the avowed enemies of the diffusion of knowledge, the danger of which to their own profession they, by a certain instinct, seem always to have perceived."

Calcutta Theosophists have discovered something worth knowing in the Yogi-Shaster. Here it is—"He who can by inserting old cotton make the breath flow through the left nostril by day and through the right nostril by night successively for twelve years shall enjoy health and youth up to a great old age, and shall not be affected by any poison." Will Western Theosophists devote themselves to this high attainment?

Sir Lepel Griffin, writing in the *Fortnightly Review* for November on "The Burman and his Creed," shows the difference of real Buddhism from what he calls "the extravagances of Esoteric Buddhism which, with Madame Blavatsky for prophet, and Messrs. Olcott and Sinnett for assistant priests, attempted to impose itself upon a foolish generation, seeking everywhere for a sign, as a new revelation, the evidences of which were cabinets with sliding backs and third-rate conjuring tricks."

The Shans of Burmah are Buddhist barbarians. As described by Mr. Scott, superintendent of the Shan States, these poor heathens, not having the benefit of Christianity, are distinguished by an incapacity to steal. There are villages in which people build their granaries on the roadside and at long distances from their houses and their fields. The reason given is that they are afraid of fire, but that they have no need to fear thieves. Mr. Scott quaintly observes that "an increase of civilisation will teach them that their property is in greater danger than their persons."

There seems to be a real General Booth, though we confess to never having heard of one except the "General" who leads the Salvation Army. At any rate, "Holbein's Visitors List" of Folkestone, Nov. 5, puts down at 6 Castle Hill Avenue—one of the most aristocratic quarters—"Booth, General and Mrs." Now so many valuable subscriptions are being sent in, this similarity of description may occasion some embarrassment. The "General" should dub himself Commander-in-Chief.

The *Christian Commonwealth* urges the union of the Baptists and Congregationalists with the simple term Christian. Meaning absolutely nothing, this will be a capital name for covering up differences of opinion.

The Welsh Baptists beg the Prince of Wales, in a written address, to set his face against gambling and betting. For our part, we are indifferent whether this podgy gentleman goes to the races or goes to church; but we feel inclined to ask the Welsh Baptists what is Christianity itself but gambling on a big scale. The real Christian—not the bastard sort so prevalent nowadays—stakes this life in the hope of winning the next. It is a heavy venture, but as the odds are billions to one he thinks it worth his while. Who are the bookmakers? Well, the bookmakers are the priests. They make a winning book whoever loses or wins.

The Rev. Albert Vedder, a Presbyterian clergyman, was sentenced at New York to five years' imprisonment for abducting Mamie McCann, a fifteen-year-old girl.

The railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem will, it is said, be finished in the spring of 1892. Meanwhile the Catholics are busy buying up land in Jerusalem with a view to an expected rise. They have secured some choice portions of the Holy City.

The American correspondent of the *Church Times* points out that the Catholics have largely obtained consideration in America by their consummate tact in acquiring property, to which object they bend their most earnest endeavors.

At the annual meeting of the London Congregational Union, Dr. Parker preached a satirical sermon "from the text in the Epistles of Lord Beaconsfield, No. 10, line 7, 'How are you all to-day.'" He recommended that preachers should boldly make use of sermons written by abler men than themselves. But why doesn't Parker try the effect of South, Taylor, Fuller, Barrow or Hooker at his own City Temple, where the text is always from the Book of Parker from the first to the last verses.

What John Stuart Mill most admired in Secular Societies was their recognising no distinction of sex in membership or office. Ladies have always been welcomed in the Secular party; they have been elected on committees, they have sometimes taken the secretaryship and even the presidency of Branches, and they have stood by the side of men as equals on Secular platforms. In fact, the equal right of the sexes to every position of usefulness is a mere common-

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place among Freethinkers. They have always thought that if a woman has anything to teach, the man who won't learn it is a fool.

Well now, the Churches, which are always a century or so behind Freethought, are beginning to discuss whether women may not be allowed to come to the front, at least a few at a time. Of course St. Paul suffered not a woman to teach (cock-a-doodle-doo!), but the women won't be kept back any longer, and when they make up their minds to have anything there is no power in heaven above, on earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, to say them nay. So the Churches are obliged to give St. Paul the go by, and yield to necessity what they would never have conceded to justice and common sense.

The old old story has to be dished up anew for the American market. This is evident from the recent publication of three lives of Christ in the form of fiction. There is *Emanuel*, by Mr. Cooley; *A Son of Issachar*, by Mr. Brooks; and *Come Forth*, by E. S. Phelps and Mr. Ward. In these romances Jesus is presented with a number of other fictitious characters, and in the last volume mentioned performs a few additional miracles to those recorded in the gospels.

If after the selection of the canonical gospels the Church had not sternly anathematised those who circulated apocryphal writings there would have been a good chance of verifying the statement that the world itself could not contain the lies that should be written.

The Rev. A. Lyttleton, one of the writers in *Lux Mundi*, is engaged as Christian Evidence Lecturer at Manchester Cathedral. The fact that he is connected with that now famous heretical volume is conspicuously mentioned on the placards. He is, however, repudiated by the Christian Evidence Society of London, which always regards the orthodoxy, if not the character, of its advocates.

In the agony column of the *Christian Commonwealth* a correspondent signing himself "Anxious" begs advice in a terrible difficulty. During business hours he is in close connection with "a young man who is an Atheist and hates religion." This young man "continually reads extracts from the *Freethinker* and other sources," and "Anxious" wants to knows what books he should read to fortify his faith. Our pious contemporary recommends its own columns as the best antidote to scepticism, and after them the profound writings of the great J. H. Mitchell. Let us pray!

"The Turkish peasant," says Mr. Beatly Kingston, "is the most hardworking, sober, continent, and orderly man of his class in Europe—a model of laboriousness, honesty, and general good conduct." Of course this exemplary peasant is not a Christian. He is a Mohammedan.

There was some pretty skirmishing on the London School Board when the School Management Committee brought up its syllabus of Bible teaching. In the fourth standard the children were to be instructed in "the law of Moses with reference to the poor, strangers, fatherless, widows, parents, and children." But Stewart Headlam, who is warm on the land question, proposed that the children should be taught all about the year of jubilee—which, by the way, does not appear to have been once commemorated in the whole course of Jewish history. Of course Headlam was beaten by a large majority. Our own sympathy is with neither side in this dispute, but rather with the poor children who, if they are to be taught political economy, should be taught it scientifically and not from the played-out "law of Moses."

Headlam fought another round and won. He got the Committee's little harmony of the gospels rejected for the four gospels in their entirety. But the four gospels are a patchwork in their way, although Headlam thinks them a perfect revelation of his "Master."

Then came a squabble about Amos and Jeremiah. The Committee submitted "lessons from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah." Headlam proposed to substitute Amos as a gentleman of stronger democratic tendencies. He thought the children of the poor should know that a poor man had been inspired by God to utter such denunciations of greed and tyranny. Of course Headlam was beaten again. The Board preferred the more "respectable" prophet.

What a sight at this time of day! A lot of ladies and gentlemen wrangling over Amos and Jeremiah, instead of teaching children the plain laws of social life, which would not be in the least affected if Amos and Jeremiah were not only dead and buried, but forgotten.

Boycotting is not confined to Ireland, as the following incident, reported by a correspondent at Canterbury, will show. A lady went into the shop of a baker in Burgate, after having seen a bill in his window relating to some anniversary in connection with a dissenting chapel. She said to him, "Mr. W., I always thought you were a staunch Churchman." "So I am," he replied. "Oh," she said, pointing to the obnoxious bill, "you must remove it. We always make it a rule never to deal with tradesmen who show Dissenting bills."

The *Methodist Recorder* will not insert an advertisement of the *Crusader*. How these Christians love one another!

General Booth allows it to be stated that he never draws a penny from the funds of the Salvation Army. Perhaps he doesn't. But he draws money from somewhere. He does not live on the air, and a £4,000 house has to be paid for in solid cash. Evidently there is hocus-pocus in Booth's protestations. It would be interesting to learn what he *does* live on. Does he, for instance, pocket the profits of the *War Cry*, or any of the other publications, which the Army officers sell at meetings and hawk in the streets.

Celestine Edwards, the black preacher, has been discoursing at Morley Hall, supported by Mr. John Lobb and other distinguished friends of the human race. From a report in a local paper we see that Mr. Edwards's subject was "The Foes of Christianity," and among them he found, in the early days, "Pagans, Platonists and Eclectics," which reminds us of the famous division of animals into men, horses, quadrupeds and ponies. The remarks on the Aristotelians were particularly brilliant. Mr. Edwards does not seem to know that the Christian Church regarded the Aristotelian philosophy as one of its main pillars. Nor did he explain how Christianity triumphed over Paganism. The actual method was the burning of Pagan books, the demolition of Pagan temples, and the suppression of Pagan worship. Of course his audience applauded his nonsense, but their ignorance was probably more than a match for the lecturer's.

According to Mr. Stead, Mr. John Morley is a very good Christian without knowing it. Surely this is a piece of cool impudence. Mr. Stead is a clever man, but few people think he knows Mr. Morley's mind better than the right honorable gentleman knows it himself. Mr. Morley is essentially a thinker, and for that reason he is *not* a Christian.

Last week's *Sunday Chronicle* had a venomous article on Mr. Bradlaugh. It is becoming the fashion to gird at him in certain "advanced" circles. He seems to be paying the penalty of outspokenness, especially on the subject of religion. Some concealed Atheists on the anonymous press cannot forgive him for avowing his Atheism to the world. It makes them feel so mean.

There is no end to the cant of sky-pilots about Jesus Christ. That "popular preacher," Mr. R. F. Horton, for instance, talks of J. C. as dividing his days between teaching moral truths and "ministering to the needs of the suffering and starving." Where is Mr. Horton's authority for this statement? It is certainly not in the Gospels. Jesus did do a trick with certain loaves and fishes at one of his own meetings; he also turned the best part of a hundred gallons of water into wine to keep up the spree at a marriage feast. But what has this to do with *the starving?* Did he befriend the starving when he cursed the fig tree and made it wither? Did he help to feed them when he destroyed a whole herd of pigs at one fell swoop? If he wanted to do something for the "starving" Jews, he should have turned the pigs into bullocks, and cut them up amongst the crowd. A good joint is a lot better than a bad miracle.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 16, Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham; at 11, "Mistakes of Jesus" at 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "A World Without God."

Thursday, November 20, St. Pancras Reform Club, Prince of Wales's Road, Kentish Town, at 8, "The Blasphemy Laws, and Why they Should be Abolished." Admission free.

November 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. K. LAPORTE.—This journal *is* supplied to the trade on sale or return. We cannot help your newsagent's being sold out. You should tell him to order more, or to keep you a copy.

W. SCROXTON.—Thanks for the cuttings. We hope the prospect at Rushden will improve.

W. GILMOUR.—The "Scotch Thistle" notes will be continued from time to time. Thanks for the cuttings.

W. H. S.—Merci bien.

J. NEATE.—Cuttings and marked papers are always welcome.

J. W. CHAPMAN.—The Rev. C. J. Whitmore is dead, but his lying tract lives after him. A halfpenny postcard won't reach him now. "T. C." (Thomas Cooper) and "J. B." (Joseph Barker) were converted a whole generation ago. Some of the other cases are imaginary, and to call the rest infidel "leaders" is to abuse the credulity of the Christian multitude. It is a curious thing that these converts have all such an ancient and fish-like smell.

W. P. BRENT.—Mistakes will occur sometimes. The secret of infallibility has not yet been discovered. *Letters to Jesus Christ* should be *fourpence*; the *twopence* got into the *Freethinker* list while the printer nodded. If you send us your full address the twopence you did not intend to invest shall be returned.

H. PORTER.—The contents-sheet shall be forwarded. Thanks for all your trouble.

JACK.—It certainly is a scandalous thing that sailors should be made to attend "divine service," whether they desire to or not. Some day the question will be raised in Parliament. Meanwhile Jack must grin and bear it. We are glad to know that the *Freethinker* is doing good work in the navy, and we take the feverish distribution of anti-infidel literature as a compliment.

REX REGES.—We regard theosophy as a far more contemptible superstition than Christianity. Some of the older theosophists were a bit cracked; some of the modern ones have a good deal of method in their madness.

H. T. BAILEY.—The extract may be useful. We will think over the suggestion of a pamphlet on Christmas. We hardly know about issuing a Christmas Number this year. We have always lost money on special numbers. Our inclination is to make the Christmas week number a double one.

S. ACROYD.—We are glad to hear of the progress at Huddersfield, and hope the open-air propaganda will be still more successful next summer. Your suggestion should be sent to the secretary of the Yorkshire Federation.

R. CHAPMAN.—Questions on the Blasphemy Laws for parliamentary candidates shall be printed in our next.

S. STANDRING.—Delighted to hear of Mr. G. Anderson's gift of £5 to the Old Southgate Branch. Your Federation should succeed with a secretary like yourself and a president like J. M. Robertson.

W. PICKLES.—It is pleasant to hear that Mr. Foote's lectures at Nelson have "done much good." Pray get the Branch in working order and communicate with Mr. Forder.

R. GREEN.—We congratulate you on your successful candidature for a seat on the King's Lynn Town Council.

YOUNG FREETHINKER (Birmingham).—Thanks for your interesting letter. Colenso's book on the Pentateuch (People's edition) would give you what you seek. In our own reading we have to consult rare and expensive works. Glad to hear your newsagent finds a sale for the *Freethinker*.

B. HARRIS.—We fear you have a taste for the wonderful.

J. SIMS.—Shall have a paragraph next week.

W. TODD.—Our space is full of other matters this week, and Parson Woods must pass.

B. C. BRIDGER.—The reverend gentleman has been told again and again that he can have a public debate whenever his courage is ripe for the encounter. Meanwhile we decline to advertise him in our columns.

JOSEPH TAYLOR.—The application should be made, through the Secretary, to the Benevolent Committee.

J. BROWN.—We are sorry to hear that the reactionists on the Sunday question have won all along the line in the municipal elections at Newcastle. More success to your gallant efforts in the future! You are quite right; there is no remedy but an active Freethought propaganda. We must, as Voltaire said, Crush the Infamous.

W. CARLILE.—The tract would influence no one fit to become a Freethinker. Suppose half a dozen Secularists in fifty years *did* return to Christianity; is that a fair offset to the thousands who don't? Six Secularists are converted to Christianity; does that outweigh sixty thousand Christians converted to Freethought?

D. HUGHES.—We are obliged to you for sending the *Freethinker* to scores of people in your district. Such action makes the paper known, and being known always means an increase of its circulation.

J. W. GOTT.—Thanks for your efforts to introduce this journal to fresh readers. Good reproductions are expensive, and poor ones are not worth inserting. We printed a few portraits about eighteen months ago, but they were too heavy a drain on our resources. By-and-bye we may repeat the experiment.

T. PHILLIPS (Spennymoor).—We hope the meeting to-night (Nov. 16) will be well attended and include fresh faces. Unfortunately you are too late for the Almanack. Write to Mr. Forder, the N. S. S. secretary, on matters of business.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following subscriptions:—E. Bradlaugh, 2s.; H. Haigh, 1s.; P. French, 2s. 6d.; G. French, 2s. 6d.; J. Jones, 2s. 6d.; A. C., 5s.; D. Hughes, 4s.; J. W. Gott, 10s.; A. Pope, 2s. 6d.; A Policeman, 2s. 6d.; H. J. Thorp, 4s.; H. G. Shepherd, 1s.; H. Howard, 2s.; S. R. Stephenson, 10s. 6d.; R. Green, 5s.; M. A. Watson, 4s.; Edward Clare, £1 1s.; S. Stalder, 10s.; Joseph Taylor, 10s.; James Marsh, 2s. 6d.; J. Rawlinson, 2s. 6d.

L. CLIFTON.—Dr. Harrison is clever, but his lectures will never convert a single unbeliever. He has met both Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote in public debate. His debate with Mr. Foote was fourteen years ago at Newcastle.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntaggs-Blatt—Leicester Daily Mercury—Barnett Press—Echo—Nelson Chronicle—Rochdale Observer—Midland Weekly News—Temperance World—Western Figaro—Star—Yorkshire Evening Post—St. Pancras Guardian—Nelson Chronicle—The Quill—Scottish Pulpit—Canterbury Press—Tit-Pits — Wolverhampton Express and Star — Holbein's Visitor's List and Folkestone Journal—Evening Standard—Birmingham Daily Gazette — Manchester Courier—Sussex Evening News.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Grimsby is not noted for big Freethought meetings, and Mr. Foote is satisfied with the fair audiences he had there on Sunday. Judging from the laughter and applause, the audiences were also satisfied with the lectures. Mr. S. Alward, a member of the County Council, presided in the morning, and his brother George in the afternoon. The evening chairman was Dr. Spring, also a member of the new County Council, despite the cry of "Atheist!" raised against him at the elections. He has been a passive member of the N. S. S. for some time, and he now joins the active list. We understand there were three other doctors at the evening lecture.

Grimsby furnished but one opponent, a ranting, raving, though well-meaning gentleman named France. What he said was beneath criticism. The audience showed remarkable forbearance to this eccentric Christian. Fortunately the meeting was saved from breaking up in disorder, and a good collection was taken for the Benevolent Fund.

The Grimsby Branch will take Mr. Foote's advice to keep pegging away. Mr. Wittering is an excellent, active secretary, and the member's roll is slowly but surely increasing. Next summer the Branch will push on with its open-air propa-

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ganda. Meanwhile several courses of lectures will be given in the Hall of Science.

We find the sale of the *Freethinker* is gradually increasing in Grimsby. Mr. Wittering gives our literature special attention in his shop. He began with three or four copies of this journal and now disposes of a quire.

Secularists of "the modern Babylon" should remember the London Freethinkers' Ball at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, November 26. Only members of the N. S. S. and their friends will be admitted. The tickets are one shilling each, and any surplus after expenses will go to the Benevolent Fund. Those who don't dance will have a concert provided for them. Mr. Foote hopes to see a big gathering.

The London Secular Federation's annual dinner will take place early in January. This festal gathering is now regarded as a permanent institution. Mr. Foote will preside as usual, and will be well supported by the leading lecturers and organisers. Miss Vance, Mr. Forder, and Mr. Angus Thomas are the dinner committee, so the arrangements are in good hands.

The wretched weather hindered the success of the first of the Free Lectures at the Peckham Radical Club. The audience was small, but Mr. Hunt had some lively discussion. Mr. Moss delivers the second lecture on Thursday (Nov. 13) and we hope he will have a larger meeting. Freethinkers in the district should bestir themselves.

Mr. J. M. Robertson finished the Tower Hamlets course, and his audience was also thinned by the rain. Some lively and profitable discussion, however, gave spirit to the proceedings.

The debate at Edmonton between Mr. C. J. Hunt and Mr. Dunn was largely attended, and the Secularists are quite satisfied with the result. Mr. J. M. Robertson begins this evening (Nov. 16) a course of five lectures on Secularism in its various aspects. The other lecturers are to be Mrs. Samson, Mrs. Thornton Smith, and Messrs. J. Rowney and S. Standring.

Secularists living in Kilburn are earnestly requested to attend a meeting at 17 Andover Place, Kilburn, on Monday evening, Nov. 17, at 8.30, to make arrangements for open-air work in that district during the coming season in connection with the West London (late Hyde Park) Branch of the N. S. S.

Mr. A. B. Moss's engagement at Rushden is cancelled owing to the strike and lock-out in the district. The mishap is regrettable. We hope the Rushden friends will not be disheartened.

Mr. J. Oliver stood as labor candidate for the Welsh Ward, Shrewsbury. His nominator was the Rev. E. Myers, an advanced Unitarian minister, who supplied Mr. Foote with some biographical materials, for his *Darwin on God*. Mr. Oliver's opponents raised the cry of "infidel!" one sky-pilot being especially active outside the polling station. Nevertheless Mr. Oliver was successful. The Shrewsbury working men are not to be deluded by the bigots of an intolerant faith.

Mr. Forder lectured at West Ham on Sunday evening. £1 1s. 6d. was collected for the Benevolent Fund.

The Spennymoor meeting called through our columns was a success. A Branch of the N. S. S. was started with ten members. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed and the new Branch will take immediate steps to carry on a Freethought propaganda in the district.

The *Nelson Chronicle* gives a brief report of Mr. Foote's recent lectures and notes the "large attendances." The same paper prints a capital letter from "Rusticus" in reply to the Rev. Mr. Barnes. Freethinkers do their cause a real service by contributing well-written letters to the local press.

Dr. Stöcker, the pious Conservative and bigoted Prussian Court Chaplain who distinguished himself by hounding on the anti-Jewish and anti-Socialist crusades, has bee dismissed by the Emperor, and this removal, we trust, argues the advent of more tolerant times in Germany.

A discussion on the formation of a Gallican church is to take place at the Perpignan theatre between Father Hyacinthe, the eloquent married priest, and the Abbe Roca. The Abbe was formerly a canon of the Catholic Church, and at present edits a paper called the *Anti-Clerical*. Abbe Roca left the Church a few months ago to become a Freethinker, and has written many articles against the Pope and the bishops and priests.

The Oregon State Secular Union has had a successful Convention at Portland, presided over by C. Beal. Among the visitors were S. P. Putnam, Mrs. Mattie Krekel, Professor Seymour, J. E. Remsburg, and W. S. Bell.

Two more indictments have been made against Dr. T. A. Voelkel for blasphemy in Muhlhausen and Neinburgh. Altogether he has had ten processes against him, but has not as yet, we believe, been imprisoned.

Dr. Specht, editor of *Menschenthum*, Gotha, has been taking a lecturing tour, visiting Leipsic, Jagerndorf and Vienna, where he has had good audiences listening to the principles of the German Freethinkers' Union.

The monthly Bulletin of the French Federation of Freethinkers for November gives a report of the proceedings at the National Congress of French Freethinkers held at Paris on Oct. 19.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, held at Hall of Science, Thursday, Nov. 6, the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the liabilities in respect of Hall of Science Free Lecture Course were ordered to be discharged. The secretary reported as to Tower Hamlets and Peckham and Dulwich lectures. The question of assisting at West Ham was dealt with; and the secretary was instructed to arrange for a course of Free Lectures at Tottenham Court Road in January next. Mr. Martin suggested that the Federation give a course of lectures in Battersea district, and the matter was deferred till next meeting. Mr. Renn moved, and Mr. Forder seconded "That the Federation undertake the management of a Children's Party," February being the month decided upon. The election of a sub-committee to arrange details was left till next meeting. The matter of the Annual Dinner was next discussed; and, on the motion of Mr. R. O. Smith, it was decided to hold it on the first Monday in January next. Mr. Forder moved "That the Bridge House Hotel be the *venue*, and the price of tickets be 2s. 6d."; carried. Miss Vance, Messrs. Forder and Angus Thomas were elected as a sub-committee to arrange details. Mr. Anderson (West Ham) gave notice that he would move, at the next meeting, "That the Council meetings be called for 7.30 p.m., instead of as at present." On the motion of Mr. Renn (Finsbury) it was resolved to print the Principles and Objects of the National Secular Society on the next monthly programme of lectures. The Council then adjourned till first Thursday in December.

EDMUND POWNCEBY, *Secretary*.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
G. R.	1	0	0	N. M. Knox	0	10	0
E. Truelove	1	0	0	C. W.	0	10	0
J. Umpleby	0	10	0	J. Tonkins	0	2	6
S. H. Munns	0	10	0	Chas. Sedgwick	0	2	6
J. Swaagman	1	1	0	J. Payne	0	2	6
W. Stuart	0	5	0	J. Cheesewright	0	5	0
Geo. Anderson	5	5	0				

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

A negro Baptist said to his Methodist master, "You've read the Bible, I s'pose?" "Yes." "Well, you've read in it of one John the Baptist, hasn't you?' "Yes." "Well, you never saw nothing of John the Methodist, did you?" "No." "Well, den you see dere's Baptists in de Bible, but dere am no Methodists, and de Bible's on my side."

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MIRACLES.

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS.

THE subject of this address should be of absorbing interest to the Secular Society, as it is the Holy Land in which their theological opponents entrench their forces and against which their crusade is carried on. The members of the Secular Society are endeavoring to bring the minds of their fellow creatures out of this region of chimera and unreality, back to the stern and rugged facts of this world.

The Christian has wandered away into a superstitious, Eastern mysticism, he has lost the spirit of his Viking forefathers whose motto was, "Be brave!" and whose first lesson to children was to speak the truth. If the Christian finds the world too harsh a place for his pampered selfishness, let him lead on and undertake the task of self conquest which his master had so often on his lips, and not store up for his private felicity joys which will never be realised. His hope may be a glorious one, the value it sets upon man may be magnified and soothing to vanity, but what good is in it, if, as Carlyle said of the fiery eloquence of an orator, it is not true.

Searching for the definition of the word "miracle," we find many varying as to their relative merits, but agreeing fundamentally in this; a miracle is an event the law or cause of which cannot be conceived by the human mind, or an event of which we cannot predict with certainty the recurrence, when the same conditions which led to its occurence again prevail. Another definition is that miracles are contradictory to the laws of nature; the laws of nature are powerless or suspended when a miracle occurs, and some other force, law, power or what you will, comes into operation. The result is that there is an effect upon material substance without a natural cause, which is an absurdity. Some upholders of the miraculous may say that miracles are only the effects of laws of nature hitherto undiscovered or not properly investigated. We shall be ready enough to admit that all the laws of nature have not yet been discovered, but that is only of minor importance; but if an occurrence is said to take place contrary to a law of nature of which we know the existence, then the reporter of such an occurrence is a near relation of that gentleman known as the "Father of lies." For instance, it is a well-known law that all organisms, man included, die, and when they are dead no power in nature can, without a process extending over years, and depending on the dissolution of their elements, bring them to life again. So when we are coolly informed, that a man has been dead, his body laid in the grave, and decomposition set in, and then again we are told he was once more endowed with life, the blood circulating through his body, the secretion of the gastric juice, bile, etc. going on, the waste and repair of tissue taking place, we may be inclined to exclaim, "Has the torch of science gone out, or was it but a will o' the wisp?"

The arguments for the non-existence and incredibility of miracles may be classed under two heads, the one scientific, and the other historical. In *The Mystery of Miracles*, written by a very orthodox person, Mr. J. W. Reynolds, who is also the author of *The Tabernacle of Nature*, which once caused much jubilation in the Christian camp; it is stated that "Miracles are creative acts of God, supernatural operations in nature's domain, new things of which unaided nature is incapable."

Now these three assertions I deny *in toto*. No one can truthfully say that such an act as creation ever took place—that is the formation of something out of nothing. Our experience, or science teaches us that all events and existences are but the modification of something that has had a prior existence. No one can prove and maintain the existence of God. The second proposition of this dealer in miracles, that his wares are "supernatural operations in nature's domain," is very misty and phantasmal. Every event which repeats itself is natural, and we know of nothing beyond nature, nor can know; nature is the sum total of all that is. We may push our inquiries further and further into the ocean of immensity, we may scrutinise with ten-thousand magnifying power the microscopic world, and yet be within nature's domain. We may discover new laws, new facts may be brought before us, but still they will be working in perfect harmony with those already known. But the last assertion of this philosophical Christian is the most unfounded of all. Miracles, he says, are new things of which nature is incapable. Who shall set bounds to the capabilities of nature? Once nature was thought to require the assistance of demons, angels, or spirits, to effect her purposes. For the creation of man it was thought necessary to have an Almighty God, and for his corruption an almost equally almighty Devil, but now good old nature is beginning to receive justice, men are finding out that these devils and gods are but masqueraders in the plumes of our natural mother, and that she is capable of producing grander results than the whole spiritual universe, according to Mahomet, John or Christ, which, according to those who seem to know most about it, is in a most chaotic and anarchical state, it being an open question as to whether God or the Devil will ultimately win. It was a new step in the orderly progress of nature when man first appeared upon the scene, but this step did not remain unique, for a race of men followed. A new step was taken by nature, it may be said, when Christ rose from the dead clothed in a semi-human form. This might be no more startling or marvellous than the appearance of the first man, the first plant; but we soon see where the analogy between the two cases fails. When the first man was brought into being, the same causes still operated and brought other men into being, thus establishing the natural law that men should exist. But when Christ rose from the dead, nature seemed to have exhausted her power in that direction, no similar effects followed where the same conditions were present. Other men have fulfilled the same physical conditions as Christ; crucifixion was not a new mode of punishment initiated specially for the Nazarene, other men suffered the agony of the cross; other men have fulfilled the same mental or moral conditions, conquering self, and have risen to as high a level as Christ; and yet good as they were, wise as they were, needful as they might be for the welfare of humanity, still they sleep in the tomb. The only immortality that we know they possess is that left in their memory and words. Therefore these two events, the origin of man and the resurrection of Christ, are not analogous. The one developed into a natural law or method, the other, if it ever existed, was sterile, abnormal, unnatural. I do not say nature is not capable of producing a higher being than man, but before I can believe it has been done, it must occur not once or twice, or a thousand times, but wherever and whenever the causes which operated to bring it into effect are at work.

GEORGE ARMATAGE.

(To be concluded.)

WEE DAVIE.

Tune—"Robin Samson's Smiddy."

Wee Davie was an active chiel
  As ever cut a thrapple,
Could loup and rin the Diel himsel'
  And wie a lion grapple.
But what think ye o' his exploit
  Wie yon auld pagan giant?
Wha struttit oot in fechtin gear
  And shook his spear defiant.

CHORUS.

At their fal the ral the ri-doe,
  An' a' their brag an' blether,
Their battle-god and holy priests
  And prophets a' thegether.

Wee Davie made himsel a sling
  And stored wie stanes his pockets,
Then faced the unbelievin gowk
  And slung the stanes like rockets.
Ane strack him fair atween the een
  And felled him like a plover,
Then Davie hackit aff his head
  For fear he might recover,

Chorus—Frae their fal the ral, etc.

Wee Davie took the head to Saul,
  Wha gied him muckle credit,
And a' the lassies in the camp
  Were singing hoo he did it;
And Saul gied him a harp to strum
  To gliff awa the deevils,
Wha plagued him sair baith e'en and morn
  When in his drucken revels.

Chorus—Wie his fal the ral, etc.

T. CLARK.

Lapman (to revivalist)—I hear that several members of the church have gone crazy over the subject of religion. Revival gatherings are meeting with glorious success.

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A BAPTISM OF FIRE.

Colonel Fitzsmithers, the editor of the Kentucky *Greased Lightning*, and a member of one of our most prominent families, was baptised and was received into the Second Baptist church, last Sunday, under most auspicious circumstances. The colonel and the Rev. Mr. Horntooter had just descended into the water preparatory to immersion, and the minister was repeating those solemn words which begin, "Brother, dost thou promise to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil?" when the colonel, raising his eyes in rapt devotion, happened to spy on the bank the familiar form of Major Blatherskite, the editor of the *Derringer*. Now, these two gentlemen had a political discussion, during which the major published in the columns of the *Derringer* some rather caustic truths in regard to the colonel. This affair had never been satisfactorily arranged, so that when the colonel observed the major, he leaned over until he could catch the ear of the minister without being noticed, and whispered: "Go right along with the service, parson. Don't let any of them critters suspect I'm a-talking to you, but I'd be obliged if you could give me the loan of your shootin'-iron for a moment, as I left mine on the bank." The minister, taking in the situation at a glance, managed to slip his six-shooter into the colonel's hand without being seen by the crowd, and then, by a quick movement, he gained the bank, and the firing began. After three or four shots had been exchanged, with no other result than killing a negro, who was standing on the opposite bank, the colonel happened to get the drop on the major while he was trying to escape, and thus ended the dispute. After this little incident, the minister once more descended into the water, and the ceremony was concluded. Before the assemblage dispersed, however, the major and the negro were buried, and the colonel in a few touching words extolled the virtues of baptism; saying that its effects were to abolish all feelings of violence, and to teach that beautiful precept, "Love thy neighbor as thyself!"—*Life*.

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS.

Dr. A. J. Harrison has been lecturing at Wolverhampton against Scepticism. His discourses were addressed "to men." Apparently the reverend gentleman is careless about women. For our part, we regard these lectures "to men" as a trick below Dr. Harrison's dignity. It suggests something spicy, which the presence of ladies would prevent the lecturer from uttering.

We have looked through the reports of Dr. Harrison's lectures, and we find them of such a nature that to criticise them would be like fighting a cloud or punching a pillow. His observations on miracles, and his conundrums on free will and necessity, seem to show that he was playing with his audience. Dr. Harrison is too able a man—or at least he was—to be the dupe of such poor sophistry.

An Eastern United States Senator tells this about his little girl: He says that when his family had gathered for dinner little Clara was too busy with her playthings to suspend, and her mother called her to come. "Yes, in a minute," was the response. "But we are all waiting," said my wife, "and your papa is waiting to ask the blessing." She came in, climbed into her chair, folded her hands demurely, bowed her head and said in a low voice: "Let her go, Gallagher?" "I am afraid," said the Senator, laughing, "that the blessing I invoked at my table that day was slightly incoherent."

A clergyman in a recent address on the propriety of doing the right thing at the right time, said that when he was chaplain in the army, at a certain battle he came upon a man who was horribly wounded, over whom a comrade was kneeling endeavoring to supply religious consolation by reading a standard catechism to him. The dying man, as the clergyman reached him was having this heart-searching question out to him: Who gave you this name?"

"How customs change!" exclaimed Jones the other evening to his better half. "I see the Jews used to employ hewers of wood and drawers of water, whereas we use ewers of water and drawers of wood."

"Now, children, who was the strongest man?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent. "John L. Samson!" yelled a little fellow whose knowledge of sacred and profane history was somewhat mixed.—*Texas Siftings*.

"Shall we have clothes in heaven, Mamma?" "No, child." Well, mamma, won't it it be funny to see the black servant and the red face big-bellied cook walk in heaven, arm in arm."

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Intelligence in Nature."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Rossetti, "Is Christianity Reasonable?" Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Biography of Herbert Spencer."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "And they Crucified Him." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Mission of Secularism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "My Political Programme now and a Quarter of a Century since"; 7, "Life, Death, and Immortality."

Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, debate between Mr. C. J. Hunt and Mr. W. O. Drake, "Materialism *v.* Spiritualism."

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 6.30, Mr. W. Jenkinson, "An Hour with 'Dagonet.'"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Christ and Christians," Monday, at 8.30, social meetings. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. C. Ivatts will lecture; 7, Mr. J. Coppock, F.C.S., "How Science tells what a Star is made of" (with experiments) Tuesday, at 8, Mr. T. Thurlow, "The True History of the Bible."

Westminster - Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "Other Worlds than Ours."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. R. Forder, "A Night with Old Nick."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Is the Bible an Immoral Book?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3, debate between Messrs. Clarendon and Keen on "Creation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, V.—'All the World's a Stage.'"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; 7, "A World Without a God"

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, a member, "The Ulster Loyalists"; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "The Socratic Method."

Hull — Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. W. Anyan, "Evolution."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class, "The Scientific Basis of Morals"; 7, Mr. Bergmann, "Does the New Testament Teach the English Morality?"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, meeting of sub-committee of North-Eastern Secular Federation; local delegates and vice-presidents are requested to attend.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. James Hooper, "Miracles Critically Examined."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, W. M., "Christ's Life and Teachings"; 7, Mr. Welch "Macaulay." Music by Miss Payne.

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, a local gentleman will give original readings.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. B. Dawson will give a reading.

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. W. R. Stansell will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Nov. 19 and 26 (Tuesday evenings), Plaistow.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 47.] SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONTINUED.]

WITHOUT going through all the insane theology of this book we may—nay, we must—give a crowning instance of it (p. 257). The language, we take it, is Booth's own.

"I am quite satisfied that these multitudes will not be saved in their present circumstances. All the Clergymen, Home Missionaries, Tract Distributors, Sick Visitors, and everyone else who care about the Salvation of the poor, may make up their minds as to that. If these people are to believe in Jesus Christ, become the Servants of God, and escape the miseries of the wrath to come, they must be helped out of their present social miseries. They must be put into a position in which they can work and eat, and have a decent room to live and sleep in, and see something before them besides a long, weary, monotonous, grinding round of toil, and anxious care to keep themselves and those they love barely alive, with nothing at the further end but the Hospital, the Union, or the Madhouse. If Christian Workers and Philanthropists will join hands to effect this change it will be accomplished, and the people will rise up and bless them, and be saved; if they will not, the people will curse them and perish."

Did ever a human brain excogitate such blasphemous nonsense? God is openly declared to be a passive spectator of the great struggle between good and evil. At the end of it he will save the succeeders and damn the failers; although, according to Booth's own admission, hosts of both classes are what they are through the pressure of circumstances. Compared with such a God the bloody Moloch was a respectable deity.

Four men are living within sight and sound of each other, and one of them goes to the bad. Thereupon it is the duty of Smith, Jones and Brown to rescue Robinson. If they succeed, God will give him a seat in Heaven; if they fail, or neglect their duty, God will cast him into Hell. Thus Robinson's fate depends upon the sympathy, self-sacrifice, and wisdom of Smith, Jones and Brown. Want of heart on their part, and even want of sense, are alike fatal to his chance of salvation. God lets them do their best; if they do nothing he is just as serene; and at the day of judgment he sends Robinson to bliss or damnation, accordingly as Smith, Jones and Brown—separately or collectively—have succeeded or failed in keeping him out of the gutter.

What a view of God! And what a ghastly, roundabout way of stating the truth that religion is powerless to save the fallen, that men and women can only be elevated by secular agencies!

This truth has always been proclaimed by Freethinkers. It is a commonplace of their teaching. Yet the Churches have ignored or denied it. Here is General Booth, however, announcing it clearly enough to all who will take the theological wadding out of their ears. True, the discovery is late, but better late than never.

It is upon this truth that Booth's scheme is founded. Sometimes, indeed, he forgets it, and talks as though the preaching of Christ and him crucified were enough to regenerate society. But this truth, that man is very largely the creature of circumstances, and that evil circumstances should be changed if there is to be any improvement, is the governing idea of his project.

No doubt the "General" seeks an escape from the logical consequences of this truth. He says, for instance, that (p. 286) "to me has been given the idea," as though God *had* intervened and selected him as the human agent. But this is all nonsense. In the first place, if God gave Booth the idea, he might as well have given him the cash. In the second place, the idea—or, rather, the set of ideas—is by no means a revelation. Every part of Booth's scheme has been advocated by other men, and several parts are already reduced to practice, though not on the gigantic scale he contemplates. His Farm Colony is admittedly borrowed from Mr. E. T. Craig, a veteran Freethinker, who was the soul of the Ralahine experiment. With this gentleman Booth has had interviews; indeed, the "General"—perhaps, with Mr. Stead's assistance — has simply picked other men's brains, although he takes care to conceal his indebtedness.

Naturally, too, the astute leader of the Salvation Army recognises the necessity of a *pious* appeal to wealthy Christians. He therefore "asserts in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving souls" that he "seeks the salvation of the body" (p. 45). And he declares (p. 3) it must not be supposed that he is "less dependent upon the plans" or that he "seeks anything short of the old conquest." At the same time (p. 279) he "does not think that any sectarian differences or religious feelings whatever ought to be imported into this question." Is it not better, he asks, that miserable crowds of men and women should have work, food, clothes, and a home, even with "some peculiar religious notions and practices," than that they should be "hungry, and naked, and homeless, and possess no religion at all"? Put in this way, of course, the question admits of only one answer. But this way of putting it begs the wider question between Christianity and Secularism; for it does not follow that Booth's is the only possible scheme of social reform, or that it is even calculated to succeed.

The real fact is, disguise it how he may, that Booth's scheme is only an extension of the Salvation Army. He promises that there shall be no compulsion, that the poor he gets hold of shall not be pressed into any form of faith, that religious freedom shall be respected. But what will the promise avail? The whole scheme, from top to bottom, is to be worked by the Salvationists; every penny is to pass through Booth's hands, and every order is to issue from his brain. Outsiders are only wanted in the shape of subscribers. It is not idle, then, to suppose that the scheme will, in practice, be anything else than a huge recruiting system for the Salvation Army? We venture to say that if Booth's *first* thought were for the poor, he would invite the formation of an influential Committee, and not seek the monopoly of all the cash and credit for his own sect.

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Let us turn now to the scheme itself. Let us see what evils are to be remedied, and the nature of the remedy proposed.

In the opening chapters, written almost exclusively by Mr. Stead, there is a vivid, but of course exaggerated, picture of the diseases of society. The writer has walked through the "shambles of our civilisation," until "it seemed as if God were no longer in this world, but that in his stead reigned a fiend, merciless as Hell, ruthless as the grave." Of course the grave is neither ruthless nor tender; and of course it is not Hell, but the God of Hell, that is merciless. But, apart from these criticisms, it is evident that Mr. Booth-Stead or Mr. Stead-Booth, is aware of much preventible evil; nor are we disposed to quarrel with him for calling it "a satire upon our Christianity," although we might suggest the impossibility of satirising a creed which has to make such shameful confessions after so many centuries of wealth, power and privilege, and such a supreme opportunity of cleansing the world if it had the capacity for the task. This Christianity has failed—disastrously and ignominiously; yet has it played the dog in the manger, and refused to allow Science and Philosophy a trial; and even now, when condemned and self-condemned, it only whines for another chance, like an old offender for the hundredth time in the prisoners' dock.

Eighteen centuries after the advent of "the Redeemer," and in the most pious country in the world, Booth calculates that one-tenth of the population, or about three millions of men, women, and children, are sunk in destitution, vice, and crime. In London alone, the city of churches, where everything but religion is tabooed on Sunday, there are 100,000 prostitutes, 85,000 thieves, and drunkards galore, to say nothing of the paupers, the idle, and the temporarily unemployed. And the disease is getting worse, according to Booth, who declares that something must be done immediately. Well, we will neither dispute his statistics or his forecast, but just take his plan of campaign and see whether it has the remotest chance of success.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

UNITARIANISM.

FOLLOWING the example of the other dissenting bodies the Unitarians are having "a forward movement," displaying renewed activity in placing their views before the masses. Their best paper, the *Inquirer* has for some time been reduced to the popular penny, and they are now seeking by free lectures and the distribution of literature to keep pace with the times.

Probably no Unitarian will deny such a movement was needed. With many converts among the rich and educated, Unitarianism has little hold on the people. For one thing it lacks a popular class of preachers. It has many able, cultured and refined scholars and gentlemen, but no powerful orator capable of attracting the masses. It cannot descend to the brass band and self-advertising methods of "General" Booth and Hugh Price Hughes. It has neither the zeal of the orthodox nor of the unbelievers. We "infidels" have suffered from persecution and it has rendered us sturdy. We have yet to fight for the bare right to exist. In the present century Unitarianism has suffered from respectability. It has been eminently decorous and dull. The *Prospective Review* and the *Theological Review*, two most able magazines, were forced to drop because never dealing with vital points which the people at large could understand and in which they were interested. We are much mistaken if this is not also the case with the *Christian Reformer*, the latest venture of the kind. Worst of all, Unitarianism has suffered from its lack of moral courage and its tendency to compromise and half measures. It has been felt to be neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.

The Unitarian congregation is a most heterogenous mixture. All shades of belief are found, from Arians who simply cannot stand the Athanasian Creed, to Agnostics who think chapel-going lends an air of respectability to heresy. One man may be a materialist follower of Priestley, the next a spiritist believing that Jesus was the first of mediums. Out of such elements an effective organisation is impossible. Indeed, the best prospect ministers like Page Hopps and Jas. Martineau look forward to is to make the Church of England broad enough to include *them* while excluding all non-Christians.

The old school of Unitarianism, based on rationalising Biblical exegesis, is dead. James Martineau, the ablest exponent of the least advanced school of modern Unitarians, confesses it. "The Seat of Authority in Religion" can no longer be found in the Church, its records or its miracles. Lardner, Priestley and Belsham no longer suffice. Theodore Parker long since superseded Channing. The Unitarians excommunicated him when alive, and have sought to adopt him since his death. But even Parker, though in advance of his time, came before the modern era of evolution.

Critically, the position of the old Unitarians, who were content with denying the supreme deity of Christ, was strong, as may be seen by any one who will take up such works as Wilson's *Scripture Proofs and Illustrations of Unitarianism* or Yates' *Vindication of Unitarianism*. The doctrine of the Trinity was doubtless an aftergrowth, derived from the contact of Judaism with Paganism. Unitarianism can fairly claim to represent the early Judaic element of Christianity. But it must never be forgotten that it was orthodox Christianity which triumphed. It was the belief in the man-god and his atoning blood, the near approach of the end of the world and the dreadful prospect of eternal torments, which won Europe to the Christian faith. In lopping off what they called the corruptions of Christianity, Unitarians destroyed its roots; what they took for excresences being really vital outgrowths, not to be removed without injury to the structure. Christianity is nothing if not dogmatic, and Coleridge, who had been a Unitarian, was quite right in denying that they are Christians at all.

The break up of old Unitarianism came in three directions:—1st, Critical. The Improved Version, edited by Belsham and others, began by questioning the authenticity of the two first chapters of Matthew, and when this was endorsed by Prof. Andrews Norton, Unitarianism was embarked on the critical path, bound not only to discard the last verses of Mark, but the whole gospel of John, discredited by Dr. J. J. Tayler and Ezra Abbot, among the best scholars in the party. When Prof. Noyes demonstrated that the Messianic prophesies did not apply to Jesus, it was felt that Biblical infallibility must go. 2nd, Sentimental. The spread of universalism forced Unitarianism into opposition to the orthodox notion of hell as much as into opposition to the orthodox notion of the Trinity. But here it was found that the scriptural authority for the former was far stronger than for the latter. When the Unitarian comes to ask himself "Should I believe in eternal torments even though it were taught in the Bible?" he is bound to decide the question between reason and authority. 3rd, Scientific. Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and others have replaced the anthropomorphic Father of the old Unitarians by an impersonal force, and made more difficult the belief in the supernatural.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin called Unitarianism a feather-bed for a falling Christian. He has to fall before he reaches it. In giving up the Church he is logically forced to resign much that the Church is the main authority for, and this includes the Bible. Having

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gone so far, he is compelled to go much further. The hope for Unitarianism is to frankly recognise that dogmatic theism will have to be dropped as much as dogmatic theology. The fruitful service of man will have to be substituted for the vain worship of God. Then may Unitarian ministers hope to hold their own so long as people feel a necessity for moral teachers. Meanwhile their best function is that of serving as stepping-stones to ford the stream which separates the land of authority from the realm of reason.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE EVIL THE CHURCH DOES.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

(*Continued.*)

A CLERGYMAN may be intelligent, devout, stainless in his character; he may be as brave as a man and as tender as a woman; he may be as pure as a maiden and as good as a god should be; but if he reaches intellectual conclusions contrary to the statements of the creed, he is doomed to suffering, perhaps to poverty, perhaps to death; doomed by the Church, which arrays herself with the garments of an angel, but scratches with the claws of a cat.

On the other hand, a clergyman may be intellectually feeble, mechanically conventional in his piety, unsavory in reputation, weak in character; he may be a moral coward and harsh in nature; he may have an impure mind and gross instincts, but if he is orthodox, any position the Church has is open to him, he may become a father of Israel, living in luxury and dying in all the odors of sanctity.

What I have said may be repeated thus: The Church is a curse to the world because it rewards mediocrity, coupled with conformity, and punishes superiority, coupled with independence and originality; because its policy paralyses the brain.

Involved in this charge against the Church is a third: It is a curse to the world because it encourages mental dishonesty. By rewarding faithful adherence to the creed and punishing expression of doubts, the Church encourages clergymen to preach what they do not believe, or at least to conceal what they do believe, when they no longer believe the creed. The clergyman knows the Church cannot control his thoughts and has no punishment for heretical opinions, unexpressed. He knows that he may be as heretical as he likes provided he does not repeat his heresies. He knows that if he offends by preaching his heresies he can retain his salary and position by recanting or keeping silent. That is to say, he knows that if he preaches his doubts, as every honest man should, he will lose his position in the Church, but that if he is a hypocrite, as every one who pretends to believe what he does not, or conceals his true opinions through fear of suffering or poverty, is, he cannot retain his position in the Church.

The direct and necessary result of the policy of the Church is to make clergymen mentally dishonest, and I have no doubt that, with the possible exception of politicians, no class of men on earth are more dishonest in their public utterances than clergymen.

I presume that, to a greater or less extent, most clergymen are hypocrites. The constitution and necessities of the Church are such that, unless a clergyman is more or less of a hypocrite he cannot remain a clergyman. A clergyman must hang to one or the other horn of a dilemma: He must have no doubts, in which case he is an imbecile, or he must conceal his doubts, in which case he is a hypocrite.

There may be exceptions to the general statement that all clergymen are imbeciles or hypocrites. It is said that there are exceptions to all rules. I am willing to allow that there are exceptions in this case, but it is my deliberate opinion that there are are no clergymen who have no doubts, and that there are none who preach all their doubts, without sooner or later ceasing to be clergymen. The inevitable conclusion is that all clergymen, who are not rapidly on their way out of the Church, are to a greater or less extent hypocrites. But whether that is true or not, it certainly is true that the policy of the Church is exactly calculated to make clergymen either imbeciles or hypocrites.

Most of you know that I was a clergyman for about fifteen years. The question will naturally arise in your minds: Which was I, an imbecile or a hypocrite? My reply is that I was neither. There was never an hour when I did not have some doubts; therefore I was not an imbecile. There was never a period in my clerical career when I did not preach my doubts; therefore I was not a hypocrite. I came very near not being ordained because I was a heretic. I never was recognised as being a "safe" man. My doubts grew more and more numerous, and as they grew, I preached them, until I preached myself out of the Church.

Many estimable clergymen have convinced themselves that it is wise and right for them to conceal their doubts, believing that truth is dangerous unless it is generously mixed with error. And so they are conscientious hypocrites. They believe it is their duty to God and man for them to be hypocrites. But a conscientious hypocrite *is* a hypocrite all the same, and I am not sure that he is not the most dangerous species of the genus. I have no doubt that the hypocrites who crucified Christ were conscientious, and I presume he knew they were, but he did not hesitate to brand them as whited sepulchres.

In the fourth place, the Church is a curse to the world because with all its might it bolsters up a false system of morals, and by doing so harbors and clothes with respectability some of the vilest persons in the community, together with many who not very good, but who are not as bad as some of its prominent members.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE BIRTHDAY OF PIERRE BAYLE. Nov. 18, 1647.

BY JULIAN HIBBERT.

SPIRIT that looketh lovingly on all,
Nor with least love on misled hearts and frail;
Sweet Charity! This day from out the pale
Of the dull common place thy voice doth call!
The natal day of one who did install
The world with happy truths, though Might turned pale
And trembled as he saw the cherished veil
Of Falsehood—touched by one Freethinker—fall!
Mother of Toleration! searching Doubt!
Twin born of Freedom! Still our cause avail;
Help us to put to flight the goblin-rout,
That chain men's thoughts in Custom's dreariest jail;
And onward as she goes, bid Reason shout,
Tocsin of deathless power—the name of Bayle.

—*From "The New Moral World."*

BLESSED BE YE POOR.

The following items are gleaned from a New York paper:—Dr. Morgan Dix, rector of Old Trinity, has $15,000. His assistant has $6,000. Of the chapels belonging to the parish, Trinity Chapel yields $3,000 to Dr. Swope, and the assistants in charge of the others have $4,000. Dr. Huntingdon, rector of Grace Church, has $15,000 and a house the rental of which is worth at least $5,000 more. St. Bartholomew is said to pay $19,000 to its rector, Dr. Crees, who, being wealthy, retains nothing for himself. Dr. Brown, of St. Thomas, receives $15,000. Dr. Rainsford, of St. George, has $10,000, and, being well to do, is said to give it all away. A dozen other Episcopal parishes in the city pay from $4,000 to $3,000 a year. The Bishop receives $15,000. Among the Presbyterians, Dr. John Hall draws $20,000; Dr. Paxton is reported to receive $10,000; Dr. Parkhurst, $3,000. Rev. Robert Collyer, Unitarian, has $10,000. The pastor of the largest Methodist church has $5,000 and parsonage, the Methodist bishop also has $5,000. In Brooklyn, Dr. Talmage is said to receive $12,000; Dr. Abbott, $3,000. It may be added that in Dr. Paxton's choir one soprano singer receives at least $4,000.—*Christian World.*

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PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

Intending subscribers to the Forder Testimonial Fund will, I hope, remit as soon as possible. I should like to present the Testimonial at the annual dinner of the London Secular Federation in January. There must be hundreds of Secularists who know Mr. Forder and what he has done for the cause, and who have not yet contributed to this fund. May I ask them to consult their exchequers and act as handsomely as they can?

I have said in the N. S. S. Almanack, now on sale, that the Freethought party is everywhere showing signs of renewed activity. Our financial position is improving and an unusual number of new members have lately been enrolled. Mr. Bradlaugh has had splendid audiences at his recent Freethought lectures in the Hall of Science, and I also find larger audiences than ever in all the towns I visit. It is a source of gratification, too, that the sale of our literature is constantly increasing.

While we are pushing ahead, however, we should exercise some discretion. When a lecture list has to be made up I fear the Branches sometimes jump at offers that they should decline. No one should be allowed to lecture on the Freethought platform whose antecedents are unknown. New comers are generally zealous, but they should serve a reasonable probation before they occupy any representative position. The credit of the party is far more important than the momentary convenience of a single Branch.

My attention has been called to a Mr. Long who is in the November lecture-list of the West Ham Branch. I make no charges against him, but I am obliged to say it is injudicious to put him forward as one of our advocates. If my warning is neglected by any Branch I shall have to lay the matter before the Executive. This is one of the unpleasant duties of my position, but I took the presidency "for better or worse."

Unfortunately I am not so well as I could wish, and the questions on the Blasphemy Laws for parliamentary candidates must wait until next week.

At the December meeting of the Executive I shall have to submit proposals for carring into effect the Conference resolution as to centralisation of the lecture-system. Meanwhile I shall be glad to hear from any workers in the party who have suggestions to make

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIAN WARS.—Prof. Leoni Levi, the statistician, has calculated that since the commencement of the Christian era there have been 286 great wars in which Christian countries have engaged. Classified as to cause they are as follows:—Forty-four wars of ambition, to obtain extension of country. Twenty-two wars of plunder, tribute, etc. Twenty-four wars of retaliation or revenge. Eight wars to settle questions of honor or prerogative. Six wars arising from disputed claims to some territory. Forty-one wars arising from disputed titles and crowns. Thirty wars commenced under pretence of assisting an allay. Twenty-three wars originating in jealousy of rival greatness. Five wars which have grown out of commerce. Fifty-five civil wars. Twenty-eight wars on account of religion.—*The Truthseeker*.

Mr. J. M. Robertson pays Birmingham his first visit next Sunday (Nov. 30). He lectures three times in Baskerville Hall. We hope our Birmingham friends will give him a hearty reception.

A Mr. Cohen, the name is a common Jewish one, sought to avoid paying his dentist on the curious ground, for a Jew, that much of his work was done on a Sunday. Judge Bayley remarked that the defence was a shabby one, and decided that dentists did not come under the Sunday Observance Act.

ACID DROPS.

"Commissioner" Tucker, with his wife, one of Booth's daughters, recently paid Bournemouth a visit. In the course of her speech, Mrs. Booth-Tucker said that the Hindus were giving up their idols, and "too many of them, particularly in the colleges, were following Bradlaugh." We are delighted to hear it. They had better follow Bradlaugh than Booth.

The Dean of Worcester has been lecturing on "Joseph Barker the Infidel." Why not lecture on the death of Queen Anne, or, better still, on Bradlaugh the Infidel? This is a subject that would make a demand on the Dean's intelligence, if he has any, which seems dubious from the report of his lecture.

After denouncing gambling at the Church Congress the clergy have gone home to the congenial occupations of organising church bazaars and lotteries, and playing whist for threepenny points.

The *purity* of the Bible was dwelt on by the Rev. W. R. Thompson, of St. Nicholas's Presbyterian Church, Shrewsbury, in a sermon on the text "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" Unfortunately the report in the local press does not give us full particulars of this interesting discourse. We are told what Mr. Thompson said about Bible science, but not what he said about Bible *purity*. Did he explain the exquisite delicacy of the stories of Judah and Tamar, Lot and his daughters, the Levite and his concubine, etc., etc.? Did he give a literal translation, instead of a semi-decorous paraphrase, of certain parts of Ezekiel and the Song of Solomon? These are the points we are curious about, but the report is silent. Perhaps the editor reflected that his paper went into family circles; perhaps he feared a prosecution for obscenity.

The relatives of the late Mr. Wood, a respected parishioner of Hucknall-Torkard, desired that he should be buried with a Nonconformist service. The vicar, the Rev. J. E. Phillips, informed them that unless he officiated he could not be buried in the same grave as his wife, and this condition was reluctantly assented to. The instance is one of many showing the disposition of the clergy to frustrate as far as possible the intentions of the Burials Act of 1880.

The Archbishop of Canterbury having been so long delaying to give judgment in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln, we will, at the risk of being included among the prophets, predict that the judgment will be more conciliatory than convincing. It will seek to harmonise the oil of Ritualism with the water of Puritanism, and will succeed in settling nothing. So far from bringing peace to the Church, it will increase strife, and so far as it seeks to stay Ritualism will be unheeded.

This prophecy is inspired. If anyone doubts it the proof is that the doubter will be eternally damned. Amen.

The Bishop of Sinesius is accused of employing the captain of his bodyguard to murder a Greek priest named Stojan.

"One Who Knows" writes in the *Echo* that one of the results of General Booth's shelters is the increase and spread of vermin.

The Newcastle Board of Guardians have been squabbling over a boy who was taken from the workhouse and indentured to a Baptist. It appears that the boy was to attend a Church of England gospel-shop, but he crawled off to a Baptist establishment; a fact which so roused the ire of the Rev. J. M. Lister that he moved that the indentures be cancelled. But more sober counsels prevailed, and the master undertook to see that the boy did go to church. Still, holy Mr. Lister is hardly satisfied. He means to keep an eye on the boy, for the Church is not to be cheated of even a poor little pauper apprentice.

Principal Caird is an intelligent man as well as an eloquent preacher. But even intellectual preachers talk nonsense

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when they select the subject of the Trinity. In a sermon on "God Manifest in the Flesh," fully reported in the *Scottish Pulpit*, he contends that the doctrine of the Trinity "enables us to think of our God as one, without thinking of Him—being constrained to think of Him as solitary." Principal Caird goes on to eloquently show that from the life of a God existing alone through an eternity of idleness before the creating fiat went forth, all elements of nobleness and blessedness known to man are excluded. But then it appears God the Father had God the Son and God the Holy Ghost with him, and that we suppose proved a satisfactory party. But we cannot conceive of a son of the same age, or eternity, with his father—and Principal Caird tells us that "He is described as the only begotten Son, which was—that is anterior to his earthly history—formed and constructed in the bosom of His Father." So that anterior to this the Father must have been alone with the Ghost, and since all three are one, the Trinity must be just as solitary and wretched as Principal Caird represents the Unitarian and Theists' God to be. A man doesn't get any additional company by saying he is composed of body, soul and spirit.

We have great sympathy with the temperance movement as long as it is a temperate and not an intemperate movement. We see no other necessity for so much gospel cant being mixed up with it than the necessity for modern sky-pilots showing some concern for secular well being. Yet here is the *Temperance World* calling it a "Christian movement," while at the same time it records that "the drink traffic in India is condemed both by the Mohammedan and the Hindu religions, and that the honor of starting the temperance movement in opposition to drinking customs imported by Christians is due to a Bengal gentleman, the late Prof. Peary Churn Sicar.

The *Christian at Work* vigorously says: "Only the judgment day will reveal the egregious blunders and the tergiversation and downright lying resorted to make the Bible by turns a sin-to-drink-a-glass-of-wine book and a boiled-grape-juice book." The fact is, that from drunken Noah to Jesus Christ—who turned water into wine, instituted a wine sacrament, and promised his disciples new wine in his kingdom—there is more countenance given to drinking than to teetotalism in the Bible.

"A. M. B." (a clergyman, we believe) writes a foolish letter on Hospitals to a Glasgow paper. He does not seem to have heard of pre-Christian hospitals in Greece, and earlier still in Egypt, to say nothing of India. A plentiful lack of knowledge is too common in these champions of "the faith." "A. M. B." should read a little history, or cease writing to the papers and "play the fool nowhere but in his own house."

The *Flaming Sword* of Chicago (Nov. 1) has an article on "God the Mother," who, it is said, has yet to appear. Jesus Christ, it says, was God the Father, but God the Mother has yet to display herself. We should have thought she must have displayed herself before there could be any God the Son.

How efficacious the Christian oath is may be judged from the statement of Judge Bedwell, at Hull, that he had for some time ceased to make out commitments for perjury, as he found that he should be flooding the Assize Courts if he did so.

The Portsmouth Protestants are up in arms against the spread of Ritualism and the offerings of masses for the dead, etc. But the churches must make themselves attractive somehow. The more its doctrines are discredited by reason the more must the churches appeal to the senses and the sentiment.

The *Western Daily Mercury* reports an interview with Mrs. Gould, mother of one of the survivors of H.M.S. Serpent. "It's God's work; oh, I know it's God's work," repeated the woman; "for I had been praying to God for the safety of the ship ever since she went away." She thinks God has concerned himself for the safety of her son, though he has swept almost all the rest of the crew to destruction. How typical is this of the whole effect of religion and of the illogical means by which it retains its power.

An interesting article on South American Republics, contributed by Dr. Felix Oswald to *Open Court*, illustrates the baneful effects of religion in those parts. Of the influence of the priests in Ecuador he says: "By a thorough monopoly of education institutes, by a jealous control of the press, and of what might be called the vocal instruction of the masses, a million descendants of Inquisition-ridden ancestors have been kept from as much as suspecting the fact that the night of mediæval insanity has anywhere been broken down by the dawn of a new era." On the other hand, a brilliant future is predicted for Chili, where, as far back as 1856, a scholar and Freethinker, Don Manuel Montt, was elected President, and where the education of the young has been wrested from the hands of priests.

Sir R. Temple, who has long resided among the heathen Hindus, says there is "no misery on earth like that of London." What a comment on English Christianity!

Pious Billy, Emperor of Germany, has "invited" Lieutenant Colonel Von Eqidy to resign his commission. This gentleman's crime was the authorship of a sceptical volume called *Serious Thoughts*.

Our Work, referring to education in Germany, says that "After devotion to God, the chief thing taught the scholars is devotion to the Emperor." If this is so, Germany must be fully half a century behind France in the matter of education.

A Nonconformist minister having purchased the title of *LL.D. from a small* university at Athens, Tennessee, U.S.A., a brother minister passed round the following at the next church assembly:

"*Made* of Athens, ere we part,
Can you tell to us the art
How to gain an LL.D.,
Fresh from Athens, Tennessee?"

A pamphlet called *A Vision of the Future* predicts that "All mankind is to acknowledge one God, profess one Religion, and submit with a wise joy to one just and all-comprehending Governments." The writer doesn't fix the date, so it will be useless to try and prove he is wrong. All we can say is substantially the same prophecy was made over two thousand years ago, and it has not come to pass yet.

The *Christian World* protests against Mr. Stead's claiming Mr. John Morley as "a great religious teacher." "That he is a fervent moralist," says the *C. W.*, "no one can doubt, and that his moral standard is higher than that of many who have professed to base their morals on religion must be admitted. But if he is 'a great religious teacher,' it follows that religion is wholly included in morality; and this, we need hardly say, *no Christian can admit*."

Writing on Sir W. Scott's *Diary*, the *C. W.* regrets that he does not seem to have been "penetrated and transfigured by passionate acceptance of Christ." Well, what man of such genius ever was warped by "passionate acceptance" of another man, whether Jesus of Nazareth or any other person?

The Rev. G. S. Reaney, a popular Congregational preacher, has left that body, the reason he assigns being its isolation and overwork of its ministers. It is expected he will secure a more comfortable berth in the Church of England to which he has "verted."

By the way, the *Christian World* discounts Mr. Reaney's passage from Congregationalism to the Church of England. His present secession is "not the first in his history," and "his tendency is migratory." Perhaps so; but Freethinkers always said the same of Joseph Barker, who was everything by turns and nothing long, yet Christian journals did not consider that this affected his secession from Freethought.

The parish priest of Cronstadt has a reputation for working miracles. He prays over the sick, and they are said to recover from chronic diseases, after being given over by the physicians. This wonderful gentleman recently visited

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St. Petersburg, where he stayed at one of the most fashionable houses in the city. When the sick heard of his presence they flocked in such numbers that the thoroughfare was blocked. They wanted to get near him, if only to touch or kiss his robe, and it was with great difficulty that he could be conveyed to his carriage.

What a picture of superstition! The crowd of fools, such as lived in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago; and the miraculous man of God, staying at a swell house, and riding in a carriage.

Canon Scott-Robertson has been reckoning up the sums contributed in 1889 from Great Britain and Ireland towards the conversion of the heathen. His figures are as under:

Church of England Societies	£523,226
Joint Church and Nonconformist Societies	217,963
English and Welsh Nonconformist Societies.....	364,652
Scotch and Irish Presbyterian Societies.....	185,646
Roman Catholic Socleties	9,819

Making a total of £1,301,306 wasted in one year on the pretext of bringing the heathen the glorious news of the gospel of damnation and making them incur it by their rejection of the said gospel.

Why do the heathen rage? Because they get so little of the cash subscribed for their benefit.

It will be seen the Catholics do not shell out much for the heathen. They save their money for the conversion of infidel England. Yet they boast too of making as many converts abroad as the Protestants.

Canon Liddon left by will some £47,226 together with a magnificent library. Of such is the kingdom of heaven!

The Jaina sect of Gwalior are in want of a god. They have accordingly petitioned the Viceroy of India to permit their worshipped image, known as Ruth Bima, to be converted into a god. It seems the poor image can only take on deityhood by being carried in public procession, and this needs government sanction. Ruth Bima is likely to be just as useful as Jehovah, Vishnu or any other member of the Pantheon.

An American religious journal is trying to get the hands of law on a clerical contributor, who palmed off a manuscript copy of an English novel as an original story. He probably learnt this business through following the common practice of palming off another person's sermon as his own.

An incident at Vienna is a good illustration of the clerical trade on the fear of death. The pastor of the Protestant church, says the *Daily News*, seemed to fear that Professor Koch's cure for consumption would involve the loss of "one of the great means of influencing his flock. He said that he was surprised to see the great commotion created by the news that one kind of death was about to be done away with, and he reminded the congregation, in the most impressive manner, that whatever Dr. Koch might still discover and invent, he could not drive death out of the world, that even if people did not die of infected lungs, they would be sure to die of something else sooner or later."

There is the secret of priestcraft. "Sinners," exclaims the priest, "you all must die!" That frightens the poor silly wretches, and they crowd around him to be saved from post-mortem evils. As for the priest himself, he might say with Iago, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse."

Hugh Price Hughes wants another £3,000 for his Wesleyan Sisterhood, but gives no assurance of their converting any fresh Atheist shoemakers.

"What do the Ritualists hold?" All the best bishoprics and most of the best livings in England.

Archdeacon Farrar's sermon at Westminster Abbey in favor of General Booth's scheme was heard by a crowded congregation. One part of it is worth notice. "First," he said, "the country is being more and more depleted, the great cities are becoming more and more densely overcrowded, and in great cities there is always a tendency to the deterioration of manhood—morally, physically, and spiritually. Secondly, our population is increasing at the rate of nearly a thousand a day, and the most rapid increase is among the most destitute and unfit." Precisely so, and General Booth's scheme aims at the more rapid reproduction of these very classes. Oh for some power to silence Christian sentimentalism, and stop Christian philanthropy for a generation or two! We should have a clearer prospect by that time, and the social problem would be nearing a solution on the lines of science and humanity.

M. Faure's proposition for the total abolition of the French Budget for Religious Worship was negatived by a substantial majority. The French Government evidently thinks it is the best policy to pay for the non-interference of the priests in politics.

We see from *La France* that M. Louis Jacolliot is dead. Though only two years in Asia he wrote most successful books of travel and surprising descriptions of India. His most famous book, *La Bible dans l'Inde*, ascribes most of the Bible stories to that land. Whether M. Jacolliot had good grounds for his opinions, or was deceived by the Brahmans, or drew on his imagination for his facts, is still an open question.

It appears that complete liberty of affirmation is not yet obtained in France, a M. Nicolas, of Rochemaine, having been fined 200 francs for refusing to take the oath when called to serve on a jury. A subscription has been started to pay the fine, and the proceeding should strengthen the hands of deputy Forcioli, who has charge of a bill for the entire abolition of the oath. The *N. S. S. Almanack*, by the way, contains a valuable item by Mr. Bradlaugh on the right to affirm, giving the statutory form in which the oath should be objected to.

Those good Christians who object to ridicule should see the pamphlet on man's descent, by the Rev. F. O. Morris. The cover is illustrated with a poor picture of a hideous monkey on a donkey, blowing a trumpet, whence issues the words "Homo Sum." Underneath are the words: "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears.—Darwin." This precious production is "dedicated, by permission, to her Majesty the Queen."

Edmund Yates is not a very religious person, yet he says he is constantly thinking of the next *World*.

QUESTIONS.

By the sea, by the desert midnight sea,
Stands a youth,
His heart full of anguish, his head full of doubt,
And with sullen lips he questions the waves:

"Oh, solve to me the Riddle of Life,
The painful primordial riddle,
Which already has racked so many heads,
Heads in hieroglyphic caps,
Heads in turbans and black berrets,
Heads in wigs, and myriad other
Poor perspiring human heads;
What is the meaning of Man?
Whence comes he? Whither goes he?
Who dwells there above in the golden stars?"

The waves murmur their everlasting murmur,
The wind sweeps, the clouds scud,
The stars glitter indifferent and cold,
And a fool awaits an answer. —*Heine.*

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 23, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne Street, Liverpool; at 11, "A World Without God"; at 3, "Mistakes of Jesus"; at 7, "Heaven and Hell."

Thursday, November 27, Radical Club, Peckham, at 8, "Heaven and Hell." Admission free.

November 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

S. S.—Ingersoll criticises the Mosaic story as it stands. He does not necessarily commit himself to a belief in the existence of Moses, and he is well aware of the late date of the Pentateuch.

G. W.—Blushing is the result of too much self-consciousness. Try to fix your attention on what is going on and forget yourself.

NAMELOT.—Will try to find room.

T. A. H.—We note your explanation.

ARCHIE THOMAS.—Most of your questions are dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*.

W. GILMOUR.—We are obliged.

J. B.—"Let it sleep in the shade." It is hardly worth a dissection. We believe there is a strong undercurrent of Freethought in Scotland, but we do not know enough of it to write on Scotch Agnosticism.

J. BLAND.—Your letter is interesting. We respect all honest differences of opinion.

H. G. S.—See "Acid Drops." Yes, Ingersoll's pamphlets are right things for Christians. The Colonel draws out their teeth—we beg pardon, their superstition—with such a winning smile.

R. NICHOLLS.—Mr. Foote feels the want of a little rest and change. Glad to hear your own circle is in good health.

H. R. CLIFTON.—The practice was common in Ireland. You are welcome to distribute the extract from our article on Booth's Book.

J. WELBUM.—Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. Forder as above.

V. F. T.—Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C., will send you a complete catalogue on application. Cassell's *Religions of the World* may be recommended.

R. H.—Something will be done at Bristol shortly. If half a dozen Freethinkers on the spot will put their hands to the work, Mr. Foote will come and lecture and start a Branch.

T. PHILLIPS.—If your new Branch has only ten members the local sky-pilot need not crow so lustily. Jesus had not *one* member left when the police ran him in. There were just twelve before, of whom one ratted, and the rest skedaddled.

Y. S. T.—Dr. Lunn is very likely as truthful as Price Hughes. Hughes says it was Sister Beatrice who converted the Atheist Shoemaker, and now Lunn says it was Sister Lily. One is as true as the other.

M. KELLY.—We acknowledge what we receive. Papers sometimes go astray. You will see our address at the head of this column.

J. TOMKINS.—Papers and cuttings are always welcome.

H. GRAHAM (Woolwich) writes: "I should like to thank you for a very great benefit. When you lectured here on 'Why I am an Atheist,' I attended, being at that time what is termed a Christian. Since then I have reasoned and read for myself, and I am very happy to tell you I have broken the chains of superstition. I am to-day a better father and a more thoughtful husband than before. I say this, not in praise of myself, but, in the words of my wife, to give the Freethought movement the credit of my bettered condition. I am now a member of the Woolwich Branch."

N. S. S. SPECIAL FUND.—M. Christopher, 2s.

C. H. KELF.—We hope the Newcastle Branch will be able to get better accommodation. Lecture Notices must be sent on separate slips of paper. We cannot undertake to copy them from letters.

YEOVIL FRIEND.—Your anonymity is respected. We are sorry that bigotry is so rampant in Yeovil.

REX REGES.—See "Acid Drops."

JOSEPH BROWN.—The dates are booked. Please send subscription lists on separate slips of paper.

J. BROWN, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following for the N.E. Secular Federation: Chester-le-Street Branch, 5s.; R. H. W., 5s.; Mr. Tullen, 5s.; Mr. Bowen, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Peacock, 1s 4d.; Mr. Robinson, 2s.; Cramlington Branch, 3s.; South Shields Branch, 6s.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Thanks. In our next.

F. LESTER.—We criticised Miss Weston's *Hard Knots* some months ago in a leading article entitled "Fooling Jack."

F. THORNET.—Yes, Mr. Forder will continue to work for the cause. His heart is in it.

NOVOCASTRIAN.—Glad to hear you approve our comments on the Coote and Lunn clique. Thanks for the cuttings.

H. W.—Thanks for your efforts to spread a little enlightenment in that benighted district. See "Acid Drops."

E. G. BILLINGTON wants to know of any shop in Worcester that supplies the *Freethinker*, or of any Secularist in the place with whom he could have an occasional chat.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following subscriptions:—F. Thornett, 5s.; James Moffat, 10s.; A Yeovil Friend, 10s.; A Yeovil Friend, 5s.; K. H., 5s.; J. Brumage, 5s.; R. Nicholls, £2 2s.; Donald James, 5s.; H. L. J., 6d.; E. Oliver, 10s.; S. S., 5s.; J. Unsworth, 2s. 6d.; James Fulton, 5s.; W. Palmer, 1s. Birmingham:—J. H. R., 1s.; J. P., 2s. 6d.; G. Coulton, 2s. 6d.; L. Kuphal, 1s.; W. H. Woods, 1s.; A Lady Friend, 1s.; E. Palmer, 1s.; S. G. Middleton, 1s.; B. A. Millichamp, 2s.; J. Evans, 2s. 6d.; collected Mr. Foote's lecture, 9s. 8d.; D. Baker, 5s.; M. Christopher, 2s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Freireligioses Sonntaggs-Blatt — Mid-Surrey Gazette — Camberwell and Peckham Star—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Western Daily Mercury—Our Work—Freidenker—Loyal American—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel—Woolwich Gazette—Eastern Argus—Midland Evening News—Bournemouth Guardian—Umpire—Modern Society—Echo—Twentieth Century—Faithful Words—Watts' Literary Guide—Der Lichtfreund—The Flaming Sword—Portsmouth Evening News—Lancashire Evening Post—Eastern Morning News.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

AFTER serving for fifteen years as Secretary to the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder is resigning the post. His best days have been spent in the party's service, and his health is now precarious. In these circumstances, it has been deemed an act of justice to present him with a testimonial in recognition of his invaluable work as a lecturer and organiser, and to assist him in the Freethought publishing business, to which he will devote the remainder of his life. The Testimonial has the hearty support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the Presidency during the period of Mr. Forder's service.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
J. P.	0	15	0	W. Oakley	0	0	6
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J. Hammond	0	0	6	H. Greenwood	0	0	3
A. Poore	0	1	0				

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the wretched, depressing weather, Mr. Foote had good audiences at Birmingham on Sunday. Mr. Daniel Baker bravely left his home and presided in the morning and evening, Mr. Middleton taking the chair in the afternoon.

The rumpus over Mr. Foote's late lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall has subsided. The Mayor recently referred

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to the subject before the Council, and said that the policy of giving the use of the Town Hall once a year to the Secularists would be continued unless the Council passed a vote to the contrary. His worship disclosed the identity of the anonymous correspondent of the *Post*, who began the row. "E. S." was E. Shorthouse, a brother of Mr. Shorthouse the pious author of *John Inglesant*.

Mr. Foote lectures at Liverpool to-day (Nov. 23), and hopes to see a good gathering of the local Freethinkers, whose support will be asked for the scheme to provide the Branch with suitable premises. He will address them specially on the subject after the afternoon lecture. It will be noticed that the lectures are to be delivered in the fresh hall, the Camden Hall being too small, and the Concert Hall being no longer available. Perhaps Mr. Foote's Liverpool friends will do their best to advertise the meetings.

The N. S. S. Almanack is selling well. It is hoped that the whole issue will be cleared out before Christmas. Every member who can afford it should purchase a copy. The President will be pleased if he can report to the Executive next week that the printer's bill is already covered.

The London Freethinkers' Ball takes place next Wednesday. This is the last notice for the dilatory applicants for tickets. There is a capital programme for the non-dancers, and Mr. Foote will deliver a brief address in the course of the evening.

So far the audiences at the Peckham course of Free Lectures have not been satisfactory. Perhaps there will be an improvement at the last lecture, next Thursday, which will be delivered by Mr. Foote. The admission is free, and Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their Christian friends to such meetings.

After Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture at the Hall of Science this evening (Nov. 23) the annual collection for the Benevolent Fund will be made. We announce the fact so that those who mean to attend may take a necessary provision of five-pound notes or coin of the realm.

A special meeting of the Newcastle Branch will be held this afternoon (Nov. 23), at 3, in the rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street. Every member should attend.

The North Eastern Secular Federation's annual Tea and Ball will take place at the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle, on Friday, Dec. 26. Tickets, 1s. 6d. each, can be had at Peter Weston's, 77 Newgate Street. The number is limited, and those who want them should apply early.

Mrs. Thornton Smith lectures at the Battersea Secular Hall, on Friday, Nov. 28. The subject will be "Secularism." Some tickets (3d. each) will be sold to defray printing and other expenses. It is hoped that Battersea Freethinkers will muster in strong force.

Mr. John Tomkins writes to the *Mid-Surrey Gazette*, commenting on the fact that a copy of the *Freethinker* lying on the table of the Battersea Free Library, had Christian comments written upon it. Mr. Tomkins says: "If I were to write across one of the religious newspapers which lie on the table certain other passages taken from the same book as the words above quoted I could make the cheeks of the individual who wrote the last-named words on the page of the *Freethinker* burn with shame. "Corruption" is hardly the word for a Christian to use at random, and I can safely say that I have never known the pages of the *Freethinker* to contain any freethought sentiment to which that term could apply."

An Agnostic Club has been formed in Boston. Dr. Rufus K. Noyes is president and J. P. Mendum vice-president.

Charles Watts, in *Secular Thought*, tells a story how Prof Goldwin Smith was once waited upon and asked for a donation to help on the work of discovering the lost tribes of Israel. The Professor is stated to have replied: "I can give nothing to aid you in discovering the ten tribes that are lost, but I will give you a big donation when you can manage to lose the other two."

The *Academy* (Nov. 15), reviewing Dr. Watkins' Bampton Lectures, says: "The one thing which may be considered absolutely certain about the Fourth Gospel is that it is widely separated from the Synoptics, that its Christ is an ideal figure, that its narration is a perversion, in a dogmatic interest, of the genuine tradition, and that its discourses are theological disquisitions freely composed by the author, mingled it may be with some authentic reminiscences."

We agree with all this except the last which indeed does not run on all fours with the rest. If the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is an ideal figure and the speeches attributed to him were composed by the author, as is evident from a comparison with the epistles attributed to John, the "authentic reminiscences" are a may-be without any logical warranty.

According to *Two Worlds*, the Rev. Edward Gough of Barrowford, says "Jesus was no more crucified by literal Jews than he is crucified by all wicked men everywhere." What is this but giving up the literal truth of the gospels?

La Verité Philosophique presents its readers with a portrait of Mr. Foote, together with an account of his life, translated from Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Copies may be obtained of Mr. Forder.

G. E. Macdonald says in *Freethought*: "Out this way the Holy Ghost is looked upon as a played-out Eastern product, which our residents do not take kindly to. California is a state of great resources herself, and if we conclude that we want holy spirits we can raise them here. We know there is soil somewhere between Crescent City and San Diego where they will do well, and if we once get the industry started and have the McKinley bill to shut out foreign competition, we shall be sending them East in tanks and on platform cars before the presidential election of 1892."

The *Christian Register*, of New York, says that to-day "Parker is honored with Channing and Emerson among the prophets of Unitarianism. How is this? Channing believed in miracles, in the literal resurrection of Christ, in the pre-existence of Jesus, in future punishment, in the divine and miraculous revelation of Christianity. If Channing was a prophet, Parker and Emerson were false prophets. If Unitarians have come to acknowledge Parker and Emerson as their prophets, they have come to ignore miracles, to degrade Jesus to the level of a man, to deny the existence of a personal God. They have abandoned Christianity and come to the borders of Pantheism."

At a meeting in the Vestry Hall, Camberwell, called to consider the proposed Sunday opening of the Free Library, opposed by the Revs. Kelley, Roberts and Thorpe, and supported by Messrs. Ramsey, Jones, Ben Ellis, and Mrs. Seal, was carried by 135 votes against 76.

Some one has sent us a copy of the *Cape Register*. It contains a queer editorial on "Freethought." The editor has been told that every sixth man at Cape Town, capable of thinking, is a Freethinker; but he doubts whether many men *are* capable of thinking, and anyhow he can't give space for controversial letters. Still, the article shows there is a decomposition of "faith" going on in South Africa.

We have but brief accounts as yet of the Congress of the American Secular Union at Portsmouth, Ohio. It appears that Dr. R. B. Westbrook has been re-elected President, and Miss Ira C. Craddock, secretary. Addresses were delivered by Judge Waite of Chicago, Thaddeus B. Wakeman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Dr. Paul Carus, Charles Watts and others.

The *Progressive Thinker* of Chicago, Nov. 8, is almost entirely taken up with a laborious attempt to prove that the American Jesuits were party to the assassination of President Lincoln. The accusation is founded on Father Chiniquy's *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*. Father Chiniquy claims to have warned Lincoln before his death.

Ingersoll's oration on Walt Whitman will be published by us next week in pamphlet form. It was delivered in the Horticultural Hall to a crowded audience, Whitman himself occupying an arm-chair on the platform. A handsome sum was realised for the venerable poet. Ingersoll's oration was a splendid effort.

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MIRACLES.

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS.

[CONTINUED.]

THE result of human experience or science is that all things work by law, or rather methods, which like those of the Medes and Persians, alter not, which are seen and known in their effects, the sum of which forces constitutes nature or existences. Geologists say these laws have been in existence for thousands or millions of years, and may, for all they know, have been in operation for ever. Although astronomers say that this so solid-seeming earth and these "everlasting hills," were at one time incandescent and a part of the sun, together with the other members of the solar system, yet they can with reason uphold this view without presupposing the existence in past ages of laws which now are relegated to the domain of nothingness. The latest teaching of science is that nature is an aggregate of laws, forming one great primary law "Evolution." Speaking of Evolution in his "Essay on the Use of the Imagination," Professor Tyndall says in his fearless way: "The essence and core of this hypothesis is that not alone the more ignoble forms of animalcula or animal life, and not alone the nobler forms of the horse and the lion, not alone the exquisite and wonderful mechanism of the human body, but that the human mind itself, emotion, intellect, will and all their phenomena, were once latent in a fiery cloud." We may not agree entirely with the hypothesis of evolution thus so strongly stated, but that evolution does exist, everyone gifted with intelligence must admit. Evolution is but growth. We see it in the development of the child from the primary life-cell to the perfected and reasonable man; we see it in the growth of ideas, in Christianity itself, in everything that is borne to our knowledge through our senses. We find this to be the case with the solar system, and galaxies and systems almost beyond our ken seem to obey the imperial sway of laws united in the one grand principle of evolution. What place then have a few paltry miracles to fill in this grand scheme of nature opening everywhere beyond our expanding gaze? Why should the eternal laws of matter be broken for the sake of a few poor cripples, or for the raising men and women from the tomb to wend once more their weary way across this troubled earth, or for the sake of strengthening a crowd in its folly because it has been so foolish as to follow an ascetic into the desert without making provision for hunger. Modern science utters her judgment when she declares miracles do not happen, and have not happened; that nothing has interfered with the orderly progression and working of the mechanism which forms our universe.

But it may be urged by the believers in miracles, who like the drowning man clutch at anything, if scientific men at the present day see no evidence of the miraculous, still men have existed in bygone ages, who may have been witnesses to isolated facts and events, which have left no trace behind them, save the recorded evidence of those who witnessed them and the influence they exerted upon those who believed in them, and this brings us to the historical aspect of the question. We have the declaration of the greatest historians, that that which has once occurred in the domain of history can never be known, pure and simple, as it occurred. No two human beings view the same object or event with the same eyes, nor do they draw the same conclusions. Complete ignorance and complete knowledge are the two poles between which opinions gyrate. To the audience seated before a conjuror, the feats he accomplishes are unaccountable from any knowledge they possess, and are really to them miraculous, but they do not name them miracles, simply because they have the conviction that these feats admit of natural explanation, and are effects of adequate causes which can be grasped by the human intellect. Hundreds of miracles have lost their reality to the people of England to-day simply because, if they think about the matter at all, they are convinced they may be either traced to natural causes or have had no existence save in the brains of those who retailed them for our edification. Yet the Christian population of England, to-day, believe in miracles, many of which have been disproved and all of which stand upon insufficient evidence. This is the opinion of Mr. Froude, whose historical knowledge, few who know his deep research into past events will dispute, although his accuracy in reporting occuring events has been laid open to severe criticism. Mr. Froude declares the miracles contained in the four gospels are as totally unprovable as any other so-called miracles contemporaneous with the period in which these gospels were written, or succeeding that period.

GEORGE ARMATAGE.

(To be concluded.)

THE DAWN OF ETHICS.

BY EDGAR FAWCETT.

(The heart of a tree. A man-ape, a woman-ape. It is early twilight, thousands of years ago.)

MAN-APE.

You know that huge tree by the small stream's edge,
Where dwells, with two weak babes, the pair we hate?

WOMAN-APE.

I know.

MAN-APE.

To-night both sire and dam will join
The great dance in the valley at moonrise. I
Shall not mix with them, this once, nor do thou.

WOMAN-APE.

Why thus resolve? The Moon-God may be wroth
If we shriek not his praise and gash ourselves
On this the sacred night when he beams full.

MAN-APE.

'Tis a mild god. His wrath we need not fear.
He is not like the Sun-God, who darts death,
Nor like the erratic lightning, ner its mate,
The August thunder—nay, nor like those gods
Of snow, flood, pest, grim powers we dare not slight.
Stay thou, as I have bid thee. When those babes,
Left all alone, are slumbering, seek their sides,
Leap at their throats and choke them. Afterward
Bring me their corpses to that cave whose mouth
Is bearded thick with vines—you know the spot.
There shall I feast that have not sucked man's blood
For days, but starve lean-lipped on herb and root.

WOMAN-APE.

I will obey thee.

MAN-APE.

Else, I'll beat thee so
That thou shalt writhe and rave beneath my strokes!

(He goes away, and the woman-ape muses.)

WOMAN-APE.

There, in a covert of cool leaves, with limbs
Laid languid on the bough's clean brawn of bark,
Slumbers my babe. If I indeed should slip
At moonrise to that big stream-bowering tree,
Clutch those two babes and choke them ere they waked,
Hurrying their dead forms to the cave where crouched
My mate, with hunger's glare in his fierce eyes
Between dark fells of hair on brows and cheeks,—
If so I obeyed this murderous hest of his,
What chance for my poor babe some future eve,
When parents of those twain I late had killed
Should scent my guilt and lust for vengeance dread? . .
Nay, I'll not do this work he bade me do,—
Not though he beat me till my yells rang out
Keener than those wild voices that erelong
Shall fill the valley at moonrise, when mad throngs
Tear limb from limb our heaven-doomed captives' frames
And toss their bleeding fragments to the stars!

—*Twentieth Century.*

A BORN INFIDEL.

A little sprite of a girl about four years old was very cross one day, and her mother, reproving her, said, "Nellie, you must not get into such tempers; you must try hard not to." "I do try," whimpered Nellie, "but something inside o' me is wrong, and I feel cross, cross, cross!" "You must pray to God and ask him to take away the cross feeling." "I did ask God, and he paid no 'tention." "You must ask harder," said the mother; "there is another who is trying to get you away from God."

Nellie was very much interested in this "other one," and wanted to know all about him. So her mother told her as simply as she could the old version of the rise and fall of Satan, and that little girls must be good so Satan couldn't get them. Nellie listened, folded her little hands complacently, shook her wee head in a comforting way, and made her mother weep by saying,—"If God made an angel that lived right in heaven right 'fore his eyes, and the angel acted that way, God can't 'spect much of me."—*New York Tribune.*

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ANOTHER FORGERY.

(John vii., 53, to viii., 12).

The story of the woman taken in adultery is one of those passages admitted by all the best authorities to be spurious, and added to the Gospel despite the solemn cursings found in the Apocalypse (Rev. xxii., 18). It is abandoned by all critical editors, being wanting in all the earliest Greek manuscripts, not in the Syriac Peshito or Gothic versions, and unmentioned by the earliest fathers. Even Canon Cook's orthodox Commentary says (p. 141), "External and internal evidence combined show beyond all reasonable doubt that this remarkable narrative is not a genuine portion of the gospel of St. John."

The style and language of the passage differ from the rest of the Gospel; but this applies also to the whole 21st chapter. The punishment of death is enjoined for adultery (Lev. xx., 10; Deut. xxii., 22) and the Talmud specifies *strangulation* as the method. Here stoning is said to be the punishment. This shows it was not concocted by a Palestinian Jew, but neither could a Jew have supposed that these were two high priests, and that the office was annual (John xi., 49; xviii., 13, 19, 24).

The story is absurd on the face of it. The Scribes and and Pharisees must have either acted by authority of the Sanhedrim or in their private capacity. If the former, they dared not have allowed the adultress to escape. If the latter, how could they say "Moses commanded *us* that such should be stoned." It is scarcely conceivable that among such law-abiding people as the Jews and Romans, a woman taken in adultery would have been allowed to escape because a teacher said, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone" a teaching which strikes at the root of all law. Some, indeed, have contended for the original authenticity of the passage on the ground that it got expunged from early manuscripts on account of the supposed licence given by it to sin.

If so important a narrative could be foisted into the Greek manuscripts after the fourth century what guarantee is there that any portion of those manuscripts, which do not date earlier than this, is genuine?

It is said that the divine beauty of Christ's character is so striking that no one could have invented it. We think, on the contrary, this would be a good argument that it was ideal. But here is a story, which perhaps more than any other, if we except the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, has been appealed to as evidence of Christ's divine begnignity in refusing to condemn the adultress, yet which all critics are forced to admit is an interpolation.

Even the famous phrase on the cross "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," is omitted from the Vatican, the oldest of all Greek manuscripts. Little facts like these suggest how much the sacred fetish books, and with them the Christian idol, are a compilation which have arrived at the form we know them in through the labors of many hands.

Lucianus.

A Story Told by a Young Russian Girl.—One day while out walking here I saw a little boy crying. Speaking kindly to him I found he was suffering with hunger. He told me a sad story. His father had started out on a tramp to hunt work, and never returned. His mother, who had long supported the family, died of overwork. He was alone and homeless. He had gone to a minister's wife and asked for help—she turned him cruelly from her door. I gave him some money and said: "Pray to God, my lad, and he will help you." "Ah! my dear lady," replied the child, "I have prayed and prayed, but God don't help me." I answered: "Be good and you will go to heaven." "But I don't want to go to heaven," he said; "I am cold, and would rather go to a warm place, so I'll not have to lie in the streets."

BUDDHISM AND ATHEISM.

"It (Buddhism) has endured for upwards of 2,100 years in spite of wars, conquests, and persecutious, and the destruction of the sacred books recovered later from Siam and Burmah. It lives enshrined in the hearts of a pious, simple, and kindly people; it leads them through a life of charity to a peaceful death-bed such as most Christians may envy."—*Sir I. F. Dickson, K.C.M.G., "English Illustrated Mag.,"* Oct. 1889.

"A generation ago, little or nothing was known in Europe of this great faith of Asia, which had nevertheless existed during twenty-four centuries, and at this day surpasses, in the number of its followers and the area of its prevalence, any other form of creed."—*Sir Edwin Arnold.*

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. F. Millar, "What is Individualism?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Jehovah's Six Days' Hard Labor." Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Secularism."

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Belief."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "The Beef, Beer, and Tobacco Delusion." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton — Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mrs. Samson, "Why Women should be Secularists"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "Our National Expenditure"; 7, "Revelations."

Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

Leyton—Holly Bush Assembly Room, Grange Road, 7.30, Mr. R. Forder will lecture. Admission free.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Jesus Christ—neither God nor Man." Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Alexandria"; 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Resurrection." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. T. Thurlow, "An Hour's Ramble from Genesis to Revelations."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. E. Calvert, "Is Matter able of itself to produce Phenomena?"

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. E. Toleman-Garner, "Man's Soul."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Foolish Sermon."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, VI.—'Have I a Tongue?'"

COUNTRY.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. Anderson, "To Whom ought we to Erect Monuments?"; 6.30, Mr. Maclusky, "Natural Rights: what are they?"

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, recitals, to be followed by a tea.

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "Gospel Myths"; 3, "The Law of Population: its meaning and its menace"; 6.30, "The Whitewashing of Christianity."

Hull—Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Mr. A. B. Moss, 10.30, "Bible and Evolution"; 2.30, "Christianity and Evolution"; 6.30, "God and Evolution."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "A World Without God"; 3, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 7, "Heaven and Hell." Mr. Foote will address local Freethinkers after the afternoon lecture.

Manchester N. S. S. — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mr. C. J. Hunt, 11, "Prayer and Miracles"; 3, "History of Priestcraft"; 6.30, "Design in Nature." Friday, at 8.30, a ball; gentlemen 1s. 6d., ladies 1s.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. R. Atkey, "Remedies for Poverty.

Plymouth — 100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Proctor, "The Labor Question in connection with Secularism." Contributions due.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, Mr. Hore, "Salvation"; 7, Mr. Lush, "General Booth's Conversion to Secularism." Music by Miss Stapely.

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street, Mr. F. Haslam, 11.30, "The Bible and Modern Science"; 3, "Miracles of Old Testament"; 6.30, "Who was Jesus, and what did he Teach?"

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, 3, "The Duties of Citizenship"; 7, "Thomas Paine: his Life and Times."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, recitations, etc.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. E. Fletcher, "Secular Morality."

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. I. Fox, "Witchcraft: its Relation to Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14, Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

T. Thurlow, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Nov. 26, Plaistow.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 48.] SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONTINUED.]

WHAT is General Booth's scheme for dealing with the "submerged tenth," or three millions of the poor, the unemployed, and the vicious? And in what spirit will he set to work if he gets the hundred thousand pounds down, with the prospect of the rest of a million pounds afterwards?

Booth is a bold man and his promises are magnificent. "If the scheme," he says, "which I set forth in these pages is not applicable to the Thief, the Harlot, the Drunkard, and the Sluggard, it may as well be dismissed without ceremony."

We suspect that the Sluggard will be the toughest subject of all. Booth has to solve the insoluble problem of how to put nervous energy into a body in which it is constitutionally lacking. Common sense says the thing cannot be done. You may galvanise the Sluggard for a while, but the effect will not last. Energy is not acquired, it is congenital. If Booth would take the trouble to read Mr. Havelock Ellis's book on Criminals, not to mention more recondite works, he would see that the Sluggard and the Thief are first cousins. Both have a defective vitality, only the Thief, and the Criminal generally, is capable, like all predatory creatures, of spasmodic activity. The type is well known and should be dealt with scientifically. Inveterate criminals should be segregated. There is no necessity to treat them with cruelty. They should be surrounded with comfort, but they should be rigorously prevented from procreating their like. Science shows us that the only permanently successful way of dealing with these classes is to cut off the supply.

Certainly there are many persons in gaol who are not congenital criminals, and these should be dealt with in a spirit of wisdom and humanity. Were they treated like men, subjected to proper discipline, and rewarded for good behavior and industry, instead of being punished so liberally for bad behavior and idleness, most of them would be reclaimed. In ordinary prisons—so wretched, so inhuman, and so imbecile is the system—eighty per cent. of first offenders come back again; while in the one great American prison which is conducted on a better method the percentage is exactly reversed, only twenty per cent. returning to gaol, and eighty per cent. joining the ranks of decent society.

General Booth is not a scientist. He knows nothing of the lessons of Evolution. He is not aware that thousands of men and women are born in every generation who are behind the age. They are types of a vanished order of mankind, relics of antecedent stages of culture. Natural Selection is always eliminating them, and General Booth proposes to coddle them, to surround them with artificial circumstances, and give them a better chance. He does not see that most of them, however propped up by the more energetic and independent, will always bear the stamp of unfitness; nor does he see that he will enable them to beget and rear a more numerous offspring of the same character. The law of heredity is a stern fact, and it will not budge a hair's-breadth for General Booth and all the sentimental religionists in the world.

Take the Harlots, for instance. We are far from denying that many girls, after being seduced by men, are pushed into a life of vice. Christian society has no mercy on female frailty; it drives a girl who has listened to the voice of a tempter, or the first suggestions of her sexual passions, into a career of infamy; and then, when it has helped to poison her life, it hypocritically sheds tears over her and sets up associations for her rescue. This is true enough—damnably true—but it is not the whole truth. Just as there are congenital criminals, there are congenital harlots. They are cases of survival or reversion. Discipline of every kind is hateful to them. They prefer to do what they like, how they like, and when they like. Animality and vanity are strong in them, but they have little steady energy and no self-control. In a polygamous state of society they would find a place in a harem; but in a monogamous and industrial state of society they are hopelessly out of harmony with the general environment. Here is an instructive little table from General Booth's book. He takes a hundred cases "as they come" from his Rescue Register.

CAUSES OF FALL:	
Drink	14
Seduction	33
Wilful Choice	24
Bad Company	27
Poverty	2
Total	100

Twenty-three of these girls had been in prison. Only two were pushed into vice by poverty. Seduction, wilful choice, and bad company, come to much the same thing in the end. In any case, one fourth of the whole hundred deliberately took to prostitution. Now if General Booth fancies that the money he spends on these is a good investment, while a greater number of good girls are trying to lead an honest life in difficult circumstances, with little or no assistance from "charity," we venture to say he is grievously mistaken; and we think he is basking in a Fool's Paradise, unless he is trading on pious credulity, when he looks forward (p. 133) to the girls of Piccadilly exchanging their quarters for "the strawberry beds of Essex or Kent."

Facts are facts. It is useless to blink them. The present writer did not make the world, or its inhabitants, and he disowns all responsibility for its miserable defects. But when you attempt to reform the world there is only one thing that will help you. Humanity is presupposed. Without it you would never make a beginning. But after that the one requisite is Science. Now all the Science displayed in General Booth's book might be written large on thick paper, and tied to the wings of a single pigeon, without impeding its flight.

General Booth himself, in one of his lucid intervals, recognises the hard facts we have just insisted on.

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"No change in circumstances," he says (p. 85), "no revolution in social conditions, can possibly transform the nature of man." "Among the denizens of Darkest England there are many who have found their way thither by defects of character which would under the most favorable circumstances relegate them to the same position." Again he says (p. 204):

"There men so incorrigibly lazy that no inducement you could offer will tempt them to work; so eaten up by vice that virtue is abhorrent to them, and so inveterately dishonest that theft is to them a master passion. When a human being has reached that stage, there is only one course that can be rationally pursued. Sorrowfully, but remorselessly, it must be recognised that he has become lunatic, morally demented, incapable of self-government, and that upon him, therefore, must be passed the sentence of permanent seclusion from a world in which he is not fit to be at large."

These very people, who are the worst part of the social problem, Booth will not trouble himself very greatly about. Here are a few extracts from the Rules for the "Colonists," as he calls the people who come into his scheme.

(*a*) Expulsion for drunkenness, dishonesty, or falsehood will follow the third offence.
(*b*) After a certain period of probation, and a considerable amount of patience, all who will not work to be expelled.
(*c*) The third offence will incur expulsion, or being handed over to the authorities.

Expulsion is Booth's whip, and a very convenient one —for him! He will soon simplify his enterprise. All who come to him will be taken, but he will speedily return to society all the liars, drunkards, thieves, and idlers; so that when the scheme is in full swing, society will still have the old problem of dealing with the residuum, and in this respect Booth will not have helped in the least.

General Booth's scheme is thus, in the ultimate analysis, merely one for dealing with the unemployed. On this point his ideas are simply childish. He seems to imagine that *work* is a thing that can be found in unlimited quantities. He does not suspect the existence of economic laws. It never occurs to him that by artificially providing work for one unemployed person he may drive another person out of employment. Nor has he the least inkling of the law of population which lies behind everythiug.

In his Labor Shops, in London, he proposes to make match-boxes. Well, now, the community is already supplied with all the match-boxes it wants. The demand cannot be stimulated. And every girl that Booth takes in from the streets and sets to making match-boxes, which are to be put on the market, will turn some other girl out of employment at Bryant and May's or other match factories.

Similarly with the Salvation Bottles (p. 120) and the Social Soap (p. 136). Booth's soap, if it gets sold, will lessen the demand for other people's soap, and thus a lot of existing soap-makers will be thrown out of work. If he collects old bottles, and furbishes them up "equal to new," there will be so many less new bottles wanted, and a lot of existing glass-bottle makers will be thrown out of work. The wily old General of the Salvation Army, owing to a want of economic knowledge, falls into a most obvious fallacy. He is like the Irishman, who lengthened his shirt by cutting a piece off the top and sewing it on the bottom.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be concluded.*)

Recently, one of our preachers said, "The little good any of us can do must be done with our hearts thumping against the hearts of our fellow-men." And every young woman in church looked at every other young woman and smiled approvingly.

A circular has been sent to very many clergymen by a wine firm setting forth the merits of its wines and liqueurs, with prices by the case, etc. The end of the circular reads: "N.B.—To avoid suspicion, every case sent you will be marked 'canned peaches.'"

THE ARCHBISHOP'S JUDGMENT.

The proverbial law's delay has been exemplified in the spiritual court of which churchmen boast as a rival and superior to the civil tribunals. We do not wonder at the protracted proceedings, nor at the nature of the decision last Friday. The Archbishop was in a strait between the Devil and the deep sea. He could hardly hope to please both High Church and Low Church. In trying to do so he will please neither. His task was a difficult one. To serve God and Mammom is nothing to it. *That* all clericals have a long apprenticeship in, and are usually adepts before they reach a bishopric. But to reconcile the Romanisers and the anti-Papists in the Church of England is a task that would tax the resources of God Almighty. What the Archbishop has done is to condemn the Bishop in his most glaring points of Romanising, such as making the sign of the cross in pronouncing absolution and benediction, though inferentially he may do so upon other occasions if he thinks fit. He is also condemned for not making the manual acts visible in the Communion service. He may, it appears, mix privately as much water as he chooses with the Savior's blood in the sacred chalice, only he must not do so in presence of the congregation.

On the other hand he is acquitted for singing the *Angus Dei*, for using the eastward position and for using lighted candles, not for purposes of light, but for purposes of ceremony. All these things, according to Archbishop Benson, are really without significance. This is meant as a salve to the Evangelicals. The Archbishop knows full well that the High Church clergy adopt these puerile usages because to them they do have significance. He lays it down that "No significance can be attached to any form, act, or usage, unless that significance is in accordance with the regular and established meaning of language and symbol." Yet he must know that the Church has been repeatedly torn to pieces in controversies about symbols which had no essential meaning at all. He must know too that the ceremonies of Rome are to be interpreted in the language of Rome. The eastward position, in celebrating the Communion, he rules is legal, but it has, he says, nothing to do with the sacrificial aspect of the ordinance—which is the very reason the Ritualist adopts it. That really the eastward position can be traced to Sun worship, as can also the bread and wine of the communion service, does not affect the matter. The Ritualist has gained his point when he can make his ceremonies speak his doctrinal language which is that of sacerdotalism; mystery and mummery for the people, and a separate and holy position for the priesthood. The effect of the Archbishop's decision will be to extend the spread of Ritualism. It will come as a boon and a blessing to ecclesiastical candle-makers. Ritualists will quietly smile at the Archbishop's appeals for forbearance, urging they will not do what he says they legally may do. Their policy is to push on, knowing the ordinary Englishmen, though he makes a fuss at first soon gets accustomed and apathetic.

We have little quarrel with the judgment. It is as weak, illogical, and inconclusive as we expected and desired. We confess that since it overides the previous judgments of the Privy Council we hope to see it appealed from. The spectacle of the highest lay tribunal over-ruling the Archbishop's judgment would be gratifying. But that it favors the Ritualists alarms us not. The Church of Rome, it is no secret, has been hoping for an Anti-Ritualist decision to drive that party into the arms of the Mother Church, and this the decision may do something to avert.

From our point of view, the more Ritualist the Church becomes the better. *Lux Mundi* shows that in their zeal for the worship of the Church, the

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Ritualists may help to give the quietus to the worship of the Bible. They seek to stay the advance of rationalism by abandoning a portion of the ground. This rationalism will take and use it against themselves. The more sharply the division between the sacerdotalism of the clergy and the Protestantism of the people is drawn, the sooner will come the disruption of the Establishment. The ascendancy of the Ritualists in the Church, is but one of many signs of the separation of the Church from the people. However puerile these questions of candles, clothes, and crossés may appear, in their ultimate issue between Rome and Reason there is a vital principle at stake, and we are confident that when the issue is made clear there is sufficient ingrained opposition to sacredotalism in Englishmen to rend the Church asunder.

J. M. WHEELER.

SCOTCH THISTLES.

In my last bunch of Thistles I drew attention to the fact that in Edinburgh and Glasgow Sunday Concerts have been established. The example set by these towns has now been followed by others. In Aberdeen on a recent Sunday afternoon the band of a Highland regiment played selections before a large audience, and in Leith a wealthy merchant has, it is announced, rented a hall for Sunday evening concerts at which secular music and secular songs will form the chief features. The clergy and the "unco guid" people in Edinburgh have drawn the attention of the authorities to the fact that Cook's Circus (where Dunn and Davidson's band performs on Sunday nights) is only licensed for week-day performances, and they want the licence withdrawn on the ground that its conditions have been infringed. Meantime Dunn and Davidson are coining money by their venture.

Professor Menzies of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, opened his winter session with an address upon Scientific Theology, in the course of which he observed that one of the questions which the theologian had to ask was, "How are the people to be made to feel that in religion there is something certain, something to be firmly relied on, which no doubt can shake, so that their faith may continue to have its basis in their own knowledge and reason, and not be at the mercy of the priest, the fanatic or the charlatan?" This is indeed a hard nut for the Christian theologian to crack, and I for one should like to see it done. The man who can show that Christianity rests now, or ever has rested, on our knowledge and reason will indeed be a prodigy.

Dr. Marcus Dods has again been airing his views upon the Bible. Here is a sample of the stuff with which this learned Professor feeds his flock. "The Bible is infallible in its substance, though not in its form; it is infallible as a whole, though not in each particular fact; it is infallible in the spirit, though not always in the letter. The discrepancies are in themselves very trifling, and of absolutely no consequence; but they become of alarming consequence when used as a lever to subvert the real infallibility of scripture." Is not this a bold statement in the face of *Lux Mundi* and other modern, not to speak of ancient criticisms upon the Bible? Divinity students must indeed repose a blind faith in their teachers if they swallow this spoon-food fit only for babes. We may, in their case, define faith as it was defined by the school-boy, who promptly gave an answer to the question What is faith? "Faith is that which enables you to believe what isn't true."

While speaking of professors, I may mention that the Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University chose "Hypnotism" as the subject of his opening lecture this winter. While admitting that the mesmerist possesses a marvellous power over his subject, he contended that no one in ordinary health could be hypnotised, except as the result of his own consent, and it was, therefore, impossible that a state which depended upon personal choice could carry an argument against will-power. "A conclusion," said he, "adverse to freedom of will is intolerable." Thus Professor Calderwood boldly proclaims that he will not tolerate any conclusion which does away with free-will.

And yet this is the Goliath of the Christian Evidence advocates in Modern Athens. Few of their meetings are complete unless he is on the platform as chairman or lecturer. He is looked upon by his admirers and backers as a veritable infidel-slayer, and they applaud vociferously when he hits out. His mode of warfare may be gleaned from the fact that on one occasion, when asked by an opponent how he reconciled the order given to the Israelites anent the spoiling of the Egyptians with the command, Thou shalt not steal, he replied:—"The order amounted to this: 'Beg, borrow, or steal whatever you can, and even then you won't have got your wages.'" This answer threw the Christians into a phrensy of delight, and the Professor smiled benignly.

The Crusade for the disestablishment of the Scottish Church goes on apace, and both parties are waxing warm. Those favorable to disestablishment say that the Ministers of the established Church are drawing their stipends under false pretences. The money was left, they affirm, for the saying of the masses for the souls of the departed, for the hearing of confessions, and for the granting of absolution—none of which is done by those who now pocket the teinds. The *Established Churchman* turns the other check to the smiters by gently reminding them "that this is an age of religious indifference; that already in the towns there are tens of thousands of artisans who go to no church, because they will not pay for a seat-rent, and cannot bear the visits of the monthly collector; and that if the Church were disestablished, the ploughmen in the country would very quickly fall into the same humour (they are doing so already), and decline to go to a church for which they had to pay, if indeed there was a church to go to?" These are the words of Principal Cunningham, and I believe them to be the truth, and nothing but the truth.

R. M. R.

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President, G. W. FOOTE.

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THE EVIL THE CHURCH DOES.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

(*Concluded.*)

An Infidel, though his life be stainless and wholly given to good works; though he swathe his wife in the sunshine of love and rock his children in the cradle of kindness; though he serve his friends and love his enemies; though he conform his life to every precept of the "Sermon on the Mount," cannot belong to the Church; but a Calvinist, though his heart be a nest of unclean birds and his whole life a serpent's trail; though he freeze his wife with indifference or defile her with a loveless embrace, and rule his children with a rod of iron; though he be false to his friends and vindictive to his enemies: though he violate every maxim of the "Sermon on the Mount," can.

A poor drunkard cannot belong to the Church, but a rich drunkard can. A poor libertine cannot belong to the Church, but a rich libertine can. A common prostitute cannot belong to the Church, but a young woman who in legal prostitution sells herself to an old man for gold can. A non-uniformed man who habitually attacks and beats his neighbors on the street cannot belong to the Church, but a policeman can. A common burglar cannot belong to the Church, but a tax collecter or sheriff can. A common murderer cannot belong to the Church, but a hangman can. The hand that adjusted the noose or cut loose the drop on Friday can take the communion bread on Sunday. A sneak thief cannot belong to the Church, but a detective can. A confidence man cannot belong to the Church, but a promoter of bogus commercial enterprises can. A bucket shop keeper cannot belong to the Church, but a stockbroker can. A policy shop keeper cannot belong to the Church, but you can buy a chance in a sofa cushion at a church fair. An ordinary gambler cannot belong to the Church, but a vacant land speculator can. An ordinary thief cannot belong to the Church, but a money manipulator can. A poor person who lives without working cannot belong to the Church, but a rich person who lives without working can. Poor men and women who spend their time in dance houses along the Bowery cannot belong to the Church, but rich men and women who spend their time in dance houses at Newport and Tuxedo can. A poor woman who does not pay her rent is not sought after by the Church, but the landlord who turns her into the street is.

The most ignoble criminals in this country are the men who are debauching the people by election bribes, who are robbing them by corporate monopolies, who are starving them by keeping them off vacant land and limiting the supply of money, but these men are all members of the Church, or may be. And this because the Church openly or tacitly recognises and encourages a false idea of morality.

The Church wants God in the Constitution, but it does not clamor for justice in society. It wants the Bible in the public schools, but it does not insist on the Golden Rule in business. It says we must not break the Sabbath, but it does not say to the employer: "You must not break that woman's back over a sewing machine." It wants you to worship Jesus, but if you try to follow his precepts it will persecute you. It tells the poor to be economical and contented, instead of telling the rich to be just. It bids the rich to be charitable, instead of telling them to stop robbing the poor. It tells women to keep within their sphere instead of telling men to give them their liberty. It encourages the suppression and imprisonment of reformers instead of studying what they have to say. It points the eye of faith to another world, but encourages the hand of business to lay up treasures in this. It preaches the blessedness of poverty while it revels in the luxury of wealth. It loves respectability more than righteousness, and hates social obscurity worse than sin. It worships God and behaves like the Devil. It wears the livery of heaven and cultivates the manners of hell. It is intrinsically and necessarily bad. It cannot be reformed. It must go!

A REVERENT AGNOSTIC.

The Marquis of Queensberry is an emotional gentleman. We were close to him once when he spoke in St. James's Hall; every nerve in his body was painfully quivering, and his brief speech was what might be expected in such circumstances. Years afterwards, his lordship rose from his seat in the stalls of a London theatre, and shouted out a protest against Tennyson's *Promise of May*, in which an Agnostic plays the part of a scoundrel. There was no necessity for such a protest, for a play which is a sermon is sure of a quick mortality, nor in any case was the theatre the proper place to make it. After these, and some other facts, we are not much astonished at the following letter from the Marquis to the head of the Salvation Army:—

"Glenlee, New Galloway, N.B., *Nov. 21.*

"My dear General Booth,—I have read *your book, In Darkest England*, with the greatest interest, also with thrills of horror that things should be as bad as they are. I send you a cheque for £100, and shall feel compelled if your scheme is carried out to give you a yearly subscription. You say you want recruits. When I come to town I should very much like to see you to talk this matter over, for I see no cause in which a man could more put his heart and soul into than this one of endeavoring to alleviate this fearful misery of our fellow creatures. I see you quote Carlyle in your book, but is it possible for anyone like myself, who is even more bitterly opposed than he was against what to me is the Christian falsehood, to work with you? We have two things to do as things are at present—first, to endeavor to alleviate the present awful suffering that exists to the best of our abilities, and surely this ought to be a State affair; and, secondly, to get at the roots of the evils, and by changing public opinion gradually develop a different state of things for future generations, when this help will not be so necessary. I do not wish to get into a religious controversy with you on how this is to be brought about, but I tell you I am no Christian and am bitterly opposed to it. A tree I believe is to be judged by its fruits. Christianity has been with us many hundreds of years. What can we think of it when its results are as they are at present with the poor, whom Christ, I believe you say, informed us we should always have with us? I know nothing about other worlds, beyond that I see thousands upon thousands around me who I presume look after their own affairs. It appears to me our common and plainest duty to help and to try and change the lot of our suffering fellow creatures here on this earth. You can publish this if you please, but without suppressing any of it. If not, and any notice is given of subscriptions, as I see you are doing, I beg it may be notified that I send this mite as a reverent agnostic to our common cause of humanity.—Yours faithfully,

Queensberry."

Lord Queensberry calls himself "a reverent agnostic," and we suppose the *reverence* is responsible for his sending £100 to help a scheme which is to be carried out by the Salvation Army, and which is designed to promote that very Christianity to which his lordship is so "bitterly opposed." Perhaps the same *reverence* has hitherto prevented his lordship from subscribing towards the work of those who are engaged in destroying the "Christian falsehood." It would be really wonderful, if one knew less of human nature, to see wealthy men tightening their purses against unpopular causes with which they have an intellectual sympathy, and loosening them promptly for popular causes with which they have no intellectual sympathy at all. Mr. Samuel Laing, M.P., is another reverent Agnostic, who sends Booth £100. How much has he ever subscribed to spread Freethought? Agnosticism, with some people, takes the form of opposing Christianity theoretically, and supporting it practically.

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ACID DROPS.

General Booth has to pay £27 damages to Mr. Baker, a lodging-house keeper, of St. John's Wood. In the Salvation Army monthly periodical, *All the World*, it was suggested that Mr. Baker was keeping a disorderly house. Before the case came on for trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, the "General" paid £2 into court. That was the amount he thought he ought to pay for a gross libel on a fellow citizen, but the jury multiplied the figure by thirteen and a half. Perhaps this little lesson will teach the "General" that he is not "all the world."

Mr. Bradlaugh's statement in last week's *National Reformer* is enough to make a saint swear. No, no; not a saint; saints swear readily enough; we should have said *a gentleman*. It appears that when Mr. Bradlaugh lay desperately ill, almost dying, a Salvation Army contingent passed under his window and stopped to give him a "salvation salute," which is one of the most hellish rows this side of Central Africa; and if the police had not protected him, these callous, fanatical wretches would have repeated their wretched performance.

Why doesn't Booth put this forward as one of his credentials? There are thousands of Christians who would gladly help him to give "salvation salutes" under the windows of sick or dying Freethinkers.

At General Booth's Exeter Hall meeting to raise the wind, the formal proceedings opened with a hymn and a prayer. Then came another hymn before the Salvation Pope rose to address the ladies and gentleman in the half-guinea seats. Now that hymn was very appropriate.

All I have I am bringing to thee.

How the "General" must have grinned (inwardly) and wished it was true.

Religion is a mental disease. The civilised races are used to it, and natural selection has toughened them. But when the diseases of civilised races are carried to uncivilised races they work the deadliest havoc. The Messiah craze has got amongst the North American Indians and driven them three-parts mad. They are indulging in wild religious dances, and Chief Little Wound says they are going to dance until spring, when "if we find Christ does not appear, we shall stop dancing." Meanwhile the white settlers are in a state of alarm. A massacre is apprehended, and the United States troops are held in readiness to put down a rising of the Christ-deluded red men.

The American papers say that the Sioux Messiah bears the commonplace name of Johnson. The name, after all, is no more commonplace than that of Jesus. He seems to bear one of the genuine marks of a Messiah in bringing calamity on those who adopt him.

Among the rancid pufferies of himself which the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes admits weekly into the *Methodist Times* this one may be noted. The readers are told that one of the secrets of his "power of evoking enthusiasm" is his "splendid decisiveness of opinion and action." "Splendid decisiveness" is good. We admit the quality, though we shouldn't give it that name. The quality comes out in his story of the Atheist Shoemaker. There isn't a word of truth in it, but the "splendid decisiveness" never trembles. In other words, the author of that fraud is a fine, straightforward liar.

By the way, the *Methodist Times* gives the names of some pious men of science—*not* including Darwin, Haeckel, and Huxley—and asks "Who dares to say that the greatest scientists are unbelievers in God, and regard the Bible as cunningly-devised fables?" Ay, who? You put the dangerous names out of sight, and cry out, Who's afraid? But this trick will not save your fetish. Science and the Bible do not agree, and you know it. As for the Bible being a lot of cunningly-devised fables, we are ready to prove it—in debate! We don't make the assertion and run away, as you did, Mr. Price Hughes, when you lied about that converted Atheist; no, we are ready to maintain it, if you have any stomach for a real fight.

Price Hughes is down on Parnell for "lying." When we read that we laughed. It was not a smile, it was a convulsion. The whole neighborhood was alarmed, and the timid old lady eight doors off has had a policeman sleeping in the house ever since.

We should like to see the dictionary they keep in the *Methodist Times* office. Our curiosity is whetted by the following sentence:—"If he [the negro] is civilised without being Christianised, his strong, passionate nature will make his civilisation a curse rather than a blessing." Now we want to know, if the inquiry isn't flat blasphemy, what are the meanings of "civilised" and "civilisation" in the Price-Hughes vocabulary. If civilisation can be a curse rather than a blessing, in any shape, the ordinary dictionaries that we have access to are fraudulent and misleading.

Poor African! The Philistines are upon thee. First come the missionaries, and then the missionaries' friends, gentlemen from the same country, and worshippers of the same Christ. And these gentlemen bring rum, syphilis, and rifles; and thou, poor darkie, findest thyself, infernally sold, bought with a great price, as the missionary says, but, alas! never paid for. And the missionary's friend dispatches thee to kingdom-come, and the missionary preaches thy funeral sermon. Amen.

The Rev. Howard Heber Evans, vicar of Mapperly, contends that St. Paul was the author of the Acts of the Apostles. This is rather a dangerous position for an orthodox defender of the faith. Good critics like Baur and Zeller consider it evident that the Acts of the Apostles belong to the second century. Consequently, if they are correct, all the evidence which goes to show that this document had the same authorship as that of the epistles attributed to Paul would only show that these last could not have been written by Paul, who, according to Christian tradition, suffered under Nero about B.C. 64.

Mr. H. H. Evans, however, brings forward some notable verbal similarities between Luke, Acts, and Paul's epistles. These similarities, however, may be explained on quite another theory than that of the authorship of Paul, viz., that the same person redacted all three long after Paul's death.

The profits of the Passion Play amount to 300,000 marks. Two thousand go to Jesus Christ—not so much for being crucified, considering that one thousand three hundred go to Caiaphas and as much to his daughter Mary. It would seem that it pays to put the Savior on the boards. But the village is said to be dissatisfied. Taxes are being levied at the same time for the State and the parish, and in Munich the opinion is expressed that the Passion Plays will have an ugly sequel.

The Rev. T. W. Norwood declined to publish the banns of a couple of barge people because they had no residence except the boat on the canal. This difficulty, which should be none, was made the subject of a conference at Nantwich, with the single result of inducing the Bishop of Chester to say he must look into the law on the subject.

Early this year Mrs. Anna Maria Morris advertised for a Christian gentleman for a husband. A Christian gentleman who was already married, and who had been convicted for felony, abduction and fraud, married her, obtained £59 from her, and then treated her cruelly. When the case came before the judge at the Manchester Assizes he remarked that the result was "exactly what might have been expected to happen to a lady who advertised for a Christian gentleman for a husband."

The *Saturday Review* professed to rejoice that a tardy testimonial was presented to Walt Whitman, but adds, "it is a pity that the chief actor should have been an offensive quack like Mr. Robert Ingersoll." Probably the writer knows no more of Mr. Robert Ingersoll than that he is an anti-Christian orator. If he read Ingersoll's noble tribute to Whitman he would discover that the good grey poet is as little religious as his eulogist. But the *Saturday Review* man, knowing little or nothing of either Ingersoll or

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Whitman, seeks to strain at the one while swallowing the other. Really it is very amusing!

About Bishop King's Romanising ritual and doctrines there can be little question. When Principal of Cuddesdon Theological Training College a goodly number of his pupils passed into the service of the Church of Rome. When consecrated Bishop of Lincoln, on April 15, 1885, the ceremonial proceedings excited great joy among the Romanisers. Though the Archbishop teaches that there is no significance to be attached to his Ritualism, the Bishop himself holds that Ritualism is proper simply on account of the doctrinal significance which is attached. There is little doubt he will conform on the few particulars required by the Archbishop's judgment. An appeal is far more likely to come from the other side.

The Rev. H. H. Henson, vicar of Barking, writes a vigorous letter to the *Times*, protesting against the patronage of Booth by the bishops. He says: "If 'General' Booth speaks truly, and the saving power of the Gospel depends on the agency of the Salvation Army, then the Church lacks the authenticating mark of Christianity; it is an imposture, and my lords would better set an example to their clergy of honesty and courage by forthwith resigning their bishoprics and applying to the 'General' for commissions in the Army."

A meeting of the unemployed was held on Clerkenwell Green on Tuesday to denounce General Booth's scheme. Testimonies were given that men waited in the bureau many days without getting any relief, and it was stated that a man would have to work twelve weeks before he got five shillings in money to buy tools.

The Catholic *Weekly Register* suggests that, as the Queen never uses Buckingham Palace, she should hand it over to Cardinal Manning as a slight restitution for the buildings of which the Catholics were despoiled under Henry VIII. "General" Booth will apply for it next for the S. A. Her Majesty has as yet given him nothing but her good wishes.

The leading Theosophist of Paris calls himself "Pappus." His real name is M. Encausse. He is the author of several volumes, in which he pretends to teach High Magic. As he has been disparaging the High Priestess we are not surprised to read in *Lucifer* that he has been expelled from the Theosophical Society. M. Encausse Pappus can afford to laugh, for he has, we learn, come in for a million of francs, given him by a deluded old French lady to propagate his crankery.

There is a superstition against looking over the shoulder. People are afraid of seeing something uncanny, a circumstance which Coleridge employed with great effect in the *Ancient Mariner*. But Mr. Spurgeon is not an ordinary man, and he says, "I have often felt that if I were to look over my shoulder and see Christ I should not be surprised." Good, Mr. Spurgeon, good! You are a *very* great man, and God Almighty walks *behind* you.

Pious Billy, whom an imbecile destiny has made the ruler of forty million Germans, has been favoring his army with some more of his views. He told them that no one could be a good soldier if he were not also a good Christian. Indeed! What about the Greeks who fell at Thermopylæ and conquered at Marathon? What about Hannibal, Marcellus, Scipio, and Julius Cæsar? Were these gentlemen Christians? And what chance would pious Billy stand against any one of them?

The *New York Herald* publishes an autobiographical account of Reginald Birchall, who was executed in Canada for murder. It is satisfactory to note that he repudiates the statement that he was an Atheist.

What trust in Providence amounts to was exemplified by a woman in Birmingham, who was called on by a local life insurance agent. "Well, sir," she said, "we've been trusting to Providence, but now there's so much illness about that does seem rather risky."

At the home office of the Salvation Army at Blackfriars Station a large advertisement on canvass, covering nearly the front of the building, announced "Two days with God at Exeter Hall on Nov. 23 and 24." Apparently God did not seem to care about their company, for he did his best to blow the advertisement into shreds.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* describes the reception of some young girls at Vienna as Brides of the much-married Christ. It says: "Many a sob was heard as the twenty young nuns filed out of the chapel behind the Bishop. In the corridors and visitors' rooms of the convent all the painful partings took place between mothers who were not all willing to give up their children, and girls who did not, every one, seem to understand the necessity of spending a long life behind the convent walls." Christ permits none of the ladies of his harem to have any contact with the outside world. To become dead to worldly duties is the highest reach of Christian morality.

A telegram from Berlin says:—"Ex-Court Chaplain Hofman, of Dresden, who resigned his chaplaincy to the Court of the King of Saxony four years ago under sensational circumstances, entered the Lutheran Church, and married a rich young widow, has now absconded from Dresden Newstadt, leaving his wife and three babies behind. It is surmised that Hofman has done this at the instigation of members of the Catholic Church, and that he is now doing penance in some Italian convent preparatory to receiving the Pope's forgiveness." Similar specimens of Roman morality have occurred in England.

The Bishop of Wakefield says the Christian may accept Evolution without fear. Yes, and a man may walk into a powder magazine with a lighted stick without fear, but he'll get blown up all the same.

At Bistritz, in Transylvania, the newly-appointed minister is of Roumanian nationality. When he tried to enter the church he was debarred by the Saxon members of the flock. A free fight ensued between the rival factions, six persons were killed, and sixteen seriously injured. God bless religion!

"Owing largely to the persevering and faithful efforts of the lady collectors" the Bolton section of the British and Foreign Bible Society has collected £215 11s. 10d. during the past year to send Bibles to the African and other heathen. Would it not be better if the "lady collectors" would turn their attention to the wants of Bolton? Is it not simply humbug to be so anxious for the salvation of people thousands of miles away while destitution, ignorance and vice flourish at your own doors?

J. Maxwell writes an indignant letter to the *Mossley Reporter*. He went into the library of the Co-operative Society and found there the writings of Paine, Bradlaugh, Foote, and other reprobates. He also found some French novels translated into English; and he calls upon the co-operators to banish "infidelity and immorality" from their midst.

J. Maxwell dosen't say if he found a Bible in the library. If he did, he need not have been so severe on French novels, for the Jewish naturalists beat the French ones hollow.

The mixed marriage question is still causing a ferment in Hungary. The Liberals are taking the opportunity to press the claims of civil marriage. Count Apponyi, though belonging to an ultra-Catholic family, has advocated this sensible reform in a speech which was much applauded. He declared that the present disorderly state of things only tended to loosen the marriage tie.

There is a certain poetical justice in the boycotting of a Catholic priest. The engineer is hoist with his own petard. Excommunication, indeed, is a game that two can play at, as Father Cantwell, of Tipperary, finds to his cost. He is boycotted by the local League, his parishioners are are warned not to give him his Christmas dues, and everyone found speaking to him is to be boycotted. Father Cantwell's novel experience may set him thinking on the fate of many a poor, inoffensive heretic cast off from human society by the tender mercies of his Church.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 30, Secular Hall, Humberston Gate, Leicester: at 3.30, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

W. O. WILCOX.—Strictly the two first chapters should be the first two chapters. J. S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, followed by Alfred Marshall's treatise.

T. PHILLIPS.—We regret to hear the bad accident to Mr. E. Fletcher, the President of the Spennymoor Branch. Pray call and pay him our respects and express our wishes for his speedy recovery.

G. NAEWIGER (Hull) thanks the Berlin friend who sent a parcel of literature for distribution.

YOUNG NORWICH.—Something ought to be done in your city. Could not some of the "young bloods" form a Branch? Only seven members are needed to make a beginning. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay you a visit.

J. TULLIN.—We think the quotation is correct. Will look it up and let you know.

R. E. HOLDING.—Such well-written letters in the local press are of great service to the cause.

J. R.—You must allow for difference of tastes. You do not like Mr. Pentecost's articles. Another correspondent wrote by the same post to say how much he relished them. Read what you do like, and skip the rest.

W. NICHOLLS.—Mr. Foote will write to you privately in a few days.

"DAYLIGHT" sends 2s. 6d. for the Children's Party at the Hall of Science.

M. W. KELLY.—We do the best we can. Thanks for your letter in the *Holloway Press*. It will influence fair-minded readers.

R. WALLER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

DUBITANS.—Thanks for the extract, though we had already seen it. Sir J. W. Dawson's book was severely handled in the *Athenæum*, which accused him of ignorance or worse. Perhaps we may notice it when we have time. Generally speaking, Sir J. W. Dawson is not a writer to waste much time upon. Some of his articles in *Tracts for the Times* are almost contemptible.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Two Friends (Grimbsy), 1s. 3d.; Mrs. Harrison, 1s. 8d.; Battersea Branch, 9s.; W. J. Lloyd, 5s.; Grimsby Branch (collected at Mr. Foote's lectures), £1 2s. 6d.—R. Forder, sec.

W. B. says that before ordering the N. S. S. Almanack he asked his shopmates if they would like one, and in consequence he had to order five copies. This correspondent's questions are thus answered. (1) Yes, Palestine is too cold in December for flocks to be out all night. (3) There were several Herods, a dynasty of them. Two are mentioned in the New Testament, and perhaps three.

M. DE P.—Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, *Supernatural Religion*, and Giles's *Christian Records*.

C. KELF.—It is always best to send Guide Notices on separate slips. The matter should be arranged as in our printed list. Some secretaries send letters also, asking "Will you kindly insert," etc. This is quite superfluous.

A. MATTHEWS, newsagent, 25 East Street, Walworth, supplies this journal and other Secular publications.

S. S.—Mr. Foote does take care of his health, and is usually quite well, but it is impossible to avoid being sometimes overworked. He comes of a pretty long-lived family.

J. S. ROGERS.—There is a great deal of truth in what you say.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following:—J. Dean, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Ford, 5s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; N. P. Mills, 5s.; S. S., 5s.; Daylight, 5s.; M. W. Kelly, 3s.; G. J. Holyoake, 10s. 6d.; J. W., 2s.; Mrs. Waterlow and family, 5s.

R. CHRISTIE.—(1) We cannot hunt through our file four years ago for the item. Life isn't long enough. (2) If the world is all wrong for the want of *true* Christianity, after nearly two thousand years' trial, it shows that the system is either bad or impracticable.

A. WRIGHT wants to know the address of a newsagent near London Bridge where he can obtain the *Freethinker*. Can any reader oblige him? Mr. Bradlaugh has given up the shop in Fleet Street. His paper and other writings are now sold by Mr. Forder at the above address.

G. F. PELHAM.—It is a mad production; but, as Bishop South said, prophecy is a subject that generally finds a man cracked or leaves him so. Thanks for the other enclosures.

J. BANHAM.—We cannot insert such a notice. If you want to work for Freethought you should begin in a more modest way.

N. P. MILLS.—Yes, it will be difficult to find a suitable successor to Mr. Forder.

W. SIMMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

Y. Y.—Your letter received. It is a little wild, but you seem to feel deeply.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntaggs-Blatt—Mossley Reporter — Freidenker — Truth-seeker—Mossley Reporter—Daily News—Liberator—Echo—Western Figaro—Der Arme Teufel—Independent Pulpit—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Flaming Sword—Cosmopolitan—Evening Standard—Cambria Daily Leader—Eastern Argus—Blackpool Times—Northern Daily Telegraph—Leicester Chronicle.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

AFTER serving for fifteen years as Secretary to the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder is resigning the post. His best days have been spent in the party's service, and his health is now precarious. In these circumstances, it has been deemed an act of justice to present him with a testimonial in recognition of his invaluable work as a lecturer and organiser, and to assist him in the Freethought publishing business, to which he will devote the remainder of his life. The Testimonial has the hearty support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the Presidency during the period of Mr. Forder's service.

G. Holloway, 1s. 6d.; J. Barnaby, 8d.; G. Stanton, 5s.; S. Hartmann, per C. Bradlaugh, 5s.; Wm. Turner, 4s.; A. G. Scopes, 2s. Per T. Huband, H.M.S. Temeraire: T. Huband, 1s.; R. Simmons, 1s.; W. Lane, 1s.; W. Dale, 1s.; H. B. W., 2s.; G. A. Meadows, 7s. 8d.

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote was in tolerably good form on Sunday, but Liverpool wasn't. During nearly the whole of the day you might have fired cannon down Lime Street without hurting anybody. The wind blew furiously and the rain was almost incessant. Going to the hall in the morning Mr. Foote had his umbrella grievously assaulted and damaged by a cyclone at the corner of London Road. For the rest of the day he tramped through the wet with a turned-up collar, and three lectures of course meant six journeys. Naturally the audiences were thinned by such weather. The morning and afternoon meetings were poor, but some three or four hundred people assembled in the evening, among them being several plucky ladies. Several questions were asked after two of the lectures, and in the morning some opposition was offered by Mr. George Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society.

Some imaginative Christians fancy that Freethought lecturers make "a splendid thing of it"; but when the lecturer, after travelling 400 miles and delivering three discourses, counts up his profit in shillings, and reflects that most of them must be spent in repairing his gingham, he is apt to take a less sanguine view of the situation.

Fortunately Mr. Foote's visit to Liverpool was fruitful in one respect. He found the Hall Scheme still in the stage of talk, but by prodding the committee and talking to, if not *at*, the Freethinkers in the meetings, he managed to get it advanced a stage further. Before the close of the proceedings

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the first half crown had been paid on eighty shares. This is a good beginning, and if the Company is formed at once and promoted with activity, we have no doubt the Liverpool Secularists will soon have a hall of their own.

Mr. Foote lectured to a crowded room at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Thursday, Nov. 20. His subject was "The Blasphemy Laws; and Why they should be Abolished." After the lecture a resolution was carried, without a single dissentient, condemning the Blasphemy Laws as an outrage on the principle of religious equality, and trusting that the members for the St. Pancras division would support any Bill brought into Parliament for the abolition of such relics of barbarism.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who is happily recovering from the shock of his recent accident, in sending half a guinea to the Forder Testimonial Fund, writes—"It is a small acknowledgment of the very considerable service rendered by Mr. Forder. I hope he has before him years of honor and greater prosperity than he has yet known."

Mr. Bradlaugh lectures in aid of the Forder Testimonial Fund at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, Dec. 10. Mr. Foote takes the chair. For particulars see advertisement.

A good collection (£7 12s.) was taken up for the Benevolent Fund after Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture on Sunday evening.

Mr. J. M. Robertson had an improved audience at Peckham, and his able lecture was listened to with close attention. Mr. Foote winds up this course of Free Lectures on Thursday evening, Nov. 27.

The Finsbury Branch has arranged for a course of Free Lectures at the Hall in Banner Street, St. Luke's, on the Sunday mornings in December. The lecturers are Messrs. Forder, Robertson, Standring and Rowney.

The West London Branch intend to continue their Tuesday evening Free Lectures at Hammersmith Club during December. The attendances have been fairly good. On Nov. 18, Mr. C. J. Hunt debated with Mr. W. O. Drake (Spiritualist), and acquitted himself very creditably. A debate is also arranged between Mr. Hunt and the Rev. S. Brennan, on Dec. 9. The subject "Does the Bible teach a Personal Devil?"

The *Brighton Times* reports a vigorous lecture by Mr. C. E. Ford on "The Priest and the Politician." He traced the disastrous influence of priestcraft from the early days of Christianity.

Rudyard Kipling has a powerful story of East London life in the Christmas Number of the *Detroit Free Press*. It is very realistic, and very pathetic in spite of its sordidness and brutality. The quotation from Browning's *Pippa Passes* at the head of the story must be ironical:

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world.

Dr. T. R. Allinson has just published a very useful little work (price 6d.) on *Diet and Digestion*. Those who will take the trouble to read it, and profit by its advice, will save many doctor's bills and enjoy a share of the priceless boon of health.

A large meeting of Leicester boot and shoe operatives passed a vote in favor of the Sunday opening of free libraries.

Dr. J. L. York, the Californian Freethought lecturer, had a debate with Father Carden, a Catholic priest, at San Diego. The result was that Father Carden was dismissed from his post for giving the infidel an opportunity of showing up the unsavory character of the Church. But this did not end the matter, for the ex-priest has since asked to lecture on the platform of the San Diego Freethought Union, and his offer has been accepted.

The *Ironclad Age* of Indianopolis for Nov. 10, opens with Mr. Wheeler's "Notes on Witchcraft in England," extracted from our columns.

The Congress of the American Secular Union at Portsmouth, Ohio, seems to have been rather a mixed gathering. President Westbrook, in addition to the Freethought leaders, invited a Jewish Rabbi and various other free-religious persons opposed to the union of Church and State. To guard their feelings he called one of the speakers sharply to order for denouncing prayer. The former officers were re-elected, R. B. Westbrook as President, Miss Ira Craddock as Secretary, Mr. Mende as Treasurer, and the name of Mr. John R. Charlesworth was added as Travelling Secretary. The directors are Dr. E. B. Foote, T. B. Wakeman, J. O. Bentley and T. M. Parot.

Mr. Symes has been giving in his *Liberator* some interesting articles on native Australian superstitions under the title of "The Gospel of the Blackfellows." It appears the blackfellows practised circumcision and had many similar superstitions to those of the Jews.

Joseph Symes keeps pegging away. He has emerged successfully from one law suit but has another before him. A state of contention seems to be the normal one with Mr. Symes. We wish him well out of all his difficulties.

Fritankaren gives a portrait and autobiographical sketch of Mr. Knut Wicksell, one of the delegates from Sweden to the International Conference at Paris. The fight for free speech in Sweden is by no means finished, cases against Messrs. Berghell and Hellborg being still pending.

The result of the elections in Italy must be another blow to the poor old Pope since Crispi is assured of another five years rule. The worst of it for Signor Pecci is that if the Ministry had not been so strong it is the Radicals and not the Clericals who would have gained.

Captain Pfoundes, of the Buddhist Propagation Society, has sent us the *Bijou of Asia* of Kioto Japan—the *Buddhist Ray* of Santa Cruz, California, and the *Buddhist* of Colombo, Ceylon. All three papers are printed in English and bear witness to the extension of the movement for the propagation of Buddhism among Christian nations.

Mr. J. D. Shaw has decided to keep the *Independent Pulpit* a monthly, and is pushing forward the Freethought Association of Texas.

We see from the *Cosmopolitan* that Mr. J. A. Balfour, of the Bombay Secular Society, 13 Khetwady, Bombay, has issued a catalogue of Freethought works for readers in India.

The *Cosmopolitan* pushes ahead despite the Post Office authorities, whose prohibition can never apply to a new issue. It reprints some paragraphs from our columns and a chapter from the *Crimes of Christianity*.

A Virgin Mother, the next instalment of Mr. Foote's "Bible Heroes" will not be ready till the middle of December. Mr. Foote is obliged to lessen his literary output for a week or two.

HOW TO HELP US.

(1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
(2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
(3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

OBITUARY.—Died on Sunday the 9th November, Mrs. Bryceson, of Charlton Place, Islington, from paralysis. The deceased lady had for many years been at our meetings, and passed calmly away without fear or trouble. She was a good woman and a loving mother. Mr. Haslam conducted the funeral, reading the service in a most impressive manner.

There is nothing nobler in man than courage; and the only way to be courageous is to be clean-handed and hearted, to be able to respect ourselves and face our record.

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TWO SECRET SOCIETIES.

Mr. Wheeler having drawn attention to the Jesuits, surely the most powerful and pernicious religious secret society now extant, it may not be out of place to call attention to two extinct secret societies, which perhaps more fully displayed the true inwardness of religion than even the company of Jesus. The first is the Mahommedan Secret Society of Assassins. Our word assassin indeed comes from the Ismailien Secret Society of Hassan ibn Sabah. Hassan and his sect, according to R. D. Osborn's *Islam Under the Khalifs of Baghdad* were Theosophists. To Freethinkers he is also noticeable as the school companion at Nasshapur of Omar Khayyam, the Persian astronomer, poet, Epicurean and pessimist. In 1090 Hassan seized the fortress of Alamut, in the mountains south of the Caspian Sea, where he became known as the old man or sheik of the mountains. His followers were pledged to extirpate the enemies of heaven. Of Hassan Lieut. Osborn says (p. 345):

"Pitiless and inscrutable as destiny, he watched the troubled world of Oriental politics, himself invisible, and whenever he perceived a formidable foe, caused a dagger to be driven into his heart. The roll of his victims would be too long to enumerate here. Warriors, statesmen, merchants—he spared none. But to the last he enforced among his followers the most rigid adherence to the letter of the Koran; and one of his last acts was the execution of his son because he had presumed to drink wine. His own time, it is said, he spent chiefly in prayer, and in the composition of treatises setting forth and defending his religious beliefs."

Nothing but religious fanactism indeed would have sustained such a pernicious society, which grew and flourished after Hassan's death in 1124, and was not suppressed till 1256, when twelve thousand of them were massacred by Houlagou, the brother of Mangou Khan during the Mongol invasion.

Of the other secret society, a Christian one, even less is known than of the Assassins. They flourished in Spain, where they were suppressed in 1803, and were known as the *Despenadores*, or Pain-relievers. As this word had at that time become obsolete, it is evident the society dated from a considerable antiquity. The Despenadores were a religious order of monks, who, in addition to the usual vows, took also a solemn oath that they would lose no opportunity of attending the bedside of the dying, and after assuring themselves of their salvation by administering the last sacrament of Extreme Unction, should take care they did not return to their old life of pain, temptation and sin, by accelerating death and relieving the death agony by means of strangulation and suffocation. This was done under the pretext of being alone for prayer, confession and spiritual consolation. How long the order had existed and how far its operations extended is uncertain. Being suppressed by the Inquisition, in order to avoid a scandal to religion, no details were made public, but it is said that the holy brotherhood of the Pain-killers, though not numerous, was extended through every province of Spain. Evidently they believed their soul-saving mission was divine, and on religious principles they had a deal to say for the beneficence of their operations.

Lucianus.

MIRACLES.

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS.

[concluded.]

Or what utility is it to believe in these miraculous events, to fill ourselves with pride over such nonsense as a dead man rising from the grave and sailing away to some unknown region of space to prepare a place of everlasting bliss. What is the use of fostering hopes which will never be realised, of transporting our best and highest thoughts into the region of unreality away from this world where they are so much needed. The man or the nation who neglects, or misunderstands the laws of the universe will ere long reap a terrible punishment. The mechanism of the cosmos will keep grinding on, notwithstanding the mistaken views and heartrending sorrows of the human race.

Do miracles appeal to the moral philosopher for support? No, for the philosophical spirit and the belief in miracles are antagonistic one to the other. The wiser a man gets the further he leaves behind him the childish conception of chance and self-willed powers. Before the abnormal and unnatural the wisdom of the wise man availeth nothing, his morality possesses no utility or value. Why should he lead men in the stern road of virtue when for all he may know, those who enjoy the delights of vice, will miss its punishment, when the terrrible diseases men have brought upon themselves by their love of pleasurable sensations may be all wiped away by the touch of a Christ? No wonder in a vicious and credulous age, Christianity with such teachings as these, with such loop-holes of escape from the evil which doth hedge us about, spread like wildfire over the decaying Roman empire. Belief is strong, belief that somewhere in this world of woes, there lies hid some panacea for all its ills, some universal all-purifying pill, is strong in the human breast. On the crest of this great wave of credulity Christianity has sat enthroned for some eighteen hundred years, but the wave will break at last ending in froth and foam, leaving Christianity high and dry, a relic of some former geological period.

The belief in miracles is opposed to science, it is antagonistic to scientific methods. If you admit the existence of the miraculous, the spasmodic interruption of the order of nature you abolish all certainty in the physical and sociological worlds, and dash to the ground the experience and labor of man from the day when he first opened his eyes to the existence of the universe.

The belief in miracles, especially those of the Bible, is unsupported by historical evidence. The product of the miracle-manufacturing power has been great, but the raw material has been drawn from the human imagination. The belief in miracles is the great enemy of progress and science, of truth and justice, and no stable development of the higher faculties of the human race can take place until miracles have been totally discarded, and the system of nature, to which we owe all that we are, and all that we may be, is recognised as alone the source of all goodness, power and beauty here and now.

George Armatage.

A SHAM PRAYER.

"Father forgive them, they know not what they do";
Thus prayed the Father's co-eternal Son
When, on the cross, the nails had pierced him through,
And made his blood, for man's redemption run.

His blood just shed made this his maiden pray'r,
As substitute for those who did rebel;
A pray'r that must have cleft the darkened air,
And thrilled the cosmic pulse, from heav'n to hell.

For as, at first, throughout the lifeless air,
The Father's fiat shed heav'n's quick'ning light,
So Christ the Savior's first post-bleeding pray'r
Had surely put all moral gloom to flight.

Can any one believe that God the Son,
Whose blood and life were ebbing on the tree,
Had then his Intercessor's work begun
By proving that a fruitless one was he?

But vain was Christ's appeal, for we do know
That those who did "they knew not what," that day,
Were not absolved; they drained their cup of woe;
Though Christ forgave, his Father made them pay.

What then avail the bleeding and the death?
The Son was snubbed; his *protégés* condemned;
His intercession was but wasted breath,
Since God's malignant temper was not stemmed.

The Father and the Son were thus at odds,
Instead of being thoroughly at one,
Which clearly shows that they were diff'rent gods,
This ruthless Father, and his ruthful son.

The *risen* Christ appears to have forgot
His quondam clients, or still failed to reach
His Father's heart, for God forsook the lot,
Or, rather, stuck too close, just like a leech.

Let no one then expect to move by prayer,
A God whom Christ his son had failed to move.
Since Christ's appeal for Jews so ill did fare,
His pray'rs for us may not more fruitful prove.

As Christ's first intercession-case was lost,
His mediation must have been a sham;
His clients having had to pay the cost,
'Twas worth no more, nor less, than just a damn.

For Christ the advocate was God the judge;
He prayed unto himself to bless his foes;
He cursed instead; to bless he would not budge;
So praise the Lord, from whom all blessings flow!

G. L. Mackenzie.

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REVIEWS.

Saint Monica. A Wife's Love Story. By Mrs. Bennett-Edwards. Bristol: Arrowsmith.—The authoress is a practised writer, and her new novel will interest many readers. She is advanced in thought, and able to work out a problem of passion with considerable skill.

Self Help in Massage. By E. T. Craig, 10, Andover Road.—The author, who is now 86 years of age, claims to have added a dozen years to his life by vitalising the blood through mineral baths and massage. Mr. Craig is no quack, and gives directions for self-help to those who think his system of value.

A Protest Against Agnosticism. By P. F. Fitzgerald. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.—The writer, we understand, is a lady, and for a lady she uses a very strange vocabulary. Her style is like that of the severest German metaphysician, and her pages show an eruption of quotations, some with references and more without. Here and there we find a sound sentence, but as a whole the book hardly permits itself to be read.

Aryan Sun-Myths the Origin of All Religions. London: Trübner and Co.—The anonymous author appears to have read widely, and the ordinary reader will find this little book contains a good deal of useful information. The author's fault is that he rides his hobby to death, and makes one origin of religions, out of many, do duty for all. We are glad to see, however, that he has the courage to put Christianity in the common category of religions.

The Rev. T. Ashcroft's attack on the Walsall Spiritualists. By the Rev. Peter Dean. E. W. Wallis, 10 Petworth Street, Cheetham, Manchester, 1d.—This is a reply by a Unitarian minister to a Methodist minister, who makes a speciality of lecturing on "Spiritualism, a Farce and a Fraud." Mr. Dean is no Spiritualist, but he shows that Spiritualism is closely interwoven with both the Old and New Testaments, and points out that "John Wesley himself was a Spiritualist if ever there was one."

The Ethical Problem. By Dr. Paul Carus, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co.—Dr. Carus is not a very stimulating writer, but we prefer his prose to his occasonal outbursts of versification in rather German English. These three lectures prove that he hardly understands Utilitarianism as taught by John Stuart Mill. To confine the "useful" to the "materially useful" is an arbitrary impertinence. Mill knew as well as Dr. Carus that "happiness" cannot be chased and captured, and such criticism of a great thinker is really trivial. Still, in some respects Dr. Carus's lectures are worth attention, and they would be still more so if he would ponder Ingersoll's profound saying that "Reformation is a hospital in which the new Philosophy exhausts its strength in nursing the old Religion."

Freethinking and Free Inquiry. By "Agnosco." London: Stewart and Co.—The author of the Junius *Letters* had a good reason for adopting a pseudonym, but it bewilders a sober person to find gentlemen putting pseudonyms on the title-pages of inoffensive volumes. If "Agnosco" is influenced by a taste for mystery, this may account for his ghostly metaphysics; if his motive is timidity, this may explain his preference of Agnosticism to Atheism. We do not wish to convey the idea that this volume has no merits; on the whole it is lucid and interesting, and occasionally it is valuable. Those who cannot read Mr. Herbert Spencer will here find an echo of his teachings. But the slavish following of the greatest master is idolatry. "Agnosco" talks of "some power acting through phenomena," but if he will take the trouble to define "power" he will see that he is talking tautology, or anthropomorphism, or nonsense. Nor does his criticism of Secularism show that he has even read the principles of the N. S. S. with any attention. We believe "Agnosco" is a young man, and young men are often ambitious; but a concoction of Herbert Spencer is not an original, or even a necessary article, and we hope "Agnosco" will devote his attention to special questions instead of ranging over the whole universe, and give his readers the results of his own thought.

The name of David's mother.—Mrs. Jesse.

Better advice than Solomon ever gave:—

"Early to bed and early to rise;
Never get drunk, and advertise."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "How Science tells what a Star is made of" (with experiments).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Free Concert by members and friends; 10, dancing. Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Origin of Species."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Explanation of the Theory of Hypnotism and Mesmerism." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton — Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Responsibility: from a Secular Standpoint."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "The Work of the Session"; 7, "Religions."

Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 7, Mr. W. Jenkinson, "Why do I Blaspheme?" A meeting of members after lecture.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Musical Evening, Orchestral Band, Ballads, etc. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham — Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, Mr. F. Haslam, 11, "The Radical Programme"; 7, "Is Christianity True?"

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Origin of Christianity."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Man and Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic."

Tottenham — Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, discussion, Messrs. Keen and others.

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Sermons from Shakespeare, VII.—'The Grey-eyed Morn.'"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Meaning of Materialism"; 3, "The Law of Population: its Meaning and its Menace"; 7, "The Christ Hallucination."

Crook—Club Room, Commercial Hotel, Commercial Street, 6.30, a paper by Mr. Robinson.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. J. Forrester, "The Chemistry of the Common Gases" (with experiments); 6.30, Mr. Shaw, "The Chronology of the Bible."

Hull — Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. W. Hudson, "Intervention."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class, "Hastings Refuted"; 7, Mr. Gowland, "Does Christianity Meet the Highest Needs of Man?"

Manchester N. S. S. — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Willock, "Secularists and Socialism"; 6.30, Mr. W. K. Hall, "The Old and the New Trades Unionism." Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, adjourned meeting to consider taking fresh premises.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Rev. Prof. J. E. Symes, M.A., "Buddha and Buddhism."

Plymouth — 100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Proctor, "The Labor Movement from a Secular Standpoint."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, "Secular Sunday-schools"; 7, entertainment, consisting of songs, recitations, etc.

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, special pianoforte and other recitals, vocal music, etc.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. R. Hankey, "The English Reformation."

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. A. Lovell, a reading.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14 Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

Tolman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 49.] SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONCLUDED.]

GETTING hold of fish and meat tins, cleaning them up, and manufacturing them into toys, is hardly worth all the eloquence spent upon it by Booth's literary adviser. Nor is there much to be said in favor of an Inquiry Office for lost people. If it be true that 18,000 people are "lost" in London every year, it may be assumed that the majority of them do not want to be found, and it is the business of the police to look after the rest. Neither is there any necessity to subvention General Booth to obtain workmen's dwellings out of town instead of ugly, dreary model dwellings in the midst of dirt and smoke. Nothing can be done until provision is made by the railway companies for conveying the workmen to and fro for twopence a day, and when this step is taken, as it must be, private enterprise will construct the dwellings without Salvation charity. With regard to the scheme of the Poor Man's Bank, it would have been but fair to say that the idea is borrowed from infidel Paris, where for many years a benevolent Society has lent money to honest and capable poor men with gratifying results. The giving of legal advice gratis to the poor would be a good thing if it did not lead to unlimited litigation. Of course General Booth does not say, and perhaps he does not know, that Mr. Bradlaugh has been doing this for twenty-five years. Thousands of poor men, not necessarily Freethinkers, have had the benefit of his legal advice. No one in quest of such assistance has ever knocked at his door in vain. Finally with respect to "Whitechapel-at-Sea," a place which Booth projects for the reception of his poor people when they badly need a little sea-air and sunshine, it must be said that this kind of charity has been carried on for years, and that Booth is only borrowing a leaf from other people's book. In fact, the "General" collects all the various charitable ideas he can discover, he dishes them up into one grandiose scheme, and modestly asks for a million pounds to carry out "the blessed lot."

Singly and collectively these projects will no more affect "the unemployed" than scratching will cure leprosy. Every effect has its cause, which must be discovered before any permanent good can be done. Now the causes of want of employment (if men desire to find it) are political and economical. The business of the true reformer is to ascertain them and to remove or counteract them. Pottering with their effects, in the name of "charity," is like dipping out and purifying certain barrels of water from an overflowing dirty stream.

At the very best "charity" is artificial, and social remedies must be natural. Work cannot be *provided*. People have certain incomes and allow themselves a certain expenditure. If they give Booth, or any other charlatan, a hundred pounds to find work for "the unemployed," they have a hundred pounds less to spend in other ways, and those who previously supplied them with that amount of commodities or service will necessarily suffer. Shuffle one pack of cards how you will, the hands may differ, but the total number of cards will be fifty-two.

General Booth talks infinite nonsense about the "failure" of Trade Unions because they only include a million and a half of workmen. Rome was not built in a day, and even the Salvation Army, with God Almighty to help it, is not yet as extensive as this "failure." Nor does the world need Booth to tell it the benefits of Coöperation. He looks to it as "one of the chief elements of hope in the future." So do thousands of other people, but what has this to do with the Salvation Army?

The only part of Booth's scheme which is of the least value is the one he has borrowed from a Freethinker. The Farm Colony is suggested by the Ralahine experiment associated with the name of Mr. E. T. Craig. But that experiment was a co-operative one, while Booth's is to be despotic. He proposes to put the unemployed at work on a big farm, and afterwards to draft them to an Over-Sea Colony, where the reformed "thieves, harlots, drunkards, and sluggards" are to lay the foundations of a new province of the British Empire. Something, of course, might be done in this way, but it is doubtful if Booth will get hold of the right material to do it with, or if his Salvation methods will be successful. Much greater effects than "charity" could realise would be effected by a wise alteration of our Land Laws, which would lead to the application of fresh capital and labor to the cultivation of the soil.

In any case, a reasonable person would ask—What are the qualifications of a religious body like the Salvation Army for carrying out such a scheme? Admitting the cleverness of the "General," is he such a universal genius as to "boss" everything, from playing tambourines to making tin toys, from preaching "blood and fire" to the administration of a big farm, from walking backwards for Christ to a gigantic emigration agency? Is the ordinary Salvation Army captain equal to these things? Booth himself admits that "the new sphere on which we are entering will call for faculties other than those which have hitherto been cultivated" in the Salvation Army. True, but will those faculties answer when you call? Will men of the required stamp of ability and character enrol themselves under the despotism of General Booth? And if they did, how long would he be able to hold them together?

Lady Florence Dixie has pointed out, with her accustomed courage, that Booth's scheme would, if successful, increase the pressure of population in the worst way by multiplying the unfit. Booth does not believe in celibacy; on the contrary, he proposes to set up a Matrimonial Bureau and bring marriageable persons together; and as the marriages he is likely to promote will, of course, be chiefly among the classes he will try to reclaim, the prospect is anything but pleasant to those who understand the population question, and especially to those who understand the philosophy of Evolution. On the whole it seems

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pretty plain, as Huxley remarks, that if Booth does sixpennyworth of good he will do a full shilling's worth of harm.

Except for the Farm Colony, which we do not see how Booth is to manage successfully, we are able to perceive nothing in his scheme which really touches the heart of the social problem; while as a remedy for the "unemployed" it seems to us perfectly ridiculous. The whole project, at bottom, is a new, gigantic device for furthering the interests of the Salvation Army, and if the other Christian bodies do not see this they must be lamentably deficient in insight. It is all very well to say that no pressure will be put upon the men and women in the Refuges and the Colonies, for they will be subjected to the omnipresent influence of the Salvation Army which is to carry out the scheme to its minutest details.

Unless we are greatly mistaken, this truth is very apparent to General Booth. He insists on having absolute control of the funds and the arrangements, and although he may have no mercenary motives, he is doubtless seeking to gratify his ambition and love of power as well as to promote the "salvation of souls."

On the whole, however, we shall be glad to see the "General" get the money he is soliciting. The cash he collects will probably be diverted from other religious enterprises, and in this respect a Freethinker need not be in the least afflicted. His experiment will, in our opinion, do a real service to society. It will demonstrate before the very eyes of people who know next to nothing of history or economics the absolute futility of religious efforts to reform the world. When it is discovered that the poor rates, the statistics of drink, the number of the unemployed, the condition of the very poor, and the miseries and degradations of what is compendiously called the social evil, are not perceptibly affected by General Booth's efforts, the very dullest will see the deception of such enterprises, and turn their attention to the scientific aspects of the great social problem. This will be a great gain, and we think it will amply compensate for the waste of a hundred thousand pounds. G. W. FOOTE.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.*

In the Bampton Lecture for 1890, Archdeacon Watkins attempts to supplement the defence of Bishop Lightfoot against the author of *Supernatural Religion* by a comparison of modern criticism of the fourth gospel with what he considers the proof of its antiquity and genuineness. The case against the gospel ascribed to John needs no big book for its statement. A few facts will suffice. John is said to have been a fisherman of Galilee, the rudest portion of Palestine. He and Peter are expressly said (Acts iv. 13.) to have been "unlearned and ignorant men." Yet the gospel is written in the best Greek of the New Testament and abounds in the terminology of a master of the Alexandrian philosophy, while the Revelation of St. John the Divine is written in barbarous Greek. In the middle of the Second Century Bishop Papias, who is said to have been a hearer and disciple of John, set himself to discover the genuine traditions of the faith. Yet he makes no mention of John's gospel. Nor do any of the apostolical fathers, though every one of them ought to have mentioned it had they been acquainted with so important a document.

The Archdeacon seeks to make out that Justin Martyr, whose period of literary activity he places between A.D. 145-147, although it might plausibly be placed between 147-152, included the Fourth Gospel in the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, to which he refers, though he mentions none of our gospels by name, and that his doctrine of the Logos is a consequence of Johannine Doctrine. But Philo and the Alexandrian teachers had taught the doctrine of the Logos in the first century. The fact that Justin did teach a different form of the Logos doctrine, yet never once refers to John, is strong evidence he did not know it. As Dr. Davidson says:

"Had the Fourth Gospel existed, and been regarded as the work of an apostle by Justin, it would have been a welcome production. He would have used in support of his views respecting the Logos, a document which expresses these views distinctly and decidedly."—*Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii, p. 343.

The remarkable miracles of the Fourth Gospel, including turning water into wine for guests well drunk, opening the eyes of one born blind by spitting on them, and raising Lazarus after he was stinking, are unmentioned by Justin, though he tells us Jesus was born in a cave, that a fire appeared in Jordan at his baptism, that he was called a magician, and other particulars not found in our gospels.

Archdeacon Watkins makes much of the alleged testimony of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, which he contends was compiled in the interim between Justin and Irenæus, and of which long-lost work an alleged Arabic version has recently been opportunely discovered. Like Dr. Lightfoot, the Archdeacon seems unaware that the first thing necessary is to authenticate this document and prove its identity with the lost work of Tatian, first referred to by Eusebius. The chances are immensely greater that the Arabic documents represent some other of the many later harmonies which have been made. Even if genuine it does not mention John by name, and would only render certain the existence of four gospels towards the close of the second century, a position I do not dispute, agreeing with Dr. Davidson that in the circumstances of the time but a short while was necessary to account for the ready reception by certain sections of the Church of the Gospel ascribed to John.

The first testimony ascribing the work to John is from Theophilus of Antioch, who wrote after the death of Marcus Antoninus, A.D. 180. Then comes Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, the first to mention the four gospels, and the father who asserts, on the authority of all the elders of Asia, that Jesus lived to be fifty years of age. Yet Archdeacon Watkins would have us believe that Irenæus could not have been deceived or deceiving in ascribing this gospel to John. Irenæus has been accused by Mr. George Reber, author of *The Christ of Paul*, of writing the Fourth Gospel himself. Of this the evidence is insufficient, but it is certain that anything coming on his authority demands the strictest investigation.

Few readers can enter into these points, which Archdeacon Watkins discreetly dwells upon, while but barely discussing the internal evidence, the relations of the Fourth Gospel to the other three, to the Apocalypse and to the alleged epistles of John, which all ordinary readers can understand. It is to these points I shall now refer, for they are decisive against the authorship of the Galilean fisherman.

In the first place the gospel is written in Greek, which Josephus tells us was little known to his countrymen. Archdeacon Watkins seems to think our gospel a translation into Greek of the Aramaic memories of John, though it bears every appearance of being an original composition. If Jesus and his apostles spoke Aramaic, why have we not their original utterances instead of Greek translations? What should we think of French stories of miraculous events said to have happened in England, the evidence of which was only found written in French,

* *Modern Criticism Considered in its Relation to the Fourth Gospel*, being the Bampton Lecture for 1890. By Henry William Watkins, M.A., D.D., Archdeacon and Canon of Durham, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Durham, etc. London: John Murray.

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while the events were repudiated by the English people?

The internal evidence is sufficient to show it was not written by any Palestinian Jew. Dr. Martineau says:—

"No companion of Jesus could have placed the scene of the Baptist's testimony in Bethany beyond Jordan*—a place unknown to geography; or have invested Annas as well as Caiaphas with the prerogatives of high priest;† or have represented that office as annual;‡ or have so forgotten Elijah and Nahum as to make the Pharisees assert that 'out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.'§ No Israelite could, like the Evangelist, place himself superciliously outside his compatriots, speak of their most sacred anniversaries as 'feasts *of the* Jews,' and reckon the Jews among the common *ethne* of the world; still less display towards them an ever pitiless and scornful spirit, and treat them as children of the Devil, deaf to every divine voice, and doomed to die in their sins."‖

A Jew could never have called the commandment to love one another "a new commandment" (John xiii. 34). In Matthew xix. 19, Jesus cites the old commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18).

The writer of *The Revelation of John the Divine*, whoever he was, was a fanatical Jew, who looked only for the salvation of the twelve tribes, and abhorred those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." To suppose the same writer was the author of the Fourth Gospel is to suppose as great a miracle as any ascribed to Jesus.

(To be concluded.)

J. M. Wheeler.

* John i., 28 (the true reading is Bethany not Bethabara).
† John xviii., 19-24.
‡ John ii., 49, 51; xviii., 13.
§ John vii., 52. See 1 Kings xvii., 1; Nahum i., 1.
‖ Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 212; 1890

A HELPLESS GOD.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the *Twentieth Century*).

In the discussion that has been going on ever since human beings began to think accurately, as to whether there is a God or not, I claim that all persons sufficiently intelligent to have opinions worth considering have arrived at certain definite conclusions, namely these: If there is a God there is only one, and if he has any particular name nobody knows what it is.

The Persians called God Ormuzd, the Greeks called him Jove, the Romans Jupiter, and each of the ancient peoples had some particular name for him. All intelligent persons in Christian nations will admit that no God by the name of Ormuzd, Jove, Jupiter, or what not, exists; that no God who said and did the things ascribed to Ormuzd, Jove, Jupiter, or was the kind of person who answered to either of these names, ever did exist. We are all ready to admit that the gods of the ancient peoples were purely imaginary beings.

It is a satisfaction to have arrived so far on the journey of rational thought. So far as we are concerned, the heavens have been swept clean of several thousand small gods, and quite a family of larger ones, who were once believed to inhabit them.

There are still, however, two large gods, with whose names we are familiar: the Mahommedan god Allah, and the Judeo-Christian god, Jehovah. We may safely say, so far as we are concerned, that Allah does not exist. Many of our people believe in God, but none of them believe that his name is Allah. Only one god, therefore, with a proper name, is believed by anybody with whom we have to do, to exist. I mean Jehovah. But Jehovah is rapidly vanishing into the clouds of oblivion that have so completely enveloped the other national deities, some of whom were his inferiors and some of whom were his betters. You may attend many Christian churches for months, or even years, and never hear any one pray to Jehovah. You are not asked now to believe in Jehovah. You may go to almost any Christian church and say: "I wish to join this church, but I do not believe that God's name is Jehovah," and if you will declare that you believe in God—just God, without any name—the Church will take you in and be glad to get you, if you are not very poor.

I think I am safe in saying that, even among the most intelligent Christians, Jehovah has had his day. And this brings me back to my proposition, that in the discussion of the question concerning the existence of God, all persons whose opinions are worth considering agree that if there is a God he has no particular name; no first name, no last name; he is not Jehovah God nor God Jehovah; he is simply God.

This is a significant point at which to have arrived; for the reason that God is not a proper name. It is a common name, a generic name, which, according to the usages of grammar, should not be capitalised. It is something, in the interests of truth, for which to be thankful, that we have arrived at that stage in our thinking at which when we address an intelligent person, and say: "Do you believe in God?" and he answers, "Yes," we may ask: "Which god?" and he will say: "No particular god, but just God."

Having got so far we are likely to get farther.

Indeed, we are farther, for the sex element has been almost entirely eliminated from the idea of God. If you ask a believer whether God is of the masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, whether God is a he, she, or it, he will tell you that he does not know, and that it does not matter; that God is just God, and that is the beginning and end of the subject.

We are even farther than that, for if you ask an intelligent believer where God is, or of what substance he is composed, or what are the limits of his power, as, for example, whether he can create something out of nothing, or add together five and five so as to make eleven, or square a circle, he will tell you that he knows nothing about where God is, or what he is, or what he can do.

I am now speaking of what intelligent persons will tell you. There are persons who, if a priest should say so, would believe that in central Africa there are mountains of sugar and rivers of rum; but the opinions of such persons are worth nothing. They are capable of believing that God has a material body. It is of no consequence what they believe or say. There are, however, intelligent persons who believe in God, but who will admit that he is absolutely indefinable; they believe in God without being able to formulate one single conception about him. They have a word of three letters, G-o-d, a word that should not be capitalised, and that is all they have. Reason has scoured the heavens, routed all the gods, stripped them of their proper names, their bodies, and their attributes, reduced their numbers to one, and left nothing of that one but a word of three letters, a word that should be spelled with a small "g."

Now, I contend that that word g-o-d should be dropped from the English language, on the ground that for intelligent persons it has no meaning whatever, and that the ideas which were once involved in it, and still attach to it in the minds of ignorant or unthinking persons, are false, and hence, injurious to the best interests of the human race.

I am aware that Herbert Spencer says there is an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," though, for the life of me, I cannot understand how he knows anything about the infinite or the eternal, or how he knows there is only one energy and not two, or why he should capita-

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lise the words he uses. I am aware that Francis E. Abbot says "the universe is a Person," with a capital P, though for the life of me, I cannot understand how countless millions of chunks of dirt and rocks, and particles of gas and water, can be a Person. I am aware that it is getting to be the fashion to deify nature, and what are called the forces and laws of nature. But I insist that an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," or the universe, or what we call nature, is not God, and that it is an arbitrary misuse of the word God, and a pandering to superstition to apply it to any of these things.

If there is an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," let us call it that; if "the universe is a Person," let us say so; if we mean nature, or force, or law, let us use these terms, and let us stop saying God.

If the word God means anything it means a being who has some particular relation to me; who can hear and answer my prayers; who can do something for me that I or no one else can do. If there is no such being, there is no God; if there is no being who can participate in the affairs of this world, so as to bring his will to pass in a manner other than according to the undeviating action of what we call natural law, there is no God, for a being who is wholly limited by natural law is not God; such a being is subject to a power or procedure greater than himself, the very idea of which ungods him.

After years of careful, and what I know to have been honest, thought, I do not hesitate to say that whatever else there may be in this universe there is no God, unless he is utterly careless of what happens or utterly unable to prevent the most cruel things from occurring.

If you wish to believe that God made this earth and all that pertains to it, and set it all in motion, and then washed his hands and forgot all about it and us; if you wish to believe that God is unjust and cruel; if you can believe that he is weak, weaker than the forces of nature, weaker than men, you can find multitudes of facts to support your beliefs; but if you hold that God is good, and all powerful, I solemnly assert that, in the face of facts, you not only cannot prove it, but that the balance of facts is very strongly against your position. The single stupendous fact that every person, male or female, white, black, red or yellow, single or married, rich or poor, forty or more years of age, and with a mind trained to think, finds it difficult to decide whether life is worth living or not, is sufficient proof that there is no wise, good, powerful God. A God who would create a race of beings endowed with natures and surrounded with conditions which make misery inevitable and happiness impossible is a failure. The fact that all races of men have been obliged to hope for a future heaven to enable them to endure their present miseries is a sufficient proof that if there is a God he is wicked or weak.

The fact that men have been logically forced to postulate a devil to account for phenomena of which an honorable God would be ashamed, proves that there is no God, unless he is bad. The invention of a devil does not help matters, for no sensible or good God would create a devil, or permit one to exist; and if there is a devil, the conclusion is inevitable that he is smarter and more powerful than God; for up to the present time he has had things pretty much his own way. If there is a devil, God is wicked to have created him and given him so much liberty, and having created him, he is too weak to make him behave himself.

But no intelligent person believes in the existence of a devil, and if there is no devil the responsibility for the evils and miseries of life is thrown back on God, and you are obliged to conclude, as before, that God is iniquitous or impotent.

(To be concluded.)

Professor Rhys Davids, an acknowledged authority, says Buddhism "ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul."

PARNELL AND KING DAVID.

At the present time when nearly every Christian in Britain is on the trail of Parnell sleuth-like, and seeking to compass his political death, may it not be well if Freethinkers take this opportunity to remind their Christian friends that in acting thus they are guilty of gross inconsistency? Parnell is to be hounded out of public life because he has been guilty of adultery with the wife of his friend, and this offence, we are told by these moralists, is unpardonable. Now it seems to me, that while Secularists are quite free to hiss and sneer at the Irish leader if they are so disposed, Christians have not the slightest shadow of a justification for their present baying. All Christians—Catholics and Protestants alike—hold up King David as a model man; and yet alongside of the "man after God's own heart" Parnell is pure as an angel of light. Parnell sinned with a woman who was as ready and as weak as he, but the same cannot be said for the King of Israel, as Bathsheba was powerless to oppose the despotic king, however strongly she may have desired to do so. Captain O'Shea is still alive and hearty, but Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, was foully murdered by the Jewish king. Parnell has always been a patriot, and his pole-star has been the welfare of Ireland; but David offered to fight with the Philistines against his own people Israel. And, moreover, broken promises, thefts, lying, and subterfuge were such prominent characteristics in the life of the Bible saint that he carries the palm for villany against all comers. Secularists should not lose sight of these things just now, but should press them home.

Within certain limits, and with more than one addition, we may apply to the Christian's model the words applied by Byron to George III. :—

From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.
He even warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found him their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as this one is
With national and individual woes. R. M. R.

ACID DROPS.

The inauguration of University Hall took place on Saturday, November 29. Mrs. Humphry Ward, the honorary secretary of the enterprise, was present on the platform. According to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, the president, the whole scheme originated with that lady, whose novel, *Robert Elsmere*, "did what a host of theological and other books had never done." Mr. Brooke said it had "reached the hearts of a vast number of persons whose misgivings upon matters of vital import had plunged them into miserable doubts because they were unable to solve the problems by which they were perplexed." Mr. Brooke, apparently, did not say how Mrs. Ward's novel had solved these problems. For our part we did not find any solution in her pages. She has broken away from orthodox Christianity, but her own religion is as dogmatic, and irreconcilable with fact, as that she has abandoned, nor is it any the more satisfying to the intellect for its dash of sentimentalism.

Mr. Brooke explained that the religion of University Hall would be "the religion of Jesus," but "without the supernatural and miraculous garments which men have manufactured." This is pretty and plausible, perhaps, but at bottom it is mere intellectual trifling. Nothing is idler than to suppose that the world will go on adoring Jesus *as a man*. Strip away his divinity, discard the miracles, and the residuum will never support a popular cultus. University Hall will only be a half-way house to perfect Freethought, but as such we give it a cordial welcome.

The screaming of clericals like Price Hughes and Dr. Parker are calculated to make a good many disgusted with "virtue." They could not have screamed worse if Mr. Parnell were the vilest of the vile. Their judgment displays the usual imbecility of religionists. It does not occur to them that a man is to be judged morally by his whole career,

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and not by a single act offensive to their canons of conduct and taste. These screaming pietists have created the worst difficulty of the situation. They have, in our opinion, roused all the antagonism of a proud nature. Mr. Parnell seems to say to them and their like—"Well, since you shriek and rail so; since you hound me down as though I were worse than Judas; since you show no consideration for all my public service to Ireland; since you fling stones enough to bury me—have at you! I can fight as well as you. You show no mercy and I will give no quarter."

Wicked and foolish as Mr. Parnell may have been in his relations with Mrs. O'Shea, what man, or what woman, is in a position to pronounce an absolute judgment? So much depends on circumstances that outsiders cannot know, and the very absence of any defence in court may have been dictated by a chivalrous regard for Mrs. O'Shea. *May be*, we say, and no more. We do not *know*, but we have a right to surmise, and who is not aware that there are generally two sides of such a case if they could only be seen? Still, Mr. Parnell would probably have done well to retire for the present from the leadership of the Irish party. But the screaming pietists would not give him a minute's grace to retire with dignity, although they knew the invincible pride of his nature. "Go, wretch, go!" they shrieked, and it was only natural for the proud man to turn and defy them.

Well does the *Speaker* say, in the only wise article we have seen on this painful subject, that the sentence on Mr. Parnell has not been tempered by the least show of mercy. Yet he deserved it. For see what he has done for his cause, whether it be right or wrong. "He found our people," says Archbishop Walsh, "politically dead. He put life and hope into them. He took them out of the hands of unsafe guides. He brought back to them their lost trust in peaceful, lawful, constitutional methods. He built up for them a Parliamentary party that could at any critical moment be counted upon to act as one man. He has kept that party together for years with its unity unbroken." That is what Mr. Parnell has done, and all this counts for nothing with the screaming pietists.

Dr. Parker, indeed, goes to a well-nigh incredible length. Preaching in his gospel-shop on Sunday morning, he declared that "As for Home Rule, as we have known it, it is dead and gone." Surely any lunatic let loose from Bedlam might talk more sensibly. One Irishman commits adultery (of course no Englishman does), and the whole Irish nation is to lose what a month ago Dr. Parker maintained to be its rights! Is it not better to be a dog and bay the moon than such a preacher?

Of course the *Freethinker* is not a political journal. Its editorial policy is to keep aloof from party strife, and we only speak out now and then when serious interests and great principles deeper than party division are imperilled by mere passion, cant, hypocrisy, and pious clamor. Whatever side they take in politics, it is the duty of Freethinkers to *think* and keep their heads cool.

We have no concern with Mr. Parnell's manifesto, or Mr Gladstone's and Mr. Morley's letters. These things are purely political. Our real point is that the screaming of certain Christian preachers has grievously aggravated this crisis. It was a time for temperate if firm speech; and nothing but mischief could be wrought by popular preachers calling the Irish "an obscene race" because they did not discard their leader in five minutes.

A new Church of God, about the five hundredth, has started up in America. One of its distinguishing rites is that the brethren—and, we suppose, sistren—wash each others' feet. This observance was strictly enjoined by J. C. on his disciples (John xiii., 14), but it is one which they quietly discard. Cleanliness comes before godliness, and we hope the new Church will find salvation with soap as well as water.

Wemyss Reid's *Life of Lord Houghton*, and Mr. Gladstone's article on that worthy, recalls some anecdotes of Carlyle and Houghton. The best known is Carlyle's saying, that if Christ came to earth again Milnes (Lord Houghton) would invite him to breakfast, and the clubs would all be talking of the good things Christ had said, This, or something like it, is earlier than Carlyle, but the following is more original. Milnes was disappointed that he was offered no post in Peel's ministry. "No, no," said Carlyle; "Peel knows what he is about; there is only one post fit for you, and that is the office of perpetual president of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society."

The Rev. Ralph Doyle, of St. John's, Wynberg, will not permit the following lines to appear on the tombstone of a soldier who was killed on the railway:

Of death he had no warning.
On no sick bed laid he;
But, Lord, we have the feeling
That he is now with thee.

Does he find some recondite blasphemy in the lines, or is the poor rhyme a desecration?

Spurgeon, who is at Mentone, and taking carriage exercise every day, has special prayers offered for him at the Tabernacle. The prayers, the warm climate, sea air, and carriage exercise, should have some effect, but he complains that he is "brought very low," and cannot write.

Mr. Augustus Harris offers to subscribe to General Booth's fund, and to give him the free use of Drury Lane Theatre, if he will let the fund be "vested in trustees for the benefit of the poor." Booth's reply is not yet published. We guess it will be "D'ye see any green?"

It is amusing to note the multitude of ministers in all directions who are trying to make a little capital and cash out of Booth's scheme. It is so well advertised that, despite the onslaught of Huxley and the Charity Organisation Society, Booth has nearly got his hundred thousand pounds, and will have to make a start while appealing for the other odd nine hundred thousand.

We have received a report of the London Congregational Union's "Outcast London Fund." This agency seems to be doing in its way, and according to its means, the very work which Booth promises to do with that £100,000. Grand Old Showman! He writes as though nothing, or next to nothing, were being done by other bodies.

James Joseph Barrett's poems in *brochure* form are sent to us by his publisher, 52 King Henry's Walk, London, with a circular stating that the said J. J. B. is "the grandest poet, the real poet laureate." Here is a sample:

The world is filled with darkness,
And bad Satan hath full sway,
But we Christians wait for Jesus
And the dawning of Christ's day.

Tennyson slinks away before Barrett.

Is is true that sky-pilots are allowed to enter the new General Post Office in London and harangue the men during their dinner hour, thus stealing a portion of their hard-earned rest, besides compelling them to stand shivering in the cold? We hope we are misinformed, for such antics on the part of the higher officials would be a gross outrage on English liberty.

The Government have carried the second reading of the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill on most illogical ground, Mr. Raikes arguing that tithes cannot be considered as national property. Why, then, should the nation make special laws for their recovery?

The *Echo* of last Tuesday, in its Portrait Gallery, gives a column to Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the veteran advocate of women's rights in America, without giving any hint that Mrs. Stanton is an advanced Freethinker, regarding the Church as the greatest obstacle to woman's elevation.

According to a writer on London Beggars in Tuesday's double *Star*, professional beggars exhibit a survival of fetish worship in carrying a piece of coal for luck. Good church-goers exhibit a similar survival in the mysterious efficacy they attribute to the Sacrament, and the Bible is no better than a fetish to the majority of believers.

Roulette tables have been set up in Tangiers by an Anglo-American company. The Sultan of Morocco will go shares in the gambling profits, but with commendable zeal for

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female propriety he wanted to exclude all ladies. A compromise, however, has been effected, in virtue of which Christian ladies are to be admitted to the gambling hell, while Muslim ladies are excluded.

The Rev. Edward Gough's *The Bible True from the Beginning*, a ponderous work in four sixteen-shilling volumes, is said by the *Scots Observer* to be "impregnated with a deep evangelical spirit." As a matter of fact Mr. Gough contends that Jesus never lived on earth at all, and that the Gospels are not in any sense historical. If this is "evangelical" that good old word has undergone a serious change of meaning.

Ah distinctly I remember,
It was in the bleak December
That in church a portly member
Sat where none had sat before;
And while he had there been seated
The new varnish had got heated,
For the work had been completed
Only two or three days before;
And the ladies near him seated
Say the portly member swore.
May he do it "Nevermore."

What a fine old crusted humbug is Christianity! When the Temperance movement began in England the clergy were nearly all against it. They pointed out, with great truth, that the Bible was anything but a teetotaller's handbook. But now that the Temperance movement is powerful the clergy, or at least a lot of them, join it and promote it with their usual intemperance. What are the *causes* of drinking? is a question they have no sense or patience to investigate. All they see, in their purblind fashion, is this, that if there were no drink nobody could drink it. So they cry out for Prohibition, and that prince of shriekers, Hugh Price Hughes, shrieks over the whole blessed chorus. If he gave himself time to *think*, he would discover two things; first, that Teetotalism is no part of Christianity, though it *is* of Mohammedanism; second, that wherever Prohibition obtains drink can be got in any quantities by persons who will have it.

The *Methodist Times* pretends that the Bible is on the side of total abstinence. Price Hughes does not argue the matter—he asserts; and he has face enough to assert anything. Mr. Wheeler's tract, *The Bible and Teetotalism*, should be extensively circulated to correct this sinister fraud of the Gospel Temperancers.

The Jews are likely to be expelled from the Caucasus, because it is said they carry on active proselytism among the Soubotnikis, a sect of Christians who keep the seventh day, and who are probably descendants of Jews converted by force. In Russia for a Jew to become a Christian is his only chance of secular salvation. To attempt to turn a Christian into a Jew is a frightful crime.

Buffalo Bill has gone to Sitting Bull's camp at the instance of the U.S. Government, to investigate the Messiah craze among the Indians. If Government would send someone to investigate the Messiah craze in England, almost as bad superstition and fanaticism would be found as among the Sioux.

Consider, for instance, the credence given to the charlatans who predict that the world will shortly come to an end, and who, like Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald* and author of *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*, shift the date a little further off as the predicted time approaches.

Almost as absurd as the fanatics who fancy the world is soon coming to an end are those who worry themselves because it is calculated that the heat and light of our sun may not be maintained much more than twenty million years, or because there is one in 280 million chances that we may collide with a large comet. When these people set up their frightful jeremiads we feel inclined to ask if they refuse to eat their dinners because they know they have got to die.

The poor old Pope spends his leisure concocting encyclicals. He has already issued more than any three of his predecessors. His latest utterance is to be on the social question. No doubt he will try to pat democracy on the back in such a way as not to offend his monarchical supporters.

The Bishop of Lincoln will, it seems, submit to the Archbishop's judgment. But the High Church *Guardian* lays it down that it affects nobody but Bishop King, which is as much as to say that the clergy can disregard the law until called upon individually to obey it. A curious doctrine for a law and order paper.

The Nonconformist press generally regard the judgment as impelling the Anglican Church a day's march nearer Rome.

A Baptist missionary has put forth a pamphlet, *Shall Islam Rule in Africa?* He admits that practically it does rule in the northern part of that continent, where it has seventy-five million votaries, while the converted Christians are comparatively few.

The Rev. James Butler, of the Methodist Church at Dunlop, Tennessee, is in jail. He sloped with a parishioner's wife and stole his horses. In Tennessee they might condone an elopement, but they stand no nonsense when horses are concerned.

A statue to Horace Greely has been unveiled before the Tribune office. The ceremonies were begun with a prayer by Bishop Potter. It's a wonder, if spirits can make their presence manifest, that Horace did not hit the bishop a whack alongside his head. Think of the incongruity of praying for the memory of the first president of the Manhittan Liberal Club.—*Truthseeker*.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward has been lecturing at the Portman Rooms on the new Elsmerian University Hall, which is to be devoted to religious teaching and reverential criticism—that is, we suppose, criticism which only concerns itself with the outworks of religion.

A debate on the question whether the Church of England teaches auricular confession has taken place at Brighton Dome between the Rev. C. H. Wainwright, Evangelical, and the Rev. H. N. Thompson, Ritualist. The former showed that confession was a cover for immorality, and the latter that it was authorised by the Prayer-book.

George Chainey, it appears, still only wants money enough, and he will go to Palestine and unfold the true interpretation of the scriptures. Just to think, lack of incidental travelling expenses may deprive a perishing world of precious truth. We sincerely wish he may raise the cash and go to Jericho.

A fierce gale off the Norwegian coast has destroyed a large fishing fleet and several hundreds of lives. Many of the survivors are suffering from exposure and starvation, for He doeth all things well.

The mysterious stone-throwing attributed to a ghost in Rochester Row is said to have ceased since a neighbor has been summoned.

The whole talk of the poor insane woman who was accused of infanticide at Wood Green was of the Lord. Doubtless her mind had been unhinged by religious teaching.

The clergyman who said: "How wonderful is the comforting and sustaining power of the Word of God!" doubtless refers to that part of it which says: "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Prov. xxxi., 7).—*Boston Investigator*.

Last Sunday Dr. Talmage delivered in the Brooklyn Academy of Music the first of his series of lectures on his recent trip to the Holy Land. The partition wall between the good Doctor's memory and his imagination is said to be in a state of very bad repair, and he ought to attach an affidavit of accuracy to each of these lectures.—*Sunday Gazetteer*.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 7, The Alhambra, Station Street, Portsmouth; at 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "A World Without God."

Dec. 14 Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

DEIST.—According to a pamphlet published by James Watson in 1847, the bones of Thomas Paine were then in the possession of a Mr. Ilwyn. We do not know what became of them afterwards. Perhaps Mr. Conway may trace the matter out.

H. S. GUBBINS.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder.

J. CROUCH.—Thanks for your interesting letter. After all the honest old name of Atheist is best.

B. HARRIS.—Will consider it when it arrives.

ISCA.—We don't know how many apples Adam and Eve ate off that tree. Probably twopence would have paid for the lot.

J. NEATE.—It is a matter for the East-End Freethinkers. They should get someone to oppose.

T. PHILLIPS.—Mr. Foote shares your hope that his visit in February will do good in the Spennymoor district. The matter of handbills shall be seen to.

W. FRANCIS.—It is hardly worth while to spend any more time on the tract you enclose. Nine out of every ten Freethinkers are converted Christians.

No. 12.—We share your opinion. The *Freethinker* would need no pushing if newsagents would only do it justice.

R. W. WELLINGS.—The poem is too well known.

A. M. WACKERBARTH.—Your question is practically answered in the reply to Mrs. Besant.

A. FRENCH.—You are correctly informed. The debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. G. B. Shaw will take place at the Hall of Science, London, in January.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Shall appear.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following: E. P. (Leicester), 2s.; W. Clarkson, 5s.; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s.; A Friend, £1; F. Smallman, £1; Louisa Sansom, 2s. 6d.; Miss and Mr. Belford, 5s.

W. JAMES.—Full of copy at present, but will try to find room.

C. TURNER.—Greg's *Creed of Christendom* is published by Trubner in two volumes at 12s.

C. E. SMITH.—Received with thanks.

TOLEMAN-GARNER thanks the Berlin Freethinker who sent a parcel of literature for distribution.

A. B. MOSS.—Article received. Too late for this week at least.

H. ROWDEN.—(1) Certificates, for framing, are issued to all new members of the N. S. S. (2) Such a prosecution would fail. (3) There is no special word for it in Latin.

JOSEPH BROWN.—The dates are booked for the N.E Secular Federation. Glad to hear the Spennymoor, Sunnyside, and Sunderland Branches have joined you. We know nothing as to Mrs. Besant's lecturing in your city in March for the Sunday Lecture Society. Why not inquire of the local secretary?

A. WRIGHT, who inquired last week for a newsagent's address near London Bridge, is informed that this journal can be obtained at Noble's, 91 Bermondsey Street, S.E., or at Davis's, New London Street, Mark Lane.

A. FLINDLE.—We have no connection with the firm you mention.

J. GORDON.—Mr. Bradlaugh's criticism on the Almanack was based on a misapprehension. See the reply to Mrs. Besant's letter in another column.

— JACKSON.—There is a Turnagain Lane near Farringdon Station.

J. WITTERING.—Glad to hear the sale of the *Freethinker* has increased in Grimsby since Mr. Foote's late visit. Your correspondence in the *News* must be of service to our cause.

H. SMITH.—No. It must have miscarried.

G. DOEG (Liverpool).—We hope the Hall Company will be pushed forward vigorously. Now is the time or never. Every Freethinker in your city should see what he can do.

G. FRASER.—We do not think of reprinting our Booth articles. Glad to hear you appreciate them. Mr. Foote will see about a date for Reading about the end of January.

R. J. MURRAY.—We are pleased to hear your account of Mr. J. R. Charlesworth, who is still a member of the Nottingham Branch. His speech at the Congress of the American Secular Union ought to do good. As at present led that Union is of little value to Freethought.

THE paragraphs in "Acid Drops" on the Parnell case are written exclusively by Mr. Foote.

W. R. SMYTH.—In our next.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntaggs-Blatt — Freidenker — Truthseeker — Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought — Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Portsmouth Evening News—Kidderminster Shuttle—Australian Trading World—Nottingham Evening News—Der Lichtfreund — Wynberg Times — Blackpool Times—Glasgow Herald—Gravesend Reporter—Rochdale Observer.

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

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

MRS. BESANT has addressed the following letter to the President of the National Secular Society:

DEAR SIR,—I am told that my name appears in a list of the N. S. S. lecturers in the Almanack. Will you kindly remove it, as you can have no right to print in such a list the name of a woman not a member of the Society.—Sincerely,

ANNIE BESANT.

Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, as editors of the N. S. S. Almanack, reply as follows. (1) The Almanack is printed and nothing can now be removed from its pages. (2) There is nothing to remove. Mrs. Besant's name is neither in the Calendar nor in the list of the N. S. S. lecturers (p. 41). It is included in a general list of Freethought Lecturers (p. 53), several of whom are not members of the N. S. S. Of course if Mrs. Besant is no longer a Freethought lecturer her name shall be excluded from this list in the next edition of the Almanack.

SUGAR PLUMS.

For the first time for many years Mr. Foote delivered two Sunday lectures at Leicester last week. The audiences were very enthusiastic as well as large. Many persons were turned away from the doors in the evening. Tea was provided at the Secular Hall for a good number of country friends. One Secularist and his wife walked in over the snowy roads all the way from Loughborough. All the stock of the *Freethinker* was sold out at the bookstall (over 100 copies), and this will doubtless lead to an increased circulation of the paper in Leicester.

It is gratifying to hear that the Guarantee Fund of £500 (£100 a year for the next five years), is very nearly raised by the Leicester Secular Society. Mr. Birch sent £5 from Florence and Mr. Wallace £1 from Glasgow. Only about £60 is still required and no doubt it will soon be forthcoming. Intending subscribers should communicate promptly with the honorary secretary, Mr. Sydney Gimson, Secular Hall, Humberston Gate, Leicester.

The London Freethinkers' Ball was a great success. It was at once numerous and select. With the exception of a dozen or two, the whole of the company, numbering nearly three hundred, were members of the Secular party. Dancing went on merrily in the large hall, the principal M.C. being Mr. Fowler; while in the minor hall upstairs an excellent concert was given under the superintendence of Miss Vance and Mr. Guest. During the evening Mr. Foote delivered a brief speech. Everyone present appeared to be delighted, and this social gathering will certainly be followed by many others of a similar character. One result will be a pretty good balance for the Benevolent Fund.

The next Freethought reunion in the metropolis will be the annual dinner of the London Secular Federation. This festive gathering will take place as before at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. The date fixed is Monday, January 5, 1891. Mr. Foote will preside. A full list of

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toasts and speakers will be duly announced. The tickets are half-a-crown. No doubt the 1891 dinner will be even more numerously attended than its two predecessors.

On Thursday evening, November 27, Mr. Foote concluded the London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures in the hall of the Peckham Radical Club. Mr. A. B. Moss presided and made a felicitous little introductory speech. There was a much improved attendance, and the lecture on "Heaven and Hell" was heartily applauded. Happily, also, there was a much improved collection. The only drawback was the severe weather. The hall was so cold that the audience, ay, and even the lecturer, would have welcomed a few whiffs from Hades.

The weighty letter of Professor Huxley against Booth's scheme in the *Times* of Dec. 1, is followed by one from Mr. Loch, the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, who convicts Booth of gross exaggeration and garbling of facts.

Mr. Symes, in the *Liberator*, points out that whatever good the Salvation Army is doing is *secular* good, and asks: "On the other side, is the Army doing good? Is it not drawing off from Secular employments an army of men and women who might be usefully engaged? Is it not diverting into improper channels an enormous sum of money, and thus adding to the number of idlers the industrious have to support? These are serious questions. And is it doing any sort of good by crowding our footpaths with comfortably dressed young women, who boldly and impudently push the sale of that unspeakable paper the *War Cry*, and expose themselves to the coarse jests of rude young men? Does this improve the modesty of the young women so engaged? And last of all, is it calculated to improve the morals of the people for Booth and Co. to carry on a giant trading concern, in fact, a giant swindle, under pretence of serving a Christ, who commanded them to renounce the world, to have neither purse nor wallet, to take no thought for the morrow? Surely, the hypocrisy of the proceeding cannot conduce to the morality of anyone concerned."

Our title "The Booth Boom," is placed at the head of some correspondence in the Leeds *Daily News*. We are glad to see that the question is being discussed.

Next Wednesday evening (Dec. 10) Mr. Bradlaugh lectures at the London Hall of Science on behalf of the Forder Testimonial Fund. Mr. Foote will take the chair and a large audience is expected.

The N. S. S. Almanack is still selling well. A larger edition has been printed than last year's, yet we hope every copy will be cleared out before January. Members of the N. S. S. should recollect that the publication is now issued by the Society at its own risk, and that all profit will accrue to the General Fund.

A meeting will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7, at Camden Hall, Liverpool (after the evening lecture) of the members of the New Hall Company, to appoint directors, secretary, etc. The present acting secretary's address is, H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Liverpool.

In the December *Church Reformer* Mr. Stewart D. Headlam gives in full his address to his School Board constituents. He says, "Experience on the Board has confirmed me in the opinion which I had formed before, that the definite teaching of the principles of religion ought not to be part of the duty imposed on the teachers in our common schools."

The *Kidderminster Shuttle* gives insertion to a well-written letter on "Professor Huxley and the Pentateuch," from "Agnostic" of Stourport. "Agnostic" says: "Judaism is now disposed of, and Christianity, being built upon it, must necessarily follow."

In the *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee, C. Derossi continues his translations from the *Ideen* of the Dutch Freethinker, Douwes Dekker "Multatuli."

The attempted suppression of Freethought in the country of Göethe, Humboldt and Schopenhauer still continues. Herr Vogtherr, of Berlin, has been brought before the Potsdam magistrate for blasphemy, and cases are still pending against Drs. Voelkel, Specht, and Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi, the first-named having had repeated warnings. This petty persecution will only result in increased spread of Freethought.

Mr. Haskett Smith gives, in *Blackwood* for December, an account of "The Druses in the Holy Land." This interesting sect, he declares, has no affinities with either Mohammedanism or Christianity. They believe in ten incarnations neither of which were Jesus or Mohammed.

The second series of lectures given by the Sunday Lecture Society begins on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 7, in the St. George's Hall, Langham Place, at 4 p.m., when Sir James Crichton Browne, M.D., F.R.S., will lecture on "Brain Stress." Lectures will subsequently be given by Mr. Whitworth Wallis, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Eric S. Bruce, Dr. Henry Hoole, Sir R. S. Ball, and Prof. G. S. Boulger.

The Canterbury Freethought Association, Christchurch, New Zealand, is going to send Mr. Foote a frozen lamb for his "Christmas dinner" as a "slight token of regard." Mr. Foote is very much obliged. He cannot promise to eat a whole lamb at one sitting, but he will do his best. He would be still more obliged if the New Zealand Freethinkers could send him *the* Lamb properly frozen, and he would promise it should never be *un*frozen.

Our antipodean friends are also going to send a lamb to Mr. Bradlaugh, who still eats meat, and to Mrs. Besant, who is a vegetarian.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Nov. 26, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, Bater, Bentley, Heaford, Ivatts, Killick, Larkin, Moss, Roger, Reynolds, Smith, Samson, Truelove, Warren, and Forder, secretary. The minutes having been read, and the finance report received and adopted, the secretary presented the Organisation Committee's report which included, among other matters, permission to form branches at Tow Law and Spennymoor, grants to the East London and Westminster branches, and the sending of Mr. Robertson as a special lecturer to Nottingham. Mr. Larkin moved and Mr. Moss seconded "that the report be accepted"; carried. The secretary presented the report on the Almanack and announced that half the edition had already been sold. The financial report on the Almanack was ordered to be presented at the next meeting. A communication was received from the council of the International Federation of Freethinkers applying for the annual subscription for the affiliation of the National Secular Society. Mr. Warren moved and Mr. Bater seconded "that two pounds be sent"; carried. A circular from the Joffrin Monument committee was considered, and Mr. Samson moved and Mr. Truelove seconded "that one pound be voted to that object"; carried. Applications asking permission to form new branches at Leyton, Essex, and Nelson, Lancashire, were unanimously agreed to. A discussion ensued on Freethought organisation, resulting in Mr. Foote giving notice to the Executive, that he would at the next meeting produce a plan dealing with the Society's lecturers.

BENEVOLENT FUND.

Collection at Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture at Hall of Science on Nov. 23, £7 10s. 0d.; E. Truelove, 10s.; Heckmondwike Branch, 6s.

R. FORDER, Secretary.

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OBITUARY.—William Bell Scott, the sculptor, artist, and poet, who died last week in Ayrshire, was, as his volumes of poems prove, a decided Freethinker. He came of a gifted and original family.

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PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON GENERAL BOOTH AND SALVATIONISM.

The following letter from Professor Huxley appeared in Monday's *Times*. It is a very important utterance, and our readers will be glad to have it *in extenso*.

"IN DARKEST ENGLAND."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—A short time ago a generous and philanthropic friend wrote to me, placing at my disposal a large sum of money for the furtherance of the vast scheme which the General of the Salvation Army has propounded, if I thought it worthy of support. The responsibility of advising my benevolent correspondent has weighed heavily upon me, but I felt that it would be cowardly, as well as ungracious, to refuse to accept it. I have therefore studied Mr. Booth's book with some care, for the purpose of separating the essential from the accessory features of his project, and I have based my judgment—I am sorry to say an unfavorable one—upon the *data* thus obtained. Before communicating my conclusions to my friend, however, I am desirous to know what there may be to be said in arrest of that judgment; and the matter is of such vast public importance that I trust you will aid me by publishing this letter, notwithstanding its length.

There are one or two points upon which I imagine all thinking men have arrived at the same convictions as those from which Mr. Booth starts. It is certain that there is an immense amount of remediable misery among us; that, in addition to the poverty, disease, and degradation which are the consequences of causes beyond human control, there is a vast, probably a very much larger, quantity of misery which is the result of individual ignorance or misconduct and of faulty social arrangements. Further, I think it is not to be doubted that, unless this remediable misery is effectually dealt with, the hordes of vice and pauperism will destroy modern civilisation as effectually as uncivilised tribes of another kind destroyed the great social organisation which preceded ours. Moreover, I think all will agree that no reforms and improvements will go to the root of the evil unless they attack it in its ultimate source—namely, the motives of the individual man. Honest, industrious, and self-restraining men will make a very bad social organisation prosper; while vicious, idle, and reckless citizens will bring to ruin the best that ever was, or ever will be, invented.

The leading propositions which are peculiar to Mr. Booth, I take to be these:—

(1) That the only adequate means to such reformation of the individual man is the adoption of that form of somewhat corybantic Christianity of which the soldiers of the Salvation Army are the militant missionaries. This implies the belief that the excitement of the religious emotions (largely by processes described by their employers as "rousing" and "convivial") is a desirable and trustworthy method of permanently amending the conduct of mankind.

I demur to these propositions. I am of opinion that the testimony of history, no less than the cool observation of that which lies within the personal experience of many of us, is wholly adverse to it.

(2) That the appropriate instrument for the propagation and maintenance of this peculiar sacramental enthusiasm is the Salvation Army—a body of devotees, drilled and disciplined as a military organisation, and provided with a numerous hierarchy of officers, every one of whom is pledged to blind and unhesitating obedience to the "General," who frankly tells us that the first condition of the service is "implicit, unquestioning obedience." "A telegram from me will send any of them to the uttermost parts of the earth"; every one "has taken service on the express condition that he or she will obey, without questioning, or gainsaying, the orders from headquarters" (*Darkest England*, p. 243).

This proposition seems to me to be indisputable. History confirms it. Francis of Assisi and Ignatius Loyola made their great experiments on the same principle. Nothing is more certain than that a body of religious enthusiasts (perhaps we may even say fanatics) pledged to blind obedience to their chief is one of the most efficient instruments for affecting any purpose that the wit of man has yet succeeded in devising. And I can but admire the insight into human nature which has led Mr. Booth to leave his unquestioning and unhesitating instruments unbound by vows. A volunteer slave is worth ten sworn bondsmen.

(3) That the success of the Salvation Army with its present force of 9,416 officers "wholly engaged in the work," its capital of three-quarters of a million, its income of the same amount, its 1375 corps at home and 1499 in the colonies and foreign countries (Appendix, pp. 3 and 4), is a proof that Divine assistance has been vouchsafed to its efforts.

Here I am not able to agree with the sanguine commander-in-chief of the new model, whose labors in creating it have probably interfered with his acquisition of information respecting the fate of previous enterprises of like kind.

It does not appear to me that his success is in any degree more remarkable than that of Francis of Assisi, or that of Ignatius Loyola, than that of George Fox, or even than that of the Mormons, in our own time. When I observe the discrepancies of the doctrinal foundations from which each of these great movements set out, I find it difficult to suppose that supernatural aid has been given to all of them; still more, that Mr. Booth's smaller measure of success is evidence that it has been granted to him.

But what became of the Franciscan experiment? If there was one rule rather than another on which the founder laid stress, it was that his army of friars should be absolute mendicants, keeping themselves sternly apart from all worldly entanglements. Yet even before the death of Francis, in 1226, a strong party, headed by Elias of Cortona, the deputy of his own appointment, began to hanker after these very things; and within 30 years of that time the Franciscans had become one of the most powerful, wealthy, and wordly corporations in Christendom, with their fingers in every sink of political and social corruption, if so be profit for the order could be fished out of it, their principal interest being to fight their rivals, the Dominicans, and to persecute such of their own brethren as were honest enough to try to carry out their founder's plainest injunctions.

We also know what has become of Loyola's experiment. For two centuries the Jesuits have been the hope of the enemies of the Papacy, for whenever it becomes too prosperous they are sure to bring about a catastrophe by their corrupt use of the political and social influence which their organisation and their wealth secure. With these examples of that which may happen to institutions founded by noble men, with high aims, in the hands of successors of a different stamp, armed with a despotic authority, before me, common prudence surely requires that before advising the handing over of a large sum of money to the general of a new order of mendicants I should ask what guarantee there is that, 30 years hence, the "General" who then autocratically controls the action, say, of 100,000 officers pledged to blind obedience, distributed through the whole length and breadth of the poorer classes, and each with his finger on the trigger of a mine charged with discontent and religious fanaticism; with the absolute control, say, of eight or ten millions sterling of capital and as many of income; with barracks in every town, with estates scattered over the country, and with settlements in the colonies—will exercise his enormous powers, not merely honestly, but wisely? What shadow of security is there that the person who wields this uncontrolled authority over many thousands of men shall use it solely for those philanthropic and religious objects which, I do not doubt, are alone in the mind of Mr. Booth? Who is to say that the Salvation Army, in the year 1920, shall not be a replica of what the Franciscan order had become in the year 1260?

The personal character and the intentions of the founders of such organisations as we are considering count for very little in the formation of a forecast of their future, and if they did, it is no disrespect to Mr. Booth to say that he is not the peer of Francis of Assisi; but if Francis's judgment of men was so imperfect as to permit him to appoint an ambitious intriguer of the stamp of Brother Elias his successor, we have no right to be sanguine about the perspicacity of Mr. Booth in a like matter.

Adding to all these considerations the fact that Mr. Llewelyn Davies, the warmth of whose philanthropy is beyond question and in whose competency and fairness I, for one, place implicit reliance, flatly denies the boasted success of the Salvation Army in its professed mission, I have arrived at the conclusion that, as at present advised, I cannot be the instrument of carrying out my friend's proposal.

Mr. Booth has pithily characterised certain benevolent schemes as doing sixpennyworth of good and a shilling's-worth of harm. I grieve to say that, in my opinion, the definition exactly fits his own project. Few social evils are of greater magnitude than uninstructed and unchastened religious fanaticism; no personal habit more surely degrades the conscience and the intellect than blind and unhesitating

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obedience to unlimited authority. Undoubtedly harlotry and intemperance are sore evils, and starvation is hard to bear or even to know of; but the prostitution of the mind, the soddening of the conscience, the dwarfing of manhood are worse calamities. It is a greater evil to have the intellect of a nation put down by organised fanaticism, to see its political and industrial affairs at the mercy of a despot whose chief thought is to make that fanaticism prevail, to watch the degradation of men, who should feel themselves individually responsible for their own and their country's fates, to mere brute instruments ready to the hand of a master for any use to which he may put them.

But that is the end to which, in my opinion, all such organisations as that to which kindly people, who do not look to the consequences of their acts, are now giving their thousands, inevitably tend. Unless clear proof that I am wrong is furnished, another thousand shall not be added by my instrumentality.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

Eastbourne, Nov. 27. T. H. Huxley.

TEN LITTLE PARSONS.

(Ten recent incidents of "clerical error" may be briefly summarised.)

Ten little parsons, preaching love divine,
One kissed his servant girl, then there were 9.

Nine little parsons, preaching sinners' fate,
One kissed his neighbor's wife, then there were 8.

Eight little parsons, smoothing paths to heaven,
One kissed his boarding-mistress, then there were 7.

Seven little parsons, exposing Satan's tricks,
One starved the children, then there were 6.

Six little parsons, preaching Christ alive,
One got slinging arsenic, then there were 5.

Five little parsons, preaching sin no more,
One fought his sexton, then there were 4.

Four little parsons, preaching Calvary,
One got horsewhipped, then there were 3.

Three little parsons, preaching Christ as true,
One cut his baby's throat, then there were 2.

Two little parsons, following the Son,
One beat his child to death, then there was 1.

One little parson, just for pious fun,
Eloped with a deacon's wife, then there were none.

Beneficent Design.—There is in tropical Africa an insect which is for all the world like a little bit of twig broken off from a tree. Another insect is so like the tree which it inhabits that it takes an expert to tell the difference. The puff-adder, again, is so colored to resemble the sward upon which it lies that an unsuspecting traveller will sit down upon it unawares, and, as Professor Drummond observes in one of his books, to sit down upon a puff-adder is to sit down for the last time.

PROFANE JOKES.

The man who scoffs at the idea of purgatory may go farther and fare worse.

Bellows: "Do you suppose our ancestors were such inveterate gossips as we are?" Fellows: "Yes, for according to Darwin they were all tale-bearers."

"This bell," said a well-meaning sexton when showing the belfry of an interesting village church to a party of visitors, "is only rung in case of a visit from the Lord Bishop of the diocese, a fire, a flood, or any other such calamities."

Patrick (just recovering from the effects of ether in the hospital): "Oh, where am I? Where am I?" Dr. Sawbones (with a wink): "In heaven." Patrick (looking around): "Then I'd like to know phwat you're doing here."

Little Boy: "Papa, did you say that God could do anything?" Pious Father: "Yes, my boy, with God all things are possible." Little Boy: "Could God make a two-year-old colt in two minutes?" Pious Father (after slight pause): "Yes; of course he oould." Little Boy: "If God made a two-year-old colt in two minutes, would the colt be two years old?" Pious Eather: "Don't ask such questions, sir; you'll be a second Ingersoll."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Heaven and Hell."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. F. Haslam, 'Is Christianity True?" Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. E. B. Pease (Fabian), "An Eight Hours' Bill, and why it is Necessary." Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Negro Slavery and the Christian Church."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Salvationism and Darkest England." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton — Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "Christianity and Secularism."

Finsbury — Loyal United Friends' Hall, Banner Street, St. Luke's, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "The Bible—is it True?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 11.15, Mr. Herbert Burrows; 7, Mr. T. Parris, "The Christ Myth."

Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, debate between Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt on "Does the Bible Teach a Personal Devil?"

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 7, a meeting of members and friends to transact important business.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Dreams: their Nature and Causes." Monday, at 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham — Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Alexandria"; 7, Mr. A. Lovell, "Jesus." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. G Cave-Hill, "Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ."

Westminster Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "In Prison for Blasphemy—Nine Months in Holloway Gaol."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Old Testament Miracles—are they True?"

Tottenham — Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, a debate between Messrs. Keen and Lockyer.

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Events that Caused the Protestant Reformation."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, 5, tea; 7, miscellaneous entertainment.

Chester-le-Street—West Pelton Co-operative Hall, 6.30, Mr. W. Carter, "Bible Proofs for the Existence of God." Free.

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, reading by a member.

Huddersfield — Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. John Grange, 3, "Why I am a Home Ruler"; 6.30, "Religion and Scepticism: their Influence on Character Contrasted."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11.30, committee meeting; 3, debate between Mr. Monks and Mr. Behricksen on "Is Morality the Outcome of Christianity?"; 7, Mr. Harry Smith. "Be ye Content with your Wages"; afterwards meeting of New Hall Company to elect directors, etc.

Manchester N. S. S. — Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Making of Judaism"; 3, "The Law of Population: its Meaning and its Menace"; 6.30, "What has Christianity Done?" Wednesday, at 8, dancing (sixpence).

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Appleby Stephenson, Esq., M.D., "Charles Kingsley and his Teachings"

Portsmouth—Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; 7, "A World Without God."

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street, Mr. Toleman-Garner, 3, "The Lord's Prayer": 7, "In Darkest Christendom and the Way Out."

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "Has God Revealed Himself to Man?"; 7, "The Struggles of Science."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual business meeting.

Spennymoor — Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 10.30, general meeting; 6, Mr. J. Rothery, a reading from Samuel Laing.

Stalybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street, 7, committee meeting.

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. King, a reading.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Dec. 28, Camberwell.

H. Smith, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 7, Liverpool. Jan. 11 (1891), Liverpool.

Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14 Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

Toleman-Garner, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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ANNIE BESANT
AND
G. W. FOOTE.
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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 50.] SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

ALL ABOUT CHRISTMAS.

Christmas comes but once a year.
And when it comes it brings good cheer.

ASK any ordinary Christian why he commemorates the twenty-fifth of December, and he will tell you he does so because it is the birthday of Jesus Christ. Ask him how he knows that, and he will answer "Of course it is," or "Everybody says so," or some other form of words which is an excuse for ignorance. He does not know that there is not the slightest evidence that Jesus Christ was born on the twenty-fifth of December, nor is he aware that this very day was commemorated by Pagans for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years before the days of Prophet of Nazareth.

The New Testament is silent on this point. But it relates one incident which contradicts the popular belief. It tells us that at the birth of Christ the angels sang a song which was heard by shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. Now it is an indisputable fact that Palestine is too cold in mid-winter for sheep to lie out on their pastures. It is obvious, therefore, that if the flocks were out at night when Christ was born, the event must have happened in a milder season of the year. This is overlooked by the generality of Christians, who read the Bible, when they do read it, with wonderful carelessness.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, does not appear to have mentioned his birthday, nor did his brothers and sisters. Perhaps they forgot it, having no Family Bible to refresh their memories, and no registrar's office to consult. The primitive Church knew nothing about it. According to the learned and trustworthy Bingham (*Antiquities*. bk. xx, ch. iv) various sects celebrated the birthday of Christ at different times. The Basilidians kept the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth of April, others the twenty-fifth of May, and the greatest part of the Eastern Church the sixth of January. The Latin Church always kept the twenty-fifth of December, but this date was not fixed until the second half of the fourth century. Preaching at Antioch, about A. D. 380, St. Chrysostom declared "It is not yet ten years since this day was made known to us (Massey, *Natural Genesis*, vol. ii, p. 403). This is perfectly conclusive. Not until Jesus Christ had been dead for more than three hundred years was his birthday discovered; in other words, it was not till then that the Church fixed the date with an eye to its own profit.

St. Chrysostom does indeed allege that "Among those inhabiting the West, it was known before from ancient and primitive times, and to the dwellers from Thrace to Cadiz it was previously familiar and well known." But this is absolute fudge. Is it likely, is it conceivable, that the birthday of Christ should be *known* in the West, far away from Palestine, and *unknown* close to it at Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians?

The real explanation of the case is very simple. "Some also think," says Bingham, "that the very design of appointing the feast of Christ's Nativity and Epiphany at this season of the year, was chiefly to oppose the vanities and excesses which the heathen indulged themselves in, upon their Saturnalia and calends of January at this very time of the year." Precisely so. After the adoption of Christianity by Constantine the Church became rapidly Paganised. It adopted all sorts of heathen rites and festivals; in short, it stooped to conquer. Now, this very twenty-fifth of December was a Pagan festival; it was adopted by the Church with simply the alteration of the name; and in order to make the most of the transaction, the Church repeatedly censured those who tried to make the day a fast instead of a festival. A variety of pious reasons were assigned, but behind them all was the real reason, that only by keeping the day as a festival could the Church wean the Pagans from their old faith. It is always easier to change popular doctrines than popular observances, and the Church's policy was to make as little alteration as possible in heathen customs while entirely changing their religious significance.

Why was the twenty-fifth of December a universal Pagan festival? Why was it celebrated from the frozen North to the sultry South, and from Gaul in the West, to Syria, Persia, and India in the East? Because it was the birthday of the SUN. On the twenty-first of December—which, curiously enough, the Church has fixed as the day of St. Thomas, who doubted the resurrection of Christ—the sun reaches its nadir. The God of Day enters into his winter cave. For three days there is stagnation. Is he really shorn of strength? Has the enemy triumphed over him for ever? Will he never more assert his might, and rise, conquering, and to conquer, in the heavens? Will the earth for ever lie in the sterile embrace of cold and darkness? Will the sweet, soft grass no more spring from the soil? Will the blackened tree-branches no more burst forth with fresh green life? Will the corn no more wave in the summer breeze? Will the vines no more bear their purple clusters of prisoned nectar? Is it hope or despair? Hope! See the three full days are ended. The twenty-fifth of December has come. The sun begins to rise, faint and pale, from what appeared his tomb. Doubt is no longer possible. The pangs of rebirth are past. His strength is returning, though as yet he is weak as a suckling child. Evohe! Eat and drink, sing and dance; and let the temples, the altars, the houses, be decorated with evergreen and misletoe, typifying the perennial life of things, and suggesting the buds of spring midst winter's snows.

All the Sun-Gods, including Jesus Christ, were born on this blessed day. It is not the Son's birthday, but the Sun's; the visible, beneficent, ever-fighting, ever-victorious God, whom the old heathen worshipped. And they were wise—wiser at least than the "spiritualised" and emasculated Christians. "Sir," said an Aberdeen lady to a Persian ambassador, "they tell me you worship the sun!" "Ah, madam," he replied, "and so would you, if you had ever seen him."

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The Puritans who, with all their sour bigotry, had much learning, saw the Pagan origin of Christmas, and the day is still disregarded by puritan Scotland. Dr. Thomas Warmstry wrote in 1648, "It doth appear that the time of this Festival doth comply with the time of the Heathen's Saturnalia." Prynne, ear-cropped Prynne, in his *Histrio-Mastix*, lets out in fine style—

"If we compare our Bacchanalian Christmases and New Year's Tides with these Saturnalia and Feasts of Janus, we shall find such near affinity between them both in regard of time (they being both in the end of December and the first of January) and in their manner of solemnising (both of them being spent in revelling, epicurism, wantonness, idleness, dancing, drinking, stage plays, masques, and carnal pomp and jollity), that we must needs conclude the one to be but the very ape or issue of the other. Hence Polydor Virgil affirms in express terms that our Christmas Lords of Misrule (which custom, saith he, is chiefly observed in England), together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stage plays, and such other Christmas disorders now in use with Christians, were derived from those Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian Festivals; which (concludes he) should cause all pious Christians externally to abominate them."

And the Puritans did abominate them. Brand tells us (*Popular Antiquities*, Christmas) that on December 22, 1647, the town-crier of Canterbury, by order of the mayor, openly proclaimed that all such "superstitious festivals" should be put down, and that "a market should be kept upon Christmas Day." There is an Order of Parliament dated December 24, 1652, directing "that no observation shall be had of the five and twentieth day of December, commonly called Christmas Day; nor any solemnity used or exercised in Churches upon that day in respect thereof."

It must, indeed, strike any reflective Christian as peculiar that the birthday of his Savior should be celebrated with social festivities. What has roast beef to do with original sin, plum-pudding with the atonement, or whiskey with salvation by faith? What relation is there between carnal enjoyments and a spiritual faith? Why are wordly pleasures the commemoratives of the central doctrine of the Religion of Sorrow? Why, in brief, is Christmas a festival at all?

The answer to this question has been given already. The practices of a religion of life naturally differ from those of a religion of death. It was appropriate to worship the sun with feast and mirth, for he was the great gladdener and sustainer, giving food to the hungry and joy to the dejected. Regarded in this light, our Christmas customs are seen to have had a natural origin. Every detail is borrowed from ancient sun-worship. Christians are still Pagans without it, and, paradoxical as it sounds, Christmas existed before Christ. The celebration is of immemorial antiquity, though its name and nominal object have changed. It preceded Christianity, and will probably survive it.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

(Concluded from p. 597.)

The Rev. J. J. Tayler comparing the Revelation ascribed to John and the Fourth Gospel says:

"The former is intensely Jewish in spirit; abounds in rich, concrete imagery; and is pervaded by a vivid Chiliasm [belief in near approach of the end of the world] from beginning to end. Its language is so broken and rough, so ungrammatical and soloecistic, as to be absolutely barbarous. The latter, on the contrary, bears traces throughout of a marked antipathy to Judaism, is free from every vestige of Chiliasm; deals rather in the mystic abstraction of the later Alexandrine schools, than in the sensuous pictures of the old prophets; and like the bed of some deep river, is filled to the brim with a continuous flow, if not of pure, at least of such smooth and perspicuous Greek as indicates a long habit of speaking and thinking in that language." *

* *The Character of the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd. edition, p. 143.

But it is the comparison with the first three gospels that is conclusive against the fourth. John gives us no parables, those most characteristic utterances of the synoptic Jesus. Nor does he know anything of the casting out of devils, the most common miracle according to the first three gospellers. He never mentions the miraculous birth of Christ, but plumps the Word made flesh fair upon us without any indication of how he or it became so. He says nothing of the derogatory and farcical temptation by the Devil, knows nothing of the short aphorisms of the Sermon on the Mount, but gives instead some long mystic discourses of which the other gospels know nothing, but which are strikingly like those found in the Epistles of John. Even John the Baptist is made to talk in the same style.

John is a product of the new faith when it had almost dissevered itself from its Jewish origin. The Christ of Matthew says he has come not to destroy the law. The Christ of John says "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers," and speaks of the Jews as children of the Devil. The Christ of John openly announced himself and is received as the Messiah, from the beginning of his ministry and in Samaria. But in the Synoptics he conceals his Messiahship and charges his disciples not to enter any city of Samaria.

The Christ of Matthew and Mark is a man who knows not when the day of judgment is. The Christ of John is one with the Father. The one is an exalted man, the other a semi-humanised God. The carpenter is put out of sight and replaced by a mysterious Logos, who talks about his flesh being meat and his blood drink. The miracles are of a different character. The turning of water into wine and the raising of Lazarus, if they had occurred, would surely have been noticed by the other gospellers.

It is not only that John omits what the others insert. The difference of the occurrences are so great that they cannot be reconciled. In John (i., 35; iii., 24) the Logos commences his public ministry and the calling of his disciples before the imprisonment of John the Baptist—not after, as in Matthew (iv., 12, etc.) and Mark (i., 14, etc.) John (ii., 13-7) places the row at the temple at the commencement of his career, not at the close, as do the other three. According to the Synoptics, the public career of Jesus occupied but about one year, with but one visit to Jerusalem at the end. John extends the period to more than three years, and represents him as frequently travelling between Galilee and Judæa.

The Synoptics make Jesus, in violation of the Jewish law, crucified on the day after the Paschal lamb was slain. John, with more plausibility, fixes it a day earlier. The first-named wished to make the last supper take the place of the Paschal lamb; the last wished to substitute the crucifixion for the Passover.

Contrasting the story in the first chapter of John with that of the three, Dr. J. E. Carpenter says:—

"How many are the variations between this narrative and the synoptic tradition! There, Jesus only enters public life after the Baptist has been thrown into prison; here, he begins to exert at once his wondrous influence, and his first followers are the disciples of his predecessors. There, Simon and Andrew are called from their nets by the lakeside; here, they are among the crowd gathered on the banks of the Jordan around John. There, Simon only receives the name Peter on his declaration, after months of discipleship, that Jesus is the Christ; here it is conferred upon him at the outset. And there, above all, a certain development may be traced which culminates in the impetuous burst with which Peter claims for his Master at Cæsarea Philippi, the dignity of Messiah, of which Jesus had hitherto said not a word; here, that high function is recognised at once by the Baptist and the disciples, and assumed at the outset by the Teacher himself."*

I have dealt, though not as fully as I might, with

* *The First Three Gospels*, pp. 43, 44; 1890.

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the contradictions between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, because they mutually destroy each other as evidence. In the word of the author of *Supernatual Religion*, "They must be pronounced mere narratives compiled long after the events recorded, by unknown persons who were neither eye-witnesses of the alleged miraculous occurrences nor hearers of the statements they profess to report."*

It is not every one who can enter into the question of the worth of the testimony of Irenæus or Tatian or Valentinus, or estimate the comparative critical value of Tholuck, Hengstenberg, Godet, Luthardt, Lightfoot, Westcott, Salmon and Sanday, who defend the genuineness of the gospel against Strauss, Bauer, Baur, Hilgenfeld, Renan, Davidson, Tayler, and Abbot, who dispute it, save that he may note that all the former have Church appointments. But everyone can see that the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics cannot be made to harmonise, and that contradictory stories cannot be the Word of God.

Our conclusion is that John is a pure work of fiction, worthless as history, valuable only as throwing light on the influences that moulded Christianity towards the end of the second century.

J. M. Wheeler.

A HELPLESS GOD.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the *Twentieth Century*).

[continued.]

If you hold that Jesus Christ was God incarnate, you are plunged into the same dilemma. He came and faced the wicked men of his time, and they defeated and hanged him, proving his weakness. If you say that he voluntarily gave up his life as a sacrificial victim to the wrath of God, there again you have the absurd and horrible conclusion that God is so vindictive that he must have a victim on which to expend his wrath against sin, and so unjust that he would accept an innocent victim instead of the guilty.

If we ask a clergyman to reconcile the miseries of the world with the goodness and power of God, he tells us that through all this misery God is working out his purpose for good. But this is a conventional, theological explanation, with no fact on which to rest, and no reason by which it may be justified. Why does God have purposes that can only be accomplished by weeping eyes, and broken hearts, and bleeding arteries? Why is he so slow about bringing his purposes to a conclusion? The clergyman tells us it is wicked to have such thoughts and ask such questions; that we must have faith; that we must bow to the will of God; that

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform.

I reply that it is not wicked to have thoughts and ask questions; that if it is, we cannot help ourselves; the thoughts come without permission, the questions formulate themselves; that there is no mystery about it; that the clergyman's explanation is not satis factory; that a wise and good God would know better and do better than to climb to the accomplishment of his purposes over mountains of human bodies, shattered nerves, perished hopes, and wrecked lives.

If God cannot produce one drop of the perfume of joy except by destroying the petals of hope; if he cannot distil a cask of the wine of happiness except by crushing millions of human beings in the press of misery; if he cannot thinly populate heaven without overcrowding hell, he is neither wise nor good.

The theological Devil, the theological heaven, the theological method of explaining the existence of evil (the oppression of the good and the triumph of the wicked) by calling it a mystery, are all vain attempts to reconcile the facts of human misery with the theory of the existence of an all-wise, all-good, and all-powerful God. But to a rational mind those facts and that theory are absolutely irreconcilable.

Consumption and a Creator cannot exist in the same universe, unless the Creator is cruel. Insanity and Infinite Intelligence are irreconcilable, unless the Infinite Intelligence is infernal. Death and Deity are inharmonious, unless the Deity is demoniac. Tears and the Trinity are contradictions, unless the Trinity is tyrannical. Groans and God are antitheses, unless God is ghoulish. Hunger and a Heavenly Father are contraries, unless the Heavenly Father is hard-hearted. Poverty and Divine Power are inconsistent, unless the Divine Power is paralysed. Honesty in prison and Hypocrisy in office would be impossible if God were on a throne, unless God is a Presbyterian politician.

How can you reconcile the existence of a good God with the Czar of Russia, or with Balfour in Ireland, or with some recent decisions of courts and brutalities of the police in this country? Do you believe that a God who could do anything would fail to open the doors of Siberian prisons, or free the Irish from the inhuman landlords who drink their blood? Do you believe a God, worthy of the name, would not rescue the miners and sewing women of this country from the power that enslaves and kills them? Do you believe a God who was not utterly weak and bad would sit still and see thousands of men become thieving tramps and other thousands of young women become pitiful street-walkers, who might be good and virtuous if there was any way by which they might earn a decent living? If you believe any of these things, your faith, or your credulity and unreason, are greater than mine.

Now, when I ask some believer to explain why God does nothing to stop these outrages, he tells me it is a mystery, in which case I turn on my heel and leave him. We have got beyond the point at which such a question can be satisfactorily answered by pious platitudes. I want an answer to that question. I do not want to be humbugged.

Perhaps the believer tells me that man is a free agent, and that God cannot change these bad conditions until men get ready for the change. If that is so, then what is the use of having any God? This explanation means that God does nothing because men will not let him do anything. Well, what sort of a God is this? A helpless God! But of what use to this world is a helpless God?

(To be concluded.)

FAILURE OF CHRISTIANITY.

A writer in the current number of the *Asiatic Quarterly*, said to be a veteran missionary, declares that the efforts which have been made to propagate Christianity have resulted in failure wherever those efforts were made where real religions existed. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Northern barbarians had no religion. Among them Christianity made some headway. But it failed to advance in those nations where already a vigorous religious life prevailed. Its success among the Hebrews was only partial. The attempt to convert the Zoroastrians resulted in failure. Christianity never crossed the Euphrates and Tigris in force and permanently. It practically does not exist now to the eastward of Mesopotamia. After the rise of Mahomedanism it proved its powerlessness to win the adherents of Mahomet. The victory lay with its opponents. These wrested from Christianity the whole of the north of Africa, where there were once 200 Christian bishops. Only in Spain did the cross conquer the crescent. To-day it is rejected and ignored by nearly two-thirds of the human race. Its adherents, including those whose sole title to be numbered among these lies in the fact of their having been born in a nominally Christian country, do not number more than 445,000,000; while there were 560,000,000 Buddhists, 190,000,000 Hindus, and 160,000,000 Mahomedans.

* *Reply to Dr. Lightfoot's Essays*, p. 163.

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MORE FROM HUXLEY ON BOOTH.

[Another letter from Professor Huxley appeared in Tuesday's *Times*, from which we extract the following.]

But it is now time to undertake a more particular criticism of *Darkest England*. At the outset of my examination of that work, I was startled to find that Mr. Booth had put forward his scheme with an almost incredibly imperfect knowledge of what had been done and is doing in the same direction. A simple reader might well imagine that the author of *Darkest England* posed as the Columbus, or at any rate the Cortez, of that region. "Go to Mudie's," he tells us, and you will be surprised to see how few books there are upon the social problem. That may or may not be correct; but if Mr. Booth had gone to a certain reading room not far from Mudie's, I undertake to say that the well-informed and obliging staff of the national library in Bloomsbury would have provided him with more books on this topic, in almost all European languages, than he would read in three months. Has Socialism no literature? And what is Socialism but an incarnation of the social question? Moreover, I am persuaded that even "Mudie's" resources could have furnished Mr. Booth with the *Life of Lord Shaftesbury* and Carlyle's works. Mr. Booth seems to have undertaken to instruct the world without having heard of *Past and Present* or of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*; though somewhat late in the day, a judicious friend called his attention to them. To those of my contemporaries on whom, as on myself, Carlyle's writings on this topic made an ineffaceable impression 40 years ago, who know that for all that time hundreds of able and devoted men, both clerical and lay, have worked heart and soul for the permanent amendment of the condition of the poor, Mr. Booth's "Go to Mudie's" affords an apt measure of the depth of his preliminary studies. However, I am bound to admit that these earlier laborers in the field labored in such a different fashion that the originality of the plan started by Mr. Booth remains largely unaffected. For them no drums have beat, no trombones brayed, no sanctified buffoonery, after the model of the oration of the Friar in Wallenstein's Camp, dear to the readers of Schiller, has tickled the ears of the groundlings on their behalf. Sadly behind the great age of rowdy self-advertisement in which their lot has fallen, they seem not to have advanced one whit beyond John the Baptist and the Apostles, 1,800 years ago, in their notions of the way in which the *metanoia*, the change of mind of the ill-doer, is to be brought about. Yet the new model was there, ready for the imitation of those ancient savers of souls. The ranting and roaring mystagogues of some of the most venerable of Greek and Syrian cults also had their processions and banners, and their fifes and cymbals and holy chants, their hierarchy of officers to whom the art of making collections was not wholly unknown, and who, as freely as their modern imitators, promised an Elysian future to contributory converts. The success of these antique Salvation armies was enormous. Simon Magus was quite as notorious a personage, and probably had as strong a following, as Mr. Booth. Yet the Apostles, with their old-fashioned ways, would not accept such success as a satisfactory sign of the Divine sanction, nor depart from their own methods of leading the way to the higher life. I deem it unessential to verify Mr. Booth's statistics. The exact strength of the population of the realm of misery, be it one, two, or three millions, has nothing to do with the efficacy of any means proposed for the highly desirable end of reducing it to a *minimum*. The sole question for consideration at present is whether the scheme, keeping specially in view the spirit in which it is to be worked, is likely to do more good than harm.

Mr. Booth tells us with commendable frankness that "it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving the soul that I seek the salvation of the body" (p. 45), which language, being interpreted, means that the propagation of the special Salvationist creed comes first, and the promotion of the physical, intellectual, and purely moral welfare of mankind second in his estimation. Men are to be made sober and industrious mainly that, as washed, shorn and docile sheep, they may be driven into the narrow theological fold which Mr. Booth patronises. If they refuse to enter, for all their moral cleanliness, they will have to take their place among the goats as sinners only less dirty than the rest.

A clergyman the other Sunday followed up a stirring sermon on the speedy approach of the world's final catastrophe by an appeal for a liberal contribution for rebuilding the tower of the church.

ACID DROPS.

The Conscience Clause applies to children but not to teachers, and thus the religious party has the upper hand in public education. A profession of religion is exacted in all the training colleges and "religious instruction" has to be received by the students. The same thing goes on lower down. Pupil teachers' heads have to be stuffed with the lumber of Jewish fables which are dignified as history. We have just been looking through a couple of recent examination papers in the diocese of Winchester, in which the junior pupil teachers are asked questions about Ruth's mother-in-law, and Ittai the Gittite, Zadok, Hushai, Ziba, and Shimei the son of Gera. They are also asked "What made David leave Keilah?" and "Why was Samuel so named?" Surely it is midsummer madness to pass the future educators of the young through this mill of imbecility. Most of them have hard work to qualify themselves for their proper duties, and the gratuitous burden of Bible rubbish must be a severe tax on their strength.

It is reported that the Indians are not only going in for a Messiah, but also for a Virgin Mary. This argues that some pale-face is working the oracle.

Rénan laughs at Mr. Gladstone's defence of Scripture. He says that the great politician becomes another man when he attempts to explain the Bible.

Mr. Gladstone's new book on Homer is dreadfully slated in the *Athenæum* by a very competent reviewer, who thinks the G. O. M. quite as old-fashioned and illogical in that field as we regard him in the field of Biblical criticism.

C. L. Dodgson writes to the *St. James's Gazette* from Christ Church, Oxford, on the subject of profanity. He admits the rarity of "blue" stories among "the senior men," but deplores that "anecdotes whose point consists in a comic allusion to some Bible text, or the existence of evil spirits, or the reality of future punishment, or even the name of God, are more freely bandied about and more openly enjoyed, not only by laymen, to whom such things may possibly be mere myths and not worthy of any respect, but even by ordained clergymen, to whom, if to any living men, these things are solemn realities." This distressed gentleman goes on to say that—"No real belief in Christianity can possibly long co-exist with a general practice of making all things holy ludicrous. A section of us may still cling to the ancient Faith; but it will be a dwindling section, holding its way, as best it can, through taunts, perhaps through persecutions, in the midst of a nation of infidels." Of course the "persecutions" are the effect of Mr. Dodgson's heated imagination. For the rest, it is evident that Freethought is spreading at Oxford.

"Too much Christian Science" is the laconic verdict of Coroner Tucker in the case of a man who died at Olean N.Y., last week under the ministration of a faith healer. Perhaps there was not quite enough science and too much Christian. —*Freethought.*

Henry Pratt, M.D., a spiritist, has written a curious work, *Jesus Bar Rabba*, in which he seeks to show that the risen Christ was a personating spirit, not actually the risen Jesus, but a false spirit teaching a different doctrine.

Mr. W. T. Stead has the universe in charge. This is so manifest that it is said that his subordinates at Northumberland Street made up the following story:—Mr. Stead died and went to heaven. He entered the door and walked up to the throne, and God Almighty got up and said, "I beg pardon, Mr. Stead, I'm sitting in your seat."

A new monthly is advertised, *The Religious Review of Reviews*. Gods and little fishes! isn't Mr. Stead's magazine religious enough for anybody?

The Church Association has unanimously resolved to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council against the Archbishop's judgment in the Lincoln case. This action is endorsed by the *Record* and the *English Churchman*. The latter says: "The Judgment would practically undo the work of the Reformation." Even the

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Ritualist *Church Times* is ungracious enough to affirm that the Archbishop's judgment has "no spiritual validity," which is exactly what the Ritualists have complained of the judgments of the Privy Council.

One writing in the *Church Times* says that if the manual acts in celebrating the communion are to be visible to all, the preacher must break the bread above his head. Of course the purport of this is that the priest shall not pretend to be working a miracle by doing the *hocus pocus* of *hoc est corpus*.

According to the *Port Elizabeth Telegraph*, the programme of the service at St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, announced the veritable Christian creed in giving as the text of the bishop's sermon, Psalm xlvi., 1, "Gold is our refuge and strength." The printer who set up the programme and those who passed it had probably some insight into the real inwardness of religion.

"Why does the revival of belief in reincarnation and magic call itself Theosophy?" was asked a well-known Theist. "Because it has neither Theos nor Sophy; neither God nor wisdom," was his reply.

"When the unclean spirit of superstition is gone out of a person," continued this Theist, "he seeketh rest, and, finding none, saith, 'I will return unto my house whence I came out.' Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits, and when they enter, the last state of that person is worse than the first."

The absolute necessity of Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God* is strikingly exemplified by a recent lecture by the Rev. W. Pierce at Islington. From a long report in the local *Gazette* we see that this gentleman gave an extract or two from Darwin's *Life and Letters* showing a slight Theistic tendency, and deliberately kept back all the strong Agnostic passages. Every Freethinker should keep a copy of *Darwin on God* by him to show Christians what Darwin really said on theology.

The *Jewish Chronicle* rejoices in the forward movement of Elsmereism, because, it says, the religion of Jesus divested of supernaturalism is simply Judaism. The Elsmerians may answer that Judaism divested of supernaturalism is simply Secularism.

The vicar of Harwich complains that boys and girls who are being prepared for confirmation are atttacted away from him by Salvation Army handbills announcing: 3 p.m. "Popping the Question and a few Hints to Young Ladies," "A Kiss in the Dark," "Hobgoblins," and other choice subjects. The Army attractions must be tame, however, after a course of Bible reading.

"Sequah" was all over the back page of Monday's *Echo*. The space was crowded with testimonials from Christian ministers. "The Churches Speak," says Sequah. Yes, it is one Sequah patronising another.

Booth's scheme, as might be expected, is attracting tramps from the country. A man charged with begging at Coventry told the bench that he was making for London to get his share of that hundred thousand pounds. The police superintendent stated that the Warwickshire roads swarmed with vagrants, all going up to London to get something from General Booth.

Dr. Parker has been criticising Professor Huxley's letter on Booth's scheme. Carefully evading every other point, the City Temple oracle made fun of apprehensions of danger from the Salvation Army leader a hundred years hence. This is a gross misrepresentation of what Huxley said, but it is near enough and honest enough for Dr. Parker.

Reaction is setting in. The *Christian Commonwealth* is already talking of "the Booth craze."

Miss Eva Booth has been promoting Salvationism at Bolton. The chief attractions appear to have been Chinese lanterns, a converted Hindu lawyer, a converted Buddhist priest, and a child of four who sang a solo and made a little speech. This precocious moralist told the meeting he was trying hard to be a good boy, and the meeting, instead of hissing this nauseous display of juvenile cant, applauded it lustily. What a glorious thing is religion when it primes up little children who ought to be in the nursery, and puts them on public platforms to teach grown-up people the way to glory!

J. H. Aitkin, writing on "The Mission Field" in the *Reaper*, says: "A well-known missionary, now gone home, once persuaded the writer to stay at home and help to quicken the life of Christians, rather than enter the foreign field as a missionary." Mr. Aitken also cites a letter from Mr. G. Pearse, who says: "When I look round on all the laborers of Morocco, Syria, and North Africa (now about 100), I am greatly struck with the apparent folly, to all *human* ideas, of such a mission to the Mohammedans. It is a dead wall immovable to our efforts, and without the present interposition of our God in filling all the laborers with the Holy Ghost, they will not break through it, nor the words they speak enter hearts." Rather a poor look out for the one divine religion.

Shortly before Mrs. Pearcy's trial for the murder of Mrs. Hogg she wrote a letter to her mother, protesting her innocence, and using many pious expressions. Her trust, she said, was in the Lord, and she advised her mother to rely on the same support. Curiously enough, the ruffian M'Donald, who confesses to having murdered Miss Holt, the Bolton schoolmistress, is also of a pious turn of mind. He has written to a friend to say that he is making his "peace with God," and he adds—"Will you offer up a prayer for me now and again?"

Somehow the religious journals are silent on these interesting matters. They do not care to advertise the piety of murderers. But how many sermons have been preached on the piety of the penitent thief!

Truth points out that Canon Rawlinson, who holds a stall at Canterbury worth £1,000 a year, with house, the sole duty being two months of cathedral residence every year, virtually presented himself with the living of All Hallows, Lombard Street, which is worth quite another £800 a year. The church is useless, and is to be pulled down, but Canon Rawlinson is to retire on his full stipend. This comes of writing trashy histories to support Holy Scripture.

A funny incident occurred at Reading. After one of Mr. Haslam's lectures a collection was made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, and twopence was put into the box by a well-known excitable Christian. As luck would have it this gentleman had unconsciously sandwiched between the pennies a sovereign which was given him by Messrs. Sutton, the seed merchants, towards the expenses of a lecture against Freethought. Of course the Secularists returned him the piece of gold, and as the lecture against Freethought is sure to advance our cause they have the pleasure of knowing the money will be usefully expended.

Philander and Olive Brown, professional spiritist mediums, of Elmira, N.Y., persuaded Paul Hill, a farmer, that his deceased wife needed funds to purchase "spiritual clothing." The poor old dupe placed various sums, amounting to £600, between the leaves of a Bible, from which they speedily disappeared. The "mediums" for some time persuaded the farmer that the money had reached his wife's spirit, and had been expended in heavenly clothing, but he ultimately became suspicious, and sued the two impostors in the States Courts. It came out in evidence that the "mediums" had granted Mr. Hill peculiar privileges, for he "heard railroad trains running in heaven," and recognised the sounds made by "sawmills turning out lumber with which to build the heavenly city."

Hearing that the Rev. E. T. Scammell, of Teignmouth, was going to discourse on Booth's book, one of our readers in that town sent him copies of the *Freethinker* containing our articles on the subject. Mr. Scammell referred to the matter in his sermon, calling this paper "scurrilous," and stating that he put the second copy into the fire—which by the way is a good old orthodox fashion of answering "infidels."

Not satisfied with this, Mr. Scammell displayed his Chris-

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tian charity by describing the gentleman who sent him this journal as "the most cringing and abject individual in the town." The only foundation for this charge is that the gentleman in question had his shop burnt out when he was uninsured, and a subscription was talked about on his behalf, but nothing came of it in consequence of local bigotry. He did not receive a single penny from any one, and Mr. Scammell kindly county-courted him for a small debt, which was scraped together—although there was a contra account which could not at the moment be established.

The new Chief Rabbi's salary is not yet determined. The recommendation of the committee is £2,200 a year. This is a small figure beside the income of an Archbishop, yet large enough to show that the preachers of Kingdom-Come are invariably fond of the mammon of unrighteousness. Forty pounds a week is "a good round sum," and some of the poor East-end Jews will have their own reflections on this matter.

Celestine Edwards, the black preacher, recently lectured for the Christian Evidence Society in the Shoreditch Town Hall. In concluding his address he contended that Christianity had "been the means of softening the passions of men." Afterwards several Freethinkers asked questions, and were "loudly hooted" by the devotees of the creed which softens the passions.

The *Eastern Argus*, which reports Mr. Edwards' lecture, gives no report of the discussion, though it records the hooting. In this way the editor helps his colored friend. But what can be expected from an editor who is flat enough to advocate the earth's flatness?

Edward Vollans, of Hull, is a pious father who believes in the divine precepts "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. xiii., 24), and "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Prov. xix., 18). Mr. Vollans thinks these texts apply also to daughters and he has accordingly come under the notice of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. When arrested he was found reading the Bible. He is now committed to prison for three months for brutal ill-usage, and at the end of the time will have to find sureties to keep the peace.

"The Fool of Fools" is the title of a lecture by the Rev. C. Bond, vicar of St. Nicholas, Brighton. The subject seems suited to that gentleman's capacity. By "the Fool of Fools" he means the Atheist. He told a story—or shall we say a fib?—about Mr. Bradlaugh lecturing at Hanley. "In the course of his remarks he made use of the phrase, 'There is no God!'—an expression which, up to that time, he had never deliberately used before. But he was excited with his subject, and in heated language he used these awful words, adding 'The man's a fool who thinks there is.'" Noticing the artfulness of the assertion that this was an expression never used before, and the insinuation that Mr. Bradlaugh, when excited with his subject, makes assertions opposed to his usual utterances, we fancy Mr. Bond must be graduating for a place in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire.

Mr. Bradlaugh's audience, continues Mr. Bond, "discussed the question afterwards, and one man said, 'When I heard that expression I felt chilled. I have often used it myself, but I didn't like the way Mr. Bradlaugh said it.' Several of the others concurred, and they decided to turn it over in their minds. After arguing it out among themselves, some turned Deists and some Christians." After this Mr. Bond may quietly apply to himself the language of Paul, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

Price Hughes says the true Liberal party is a religious party and the sooner the other sort leave it the better. Well, if the Liberal party consisted chiefly of Price Hughes the "other sort" would never want to join it. Perhaps the dressing this shallow, bumptious Methodist prophet received in the last number of the *Speaker* will help to convince him that the Liberal party does not absolutely depend on the Bethelites.

A religious journal boasts of the fact that Christianity raises annually the sum of several hundred million dollars for religious purposes. This merely shows that a great deal of good money goes to a bad purpose. Our motto is: Millions for man; not a cent for God.—*Boston Investigator.*

The Rev. T. T. Berger, B.A., vicar of St. James's, Bolton, teaches that Christians are not to go to law one with another. Yet he sued Henry Hendry for 7s., representing two weeks' rent of his poor cottage. Defendant's wife appeared, and stated that only a week's rent was owing, but that the plaintiff had refused to accept it and had threatened to put the furniture into the street. There was no money at all coming into the house. Her husband was bedfast, and had not worked for nearly twelve months. She also had her mother in bed. She had one child. All of them are dependent on her for subsistence, and it was only now and then that she could get a bit of washing or charring to do. She produced a certificate from Dr. Garstang showing that her husband was in an advanced stage of consumption. His Honor said the case was one of hardship, and he was bound to take into consideration defendant's circumstances. He would make an order for the money to be paid at 2s. per month.

It is well to be a clergyman's son if you are tried at the Guildhall. A young man named John Wynne was recently charged with stealing two dozen pairs of gloves from his employer. In consideration of the young man's parentage Alderman Renals let him off easily, merely binding his father to bring him up for judgment when called upon. Two other persons implicated in the robbery, not having parsons for fathers, will pay the whole penalty.

Rev. gentleman (reproachfully, to drowsy member of his flock): "How *can* you sleep in church every Sunday, Mr. Jenkins?" Mr. Jenkins: "Well, sir, *that's* what puzzles me, too, for you do talk powerful loud at times, to be sure, sir."

A good woman presented three reasons for objecting to a preacher. She said that in the first place he read his sermons; in the second he did not read them well; and in the third place they were not worth reading.

By the casting vote of the chairman, the Liverpool City Council decided not to open the Art Gallery and Museum on Sunday afternoons. Alderman Livingstone, as usual, distinguished himself by the virulence of his opposition. The Partingtons of the Council will not much longer mop out the Atlantic. Parties are evenly balanced just now, and next year victory will declare itself with the progressives.

Veracity is not a Christian virtue. We are not surprised, therefore, by what we learn from a Croydon correspondent. Receiving a card, stamped by the Young Men's Christian Association, with the invitation "Will you come, brother?" he went to a Special Gospel meeting for "Men Only." About fifty shop assistants were present, but not a single one of the clergymen and purists announced as speakers. Our correspondent gave the principal singer a copy of the *Freethinker*, and hopes he rescued a soul from the lake of humbug and credulity.

"H. J. W.," a ratepayer of Clapham Junction, writes to the *South-Western Star* complaining of the admission of the *Freethinker* to the reading-room of the Public Library. He regards it as likely to poison the minds of the pure and innocent, but he does not say how many of that class are to be found in Clapham. This pious busybody had better leave the *Freethinker* alone, for it contains nothing of an impure character. It is, indeed, very far from our intention to imitate the Bible in this respect. We may also observe that if "H. J. W." wishes to turn the *Freethinker* out of a public library, he should at least give his name and address, and not deal out his slanders from a place of cowardly concealment.

"The history of religion displays but too plainly the proneness of mankind to relapse, in spite of reformation, into the lower and darker condition of the past."—*Dr. E. B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture:" Animism, vol. i., p. 421.*

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 14, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints, Manchester; at 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Reason and Faith"; at 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

Dec. 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London.

January 4, Milton Hall; 11, Hall of Science; 18, Huddersfield; 25, Hall of Science.

February 1, Hull; 16, South Shields; 23, Newcastle.

March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Hall of Science.

April 13, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

A. MASON.—Mrs. E. C. Stanton is not a Christian in any accepted meaning of the term. We have several times during the last year or so, printed heterodox utterances from her lips or pen.

NEW YORK "TRUTHSEEKER."—No copy to hand for a fortnight.

A. S. RICHARDSON.—"To rationalise morality" means to strip it of theological prejudices and establish it absolutely on the basis of secular utility. An active member of the N. S. S. should work with a Branch or help the cause in ways often indicated in the *Freethinker*.

J. W. H.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. A. W.—We did not intend to reprint our Booth articles, but it might be done if many of our readers desire it.

A. HORSMAN.—Sorry we cannot avail ourselves of your help in that direction. We have already more copy than we can find room for.

T. BURRELL.—Glad to hear our Booth articles have been so heartily approved in Westminster. A reprint will depend on the number who express a wish for it.

W. G. RENN.—We think the Finsbury Branch is hardly well advised to open a lecture-room at the back of the Hall of Science. You cannot expect to prosper there, unless at the expense of the old meeting-place.

H. F. SMART.—We have already dealt with H. L. Hastings's libellous nonsense on Colonel Ingersoll. Ingersoll himself never condescends to answer or notice these gutter controversialists. They only seek to provoke the lion's roar in order to draw attention to their existence, but up to the present they have not even caused a frown on his brows. What Hastings says about Paine is a downright lie, and he knows it. We defy him to substantiate it on any public platform, and we are willing to find him one gratis for the purpose.

H. EVANS.—There is nothing to prevent an Atheist from sitting in Parliament.

W. AMEY.—Thanks for the cuttings. Glad to see the Portsmouth *Evening News* speaking out on Canon Rawlinson's pluralities.

G. W. AND H. H.—Unfortunately such cases are common. Christianity shows itself a religion of hatred the moment you begin to think for yourself. Let the bigots go and live your own free, honest life.

J. FRASER.—Arrived under-stamped. See "Sugar Plums."

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following: J. Chamberlain, 5s.; G. A. Henning, 5s.; E. W. Osborn, 2s. 6d.; H. Croughan, 2s.; V. E., £2.

MR. FOOTE thinks he gave the second Sunday in February to some Branch, but he has omitted to enter it in his engagement book. Will the secretary of the Branch in question (if any) communicate with Mr. Foote at once?

J. SAUNDERS.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

J. BENNETT.—We are sorry that the Darlington friends had not a little more patience. The work always falls on the shoulders of a few in every movement.

No. 1.—That sky-pilot must be a miserable skunk. See our paragraph.

TOLMAN-GARNER.—Glad to hear of your successful meetings at Reading.

R. BROWNE.—It is Dr. Adam Clarke who contends that the nacash or serpent of Genesis iii. was an ourang outang.

CALEB WILLIAMS.—The Quakers in America are far more liberal in opinions than those in England. The majority of them reject the doctrine of the Trinity and the Atonement.

W. T. G.—Newman's *Phases of Faith* can often be picked up second-hand for a couple of shillings. We are grieved, though not surprised, at the story of your persecution by Christian bigots. When clergymen go to the employers of a poor old workman only able to earn a few shillings a week, and try to get him discharged, they show the usual fruits of Christian charity. You are evidently a brave man, but quite as evidently you will be driven to starvation if you continue to propagate Freethought, and we advise you to temper your courage with discretion. Oh that the bigots, who say that heaven is their home, would *go* home, and cease making earth a hell for honest thinkers.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntaggs-Blatt — Freidenker — The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought — Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Hull Critic—Bolton Evening News—Port Elizabeth Telegraph—Cape Register—Devon Evening Express—Teignmouth Times—Hull Daily News—Northern Daily Telegraph—Australian Republican—Lancashire Evening Post — The Reaper—La Verite Philosophique—Fraser's Comic Annual.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A Virgin Mother, the new instalment of "Bible Romances," will be ready next week. This is a double number, price twopence. As it presents a lot of information as to the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception, the paternal Ghost, the intermediary Gabriel, and the birth of the baby God, it will be very appropriate to the Christmas season. Mr. Foote has taken great pains with this pamphlet, and will doubtless be recompensed by a large sale.

Our centenary edition of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* is at the binder's and will be ready next week. It is printed in good type, on good paper, and the work is prefaced by a political biography of Paine by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who has unearthed some new and interesting facts. The paper copies will be sold at one shilling.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake has almost recovered from the effects of his late accident at Charing Cross, where he was knocked down by the pole of an omnibus, and narrowly escaped being killed or mutilated. The good news from Brighton, where Mr. Holyoake resides, will be grateful to his many friends throughout the country.

N. S. S. Branches should complete and return to the Treasurer their collecting lists for the Forder Testimonial Fund. Up to the present the amounts acknowledged have almost entirely been received from individual subscribers.

Humanity and Dogma, by Amos Waters, and *Agnosticism and Immortality*, by Samuel Laing, two penny propagandist pamphlets, are sent to us by Watts and Co. Both are well worthy of circulation, especially the second. Mr. Laing destroys all the arguments for a future life, but he leaves hope in the bottom of the box, without apparently seeing that hope and fear are inseparable twins.

Shelley's *Cenci*, translated by M. Rabbe, is to be produced at a Paris theatre. It cannot be produced in England. The Lord Chamberlain blocks the way. He prefers short skirts and pink tights.

Our Swedish friends have had some difficulties. Since the Socialist conference at Halle, the Socialists in Sweden have striven to make the Freethought movement a mere appanage to their own. This we are glad to say has been stoutly resisted by Mr. Lennstrand and Captain Thomson, and they have thereby incurred some scurillity from a few dissatisfied Socialists.

We take this opportunity of stating that the interest taken by English Freethinkers in the Freethought movement in Sweden was mainly aroused by Captain Thomson's letters, and

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that he was made the medium of receiving the funds collected because we have every confidence in his integrity.

The Battersea Branch gives a Children's Party next Tuesday, Dec. 16. Any Freethinker in Battersea and district can have tickets for his children by applying to Mr. Martin, 32 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea. A substantial tea will be provided, and endless amusements will follow. Donations and toys can be sent to above address.

On Sunday a meeting was held of the shareholders of the new Liverpool Hall of Science Company. Directors were appointed and a large number of additional shares taken up. No time will be lost in securing a site and commencing operations. We press upon all Liverpool Freethinkers the duty of prompt assistance in this matter.

The *Hull Critic* gives insertion to a smart letter from the pen of the indefatigable Mr. G. E. C. Naewiger on "Christianity or Humanity: Which?"

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for December gives as frontispiece a fine steel engraving of the late Alfred Theodore Lilly, who has often done much to befriend the *Magazine*. Mr. Holyoake concludes his discourse on "The Sorrows of God" and Mr. T. B. Wakeman on "Our Unchurched Millions." Mr. Wakeman says that, according to the recent U.S. census, the rate of increase of the secular over the church population is very large—nearly double; but accurate figures are not obtainable.

The *Echo* of Tuesday gives an account of Mr. George Bernard Shaw, mentioning that when young and in Dublin he boldly avowed himself an Atheist.

Mr. C. Voysey has devoted six of his Theistic Sermons to a criticism of *Lux Mundi*. They are now published in pamphlet form, and may help to show how untenable is the theory of Bible inspiration.

Old Radical Reformers and Chartists will be interested in Mr. Holyoake's reminiscences of Ernest Jones in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* of Dec. 6.

La Verité Philosophique for Dec. 5 gives a portrait and sketch of Gustave Adolphe Hubbard, deputy and President of the Friends of Secular Education.

We gather from the *Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt*, that there are now five indictments pending against Dr. Voelkel for his Freethought lectures, two in Berlin, and one each in Halle, Muhlhausen and Bernburg.

Mr. Symes, in his interesting paper on "The Gospel of the Blackfellows," in the *Liberator*, says: "Beveridge notes one point that is worthy of remark, namely, that it is the greatest scamp of the tribe that usually offers himself for the post of priest. To read the history of Christianity is to be forced to the conclusion that the blacks are by no means singular in having the worst man in the post of priest. As in the Bible, so amongst the blacks, every stage and kind of insanity is venerated as a manifestation of something divine. Strike out all the insanity from the Bible, and you will find you have scarcely a trace of the supernatural or of inspiration left. I do not mean this to be taken as a jest or mere sarcasm, but as sober truth. For a man now to behave as Abraham did (in attempting the life of Isaac), Jephthah, Saul, Elijah, Isaiah, (going naked three years), Jesus, John (Revelation John), would unquestionably land him in the asylum. But amongst blacks and ancient Jews etc., such characters were revealers of the gods—as if the gods were all mad. Indeed, this superstition is at the base of all revelation. The less a man knows of this world the more he is supposed to know of some other. To-day we put lunatics under restraint, to balance our conduct in worshipping those of Bible times."

Over twenty years after the occurrence, M. Renan is charged with want of patriotism for having said of the Germans at a private dinner in 1870, "They are superior to us. The Catechism stultifies individuality; the education of the Jesuits and of the Brethren of the Christian Doctrine, cramps all the independent faculties of the intellect, whereas Protestantism develops them." If M. Renan used the words quoted, he but deserves praise for preferring truth to the prejudice which shelters itself under the name of patriotism.

Our friends in Bombay are making satisfactory progress. Mr. J. Balfour informs us that the Society has a fair balance in hand and has at length arranged for a course of public lectures. He reports that the Catholics and Protestants are alike bewailing the "spread of infidelity" in India. By way of counteracting it they are circulating a disgusting libel on Colonel Ingereoll. Happily, however, this dirty weapon is not so useful as it was. People are growing wiser and less disposed to accept personalities for arguments.

Fraser's Blythe and Tyneside *Comic Annual* is a big twopennyworth. There is a Freethought vein in some of the items, showing that the editor knows his public, and recognises that wit and "profanity" are first cousins.

THE DEVIL WITHIN.

Of late the doctrine of original sin appears to have been quietly dropped by all save a very limited number of Christians. Respectable people do not like to be perpetually reminded that they are "miserable sinners"; that they have the taint of the old Adam in their blood, and that their best actions, their most unselfish deeds, are but as "filthy rags" in the sight of God.

And yet the doctrine of original sin is at the root of the Christian Creed. If man were not a sinner he would not need salvation. But what is sin? An ordinary Christian will answer "disobedience to the will of God." But if we are to obey the will of God surely we have a right to know precisely what it is? "It is contained in the Bible" say one set of believers in Deity; "it is contained in the Koran" say another; it is contained in the Zendavesta" cry a third; it is contained in no book at all proclaim the Theists —but it is written in the grand volume of Nature which all men can read and understand alike.

Now if sin means disobedience to any alleged written will of God, the sinner may be ignorant of it, or he may not understand it, or he may not possess the power to obey it;—in either case he would not be responsible for any infringement of an alleged will he did not understand or was incapable of putting into practice. If God is Almighty and all-wise he knows that his alleged will is disputed by learned and thoughtful men, how then can he expect it to be understood and believed by the ignorant and thoughtless? Besides God, being the author of man, is responsible for all the defects of his constitution and character.

It is admitted by Christians that God at the start made man perfect. But man was perfect for less than twenty-four hours. While he was yet a mere babe the Devil spoilt him. At one stroke the serpent of temptation—the Devil within—ruined the supreme achievement of an omnipotent and all-wise God. But is not God the author of all the desires of the human heart, or only some of them? Is there another being more powerful than God, who suggests all actions of an immoral tendency? And how does this evil being know what are the desires of men unless he also is all-wise? In which case we should have a plurality of infinite, omnipotent, and all-wise beings, which is a flagrant absurdity. Recognising in some measure the contradictory character of their own teachings, it is no wonder that the Christians from time to time silently drop some of the more objectionable dogmas of their creed.

Circumstances, however, sometimes arise that give the more earnest and zealous among the orthodox an opportunity of resuscitating dogmas that had almost died of neglect and inanition. Mr. Parnell does a wicked and dishonorable deed which few who knew anything of the cool, calculating character of this politician would have suspected. Without thinking

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for a moment of the numerous temptations that beset the path of men who are the natural leaders of their fellows, the majority of Christians swoop down upon Mr. Parnell and assail him with all the strong and bitter epithets in the vocabulary of abuse. Forgetful of the teachings of their alleged Master, who bade only those who were absolutely sinless to cast the first stone, they assail him day by day with terrible remorselessness, so that the Secularist who prefers to leave Mr. Parnell to "those thorns that in his bosom dwell to prick and sting him" is forced to exclaim:

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun.

Some few earnest Christians, however, have found a little ground for excuse for their fallen brother. He was tempted by the Devil, they say—the Devil within; and the Devil overcame the better promptings of his heart. But the old question of the poor Zulu arises once again. Why doesn't God kill the Devil? or, if the Devil is only a power and not a being, why does not God destroy it?

The truth is, Christians understand as little about sexual questions as they do about the doctrine of evolution. They do not understand that in some the sexual passion is more developed than in others; and that some men and some women would risk everything—reputation, nay, even life itself—for the gratification of their lowest instincts. Philosophy teaches us that the chief lesson of life is to learn to understand ourselves; to regulate and control all our passions by reason. But if the Devil within prompts a believer like Mr. Parnell to sin, who, according to the Christians, prompts unbelievers like Mr. Samuel Laing and the Marquis of Queensberry to send money to help General Booth in his gigantic scheme? Christians regard the action of these latter gentlemen as good, though in my judgment they are only expending their money in promoting the crassest superstition; in attempting to do away with one set of evils they are deliberately promoting the development of another.

Is not the Devil or evil tendency of superstition as harmful as the Devil of drink, of lust, of vice, of crime? Granted, drunkenness has caused much misery and crime in the world, but superstition has caused much more. The fact is, every virtue may be converted into a vice; it requires education and knowledge of the facts of life to act as bridle and reins to the human passions, so that each individual, by knowing the road and keeping the passions well in check, may drive down the narrow path that leads to his own happiness and the well-being of humanity.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

J. Laws, 10s. 6d. Per J. Robinson: M. Stiff, 5s.; J. Robinson, 1s.; J. Pearse, 1s.; W. Dent, 1s.; F. Roose, 6d.; J. Hulme, 1s.; T. Smith, 6d.; J. Roose, 1s. Ox Hill Branch N. S. S., 5s.; H. Trummell, 2s. 6d.; Gerald Massey, £1 1s.; H. Underdown, 2s. 6d.; P. Baldwin, 2s.; P. V. Le Lubez (per C. Bradlaugh), £5; F. Margetson, 2s.; W. T., 6d.; H. Chadwick (per W. H. Harrop), 5s.; W. H. Harrop, 5s.; R. Hunt, 2s.; A. Woodroop, 2s.

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

Professor Stölze, of Wurzburg, who recently discovered some of Giordano Bruno's manuscripts, is now said to have found the heretical treatise of Abelard on the Trinity.

Miss Power Cobbe writes on "Two Religions" in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*. She sums up all faiths as consisting either of the worship of Power or the worship of Goodness, without seeing, or without declaring, that the service of God belongs to the former category and the service of man to the latter.

CHRIST'S FAREWELL SUPPER.

CHRIST JESUS gave, it has been said,
To some old chums a farewell "spread,"
And asked them, o'er the parting cup,
To try to keep his mem'ry up,
And, sometimes, o'er a glass of wine,
To think of him for "Auld lang syne."

But listen! and I'll tell you how
This farewell supper raised a row:—
There, later, rose a fierce ferment
About the kind of bread Christ meant
His friends to eat at each love-feast—
Unleavened cakes or dough or yeast.
Fermented bread, some said, was best,
No! unfermented, said the rest.
And rows enough to rouse the dead
About the wine, or white, or red;
Some thought diluting was discreet,
While others said, "We'll take it neat,
And drink, in mem'ry of the dead,
Good wine that warms both heart and head."
In fact, these friends were taken up
Less with their chum than with the cup.

Some others had a pious dread
Of using common baker's bread;
They said it would profane the feast
To symbolise Christ's death with yeast.
In this they were, no doubt, unwise;
For yeast is just the thing to rise.
A few declared there would be harm
In using even German barm;
Our motto is, they boldly said:
"Eschewing leav'n in chewing bread."

But, stranger still—now hold your breath,
This is a fact as true as death—
Some said that ev'ry blessed crumb
Was really Jesus Christ, their chum!—
His very corpse, be't understood,
And that the wine was really blood!
They called it "Transubstantiation,"
And backed it up with hot damnation.

The bread and wine which Christ did "stand"
Were doubtless racy of the land:
That is, as Jesus was a Jew,
The "bill of fare" was Jewish too;
But, if he'd been more west or east,
It would have been a diff'rent feast:
Instead of bread perhaps some rare-bit;
Instead of wine, perhaps some sherbet;
Or, if an Irishman he'd been,
The "tipple" would have been "poteen";
The "grub" had been quite Irish, too—
Some "murphies" or some "Irish stew."
If he'd been Scotch, I'll lay a stake
The bread had been good oatmeal cake;
At any rate, 'twixt me and you,
The *other* had been "mountain dew."
The supper might have been—who knows?—
A haggis and some "Athole brose";
A "tankard-cool"—wine, lemon, borage—
Or whiskey neat with oatmeal porridge.

All this will clearly show, I think,
That Christ, in asking folk to drink
A glass to him for "Auld lang syne,"
Ne'er meant to say it *must* be wine.
Besides, though he was not well read,
He surely must have heard it said
That in some lands there grew no vines,
And that their people had no wines.
Depend upon't, he meant we should
Use any sort of drink and food;
He merely wanted folk to link
His mem'ry with their food and drink.

For why should we just draw the line
Of imitation at the wine?
Ought we to seek a "pub" or inn
To celebrate this supper in?

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And hire a room that must be "upper"
Before we can set out the supper?
And must we—so to follow him in
Ev'rything—exclude all women,
And, just to make the thing complete,
Have wherewithal for washing feet?

Though some folk are, by crafty priests,
Debarred from joining these "love-feasts,"
They need not feel left in the lurch:
Christ never held one in a church.
Why care for any priestly snub?
Like Christ, go eat it in a "pub,"
Or, better still, go home and eat
Your ordinary sort of meat—
Roast-beef or lobster, chop or whelk,
With wine or water, beer or milk.
The "elements" might surely be
A roll and butter and some tea;
Or, when a public-house is near,
A sandwich and a glass of beer.
Why not? It's not the drink or meat,
It's what you think of while you eat.
You merely have of Christ to think
While thus you eat, and thus you drink.

Poor Christ! although his head was cracked,
His honest heart but little lacked,
When, in the face of curse and ban,
He tried to raise his fellow man.
Although he failed he did his best;
His scheme was bad, so let him rest.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, Hall of Science, Thursday, December 4th, the President, G. W. Foote in the chair. The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the Secretary presented financial statements *re* Tower Hamlets and Peckham courses of Free Lectures; and reported arrangements for course at Athenæum Hall in January next. Miss Vance, Messrs. Forder and J. Robertson were elected a subcommittee to arrange Children's Party in February. The question of Free Lectures in Battersea district was discussed. Mr. Anderson's motion to alter time of meeting was met by an amendment, and it was decided to meet in future at 8 o'clock. Progress was reported on Annual Dinner, and detail arrangements were discussed. The lecture list for January was ordered to be printed, and Messrs. H. Lupton and E. Anderson were elected auditors of accounts for 1890. It was decided to print and issue Report and Balance Sheet for 1890 in time for Annual Dinner. The Council adjourned till Jan 1, 1891.—E. POWNCEBY, Sec.

Tickets for Dinner (which will take place at Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, on Monday Jan. 5, 1891) price 2/6, may be obtained of the Branch Secretaries, at Hall of Science, of Mr. Forder, or the Secretary, 9 Finsbury Street, E.C.

REVIEW.

Sceptical Musings and Other Verses. Birmingham, 1890.—The author is evidently a Freethinker, and many of his utterances are pithily put. Witness the following:

Our spirits, so the preachers say, survive
The bodies death in some immortal sphere;
Methinks man's spirit often dies while here,
Quenched in the struggle to maintain alive
The toiling body in its hard career.

Many are in lighter vein, as for instance—

That God the tribes of Israel made their own
Was fierce and cruel; war was his delight
And reeking altar smoked before his sight
With burning beasts, while butchering priests fell prone
To mitigate his wrath or foil his spite.

If he and Christ be one, as it is said,
The obvious conclusions then remain
That either God, the Son, doth now disdain
The peaceful ends to which his teachings led,
Or else Jehovah has been born again.

SCOTCH THISTLES.

Rev. John MacNeil, the clerical buffoon, has again been revisiting the glimpses of the moon in bonnie Scotland. He recently preached before a large congregation in Glasgow, and availed himself of the opportunity to rail at sceptical scientists like Tyndall and Huxley and Spencer. The Rev. John chose for his text the feeding of the 5,000, and evidently thought that he had for ever silenced the sceptics when he assured his hearers that his answer to those who doubted this miracle was "that they [the speaker and his hearers] saw the 5,000 jaws going their best." Was there ever a more childish statement made or deeper-dyed lie told by hard-pressed apologist? Men of the John MacNeil stamp are hardly worth secular powder and shot, and their ravings would be quite beneath our notice were it not for the fact that thousands of intelligent men and women are still so trammelled by their early training or present surroundings that they accept without question whatever a popular preacher says. MacNeil and Company know this, and trade upon it. Many Christians and all Secularists will, however, agree with Mr. MacNeil when he says that "Christians ought to have a little more common sense than to write great big volumes to explain the miracles and to defend the supernatural in them"—both parties will agree with him, but probably upon very different grounds.

Wily parsons avoid the palpable contradictions in the Bible unless they are forced upon them; but what are we to think of the fearless one who boldly faced the difficulty in Glasgow last Sunday? A candidate for the pastorship of one of the City churches took his stand upon the *triple text* of "Bear ye one another's burden," "Every man *shall* bear his own burden," "Cast thy burden on the *Lord*." Surely any sermon built on this foundation must have been as edifying and instructive as one would be which had for its groundwork an attempt to make clear how three persons are one and one person three.

General Booth had a bumper meeting in Edinburgh on Thursday last, and his appeal for funds to support his latest project has met with some success, although the cautious ones are looking askance. One canny Scot, when asked by an acquaintance who was collecting subscriptions "What may I put you down for?" promptly replied, "If I give you anything at all you may put me down for a fool."

Apropos of Booth's scheme, the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, in an able article upon "How the Masses are Reared," remarks: "Morally the responsibility weighs most heavily and most immediately upon the heads of the paid professional keepers of the social conscience—the clergy. What are the clergy doing to signify their sense of responsibility? Most of them are engaged in commercial enterprises for the exploitation of superstition at home and abroad. Some find it a lively, interesting, and remunerative occupation to pitch half-crowns into the gutter, for which the masses scramble; some coin reputation and dollars by alternately preaching cant about cant, and denouncing with passionate vehemence the less impure and more harmless forms of common amusements and recreations."

The feelings of the Scotch divine who recently received a testimonial from the members of his flock may be better understood than described when he heard the following eulogium passed upon himself by the well-meaning elder appointed to make the presentation: "We hae aye admired your twa outstanding features—your independence and your eloquence—and, speaking for masel' I can honestly say that I hae aye lookit on ye as ane wha feared neither God nor man: and every time I hear ye preach I feel mair and mair convinced that ye come as nearly as mortal man can come to the Bible ideal o' a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."

He must have felt as much flattered as did the country parson, who, having asked his beadle how he was pleased with the minister who preached last Sunday, received for reply: "Weel, his preaching was far ower plain and simple for me; onybody could understand what he was driving at. I like a sermon that jumbles the sense and confounds the judgment. And, though I dinna like tae flatter ye, I'm bound tae confess that I never heard ane that could come up tae yoursel' at that."

R. M. B.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

UNITARIANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. J. M. Wheeler certainly knows a thing or two about Unitarianism, but there are several other things concerning it which he does not know, and he has made at least four very important blunders. One of these I ask you to be good enough to correct. Mr. Wheeler says, after remarking that it has little hold upon the people, that "it lacks a popular class of preachers," . . . . "but no powerful orator capable of attracting the masses." Without referring to America, where we have such men as Robert Collyer and Brooke Herford, who are capable of attracting the masses, it is right that it should be stated that we have, I might almost say, dozens of ministers who can attract, and have attracted, and still are attracting "the masses." We remember what the late Chas. Beard did a few years ago in Liverpool, over and over again. I have before me a report of "Services for the People," in Liverpool in 1885, when the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, and the Rev. W. Carey Walters addressed during six months, in a Roman Catholic and Orange district, Sunday after Sunday, on an average 2000 persons. We also know what Mr. John Page Hopps of Leicester has done on Sunday afternoons over and over again, what Dr. Crosskey has done and even now is doing in Birmingham. Does your sub. not know what Mr. Broaderick of Ipswich is doing there on Sunday afternoons and evenings, and has been so doing during three or four years? Why, in each of these cases fully a thousand of the masses are addressed each time. I could also refer to what Mr. W. Mitchell—an ex-Secular lecturer and editor, did in Leicester, Glasgow, and elsewhere, and what Mr. Lazenby is at present doing in Glasgow, and Mr. Webster in Aberdeen—addressing in fact hundreds and thousands of the masses. Let Mr. Wheeler and your readers refer to the last report of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, especially to the part "Special Services for the People"—and go in time that they may get a seat to one of these services, and they will find out how far they are mistaken.

No, we will not become such as you are in order that we may be popular. The tendency of Unitarianism is not towards Materialism and Agnosticism, let that be understood distinctly. When I went in and out among the Secularists, you only had six or so lecturers who could attract the masses, and two of these have since left you. Have you any more now, and do you do any more now for the fruitful service of man? I trow not.—Yours truly,

W. RODGER SMYTH.

Bridgwater, Nov. 26.

[Mr. Wheeler has heard five of the ministers named, and does not consider one of them a powerful orator.]

PROF. TYNDALL ON GENERAL BOOTH'S SCHEME.

Professor Tyndall has addressed the following letter to the editor of the *Llangollen Advertiser* with reference to a series of articles in that journal on *Darkest England*:—

"Hindhead House, Haslemere, Dec. 4.

"Dear Sir,—I am very much obliged to you for the newspaper which you have been good enough to send me, and I have read your account of your visit to the slums of London. Your description, being that of an eye-witness, is particularly vivid and interesting. I have no doubt that what you say regarding the present action of the Salvation Army is a perfectly accurate record of what you witnessed, but the permanence of the action cannot be ascertained or deduced from a flying visit of a few hours. During the lifetime of General Booth matters may move smoothly, but there is not the slightest guarantee that they will continue so to move after he is gone. The engine he has evoked might, in the hands of less scrupulous successors, prove to be a curse instead of a blessing to humanity. Two or three days ago two letters appeared in the *Times* criticising the scheme of General Booth. The one was from Professor Huxley, the other from Mr. Loch, secretary to the Charity Organisation Society. Those letters ought, in my opinion, to make any sensible man pause before committing himself to the scheme of General Booth. I end as I began, thanking you for your friendly remembrance of, yours faithfully,

JOHN TYNDALL."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. F. Millar, "Christ and Christianity."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "General Booth's Scheme for Pauperising Labor." Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday Children's Party. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E., 7, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Is Christianity Reasonable?"

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Dreams: their Nature and Meaning." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "Secularism: a death unto sin and a new birth unto Righteousness."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism and Christianity Compared."

Finsbury—Loyal United Friends' Hall, Banner Street, St. Luke's, 11.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Meaning of Secularism."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 11.15, Mr. Herbert Burrows, "Socialism and Political Programmes"; 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Christ Hallucination."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Broadway, Tuesday at 8, Mr. R. Forder, "The Exodus from Egypt."

Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road, 7, Mr. W. Jenkinson will read from Dagonet "Ballads."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Bennet Burleigh, "My War Experience in the Soudan." Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, a lecture; 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture. Tuesday, at 8, a lecture.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, special general meeting of members, election of officers, etc.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Design in Nature."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, a debate between Messrs. Keen and Lockyer, "Can we Follow Jesus?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Protestant Reformation: its Career and Triumph."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, 7, Mr. R. S. Bransby, "Christianity and Science—a Reply to Dr. Harrison."

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. W. Gilmour, "The Jesuits"; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "An Hour with the Microscope" (lantern illustrations).

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 3, debate between Mr. Gowland and Mr. Ingham, "Secular Morality Superior to Christian"; 7, Mr. Haslam, "Nuts to Crack."

Manchester N. S. S.—Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saint's, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Reason and Faith"; 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

Nelson—Queen's Hall, Mr. T. Slater, 11, "Life, Mind, Soul and Spirit"; 3, "What is Morality?"; 6.30, "The Advantages of Freethought."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, fortnightly meeting of members.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, Mr. G. J. Holyoake, 3, "The Night Side and the Day Side of the Bible": 7, "What would Follow were the Effacement of Christianity Possible?"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, Prof. Wilson, "Ventriloquism—what is it?" (with surprising practical illustrations).

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a reading.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. B. Dawson, "Eighteen Years of Freethought—a Retrospect and a Comparison."

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. Taylor, "Socialism."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Dec. 21, Grimsby; 28, Camberwell. Feb. 22 (1891), Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14, Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Dec. 21, Woolwich.

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 51.] SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

LITTLE JESUS.

THE four canonical Gospels are remarkably silent about the youth of Jesus. They tell us of his birth, or rather two of them do; they introduce him again at the age of twelve, and a third time at the opening of his ministry when he "began to be about thirty years of age." Singularly enough, on the hypothesis that the Gospel life of Christ is history and not mythology, these are the very ages of the salient points in the Egyptian story of Horus, who, with his virgin mother Isis, was worshipped for centuries and perhaps millenniums before the rise of the Star of Bethlehem; twelve being the oriental age of puberty, and thirty the ancient age of manhood.

All we know of Jesus, if we know anything, is his public career, which only lasted for three years; although, indeed, Irenæus, one of the principal Fathers of the second century, and the first who mentions the four Gospels, distinctly says that he lived to the age of fifty. Then again, if we subtract all the miracles, which many Christians find it more and more difficult to believe, so little is left that Jesus becomes an infinitely more shadowy figure than Buddha or Mohammed. And before the opening of his public life all is obscurity, except for the one occasion when he went up as a boy with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem.

Now this is very tantalising, not to say provoking. Even if the evangelists thought the childhood of Jesus of no importance, they might have told us what he was doing between twenty and thirty. That is generally the season when a man's wild oats are sown if he has any. Was Jesus fond of the ladies, or were they as fond of him as they have been since? Did he court, or flirt, or even "spoon"? Did he win the heart of a Jewish maiden who died prematurely and saddened his life? Or did he keep fancy-free, and only snatch a harmless kiss now and then from a Semitic maiden with pouting lips and eyes of sleepy fire? Was he occupied all day in Joseph's workshop? Were his evenings spent at home? Did he always look sedate, or did he sometimes, on festive occasions, take an extra glass of the "wine that cheereth God and man"?

What was Jesus doing as a boy? Did he go to school? Was it the fortune of some Jewish schoolmaster to teach God Almighty? Did he begin chiselling and planing at fourteen or fifteen, and was he dexterous or clumsy at the business? How did he get on with Joseph, and Joseph with him? What was his reputation among other boys? Did they regard him as a milksop or a brick? Was he ever in a street fight? Did he ever come home to his mother with a sanguine nose and a suspicious blackness under the eyes? Was he prone to taking the part of smaller boys when beaten by their superiors in size and weight? Or did he walk through the life of a schoolboy with indifference, and only begin to show any positive quality when he started preaching?

None of these questions can be answered, and the Christians are content to remain in ignorance. They are an incurious race. Perhaps they think they have enough incredibility to swallow without troubling for more. But the early Christians had more curiosity, and a stouter stomach for marvels. And they were well supplied by the scribbling impostors of that age. Among the gospels which are styled apocryphal by later and more fastidious generations, there is one called the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ. This document must have been very interesting to the women and the young folk of both sexes. It was in use in the second century, and was partially credited, at least, in succeeding ages by Eusebius, Athanasius, and Chrysostom. Portions of it have passed into Christian and oriental tradition. There is even a distinct reminiscence of it in Milton's *Ode to the Nativity*.

According to this gospel, which is probably as accurate as those in the New Testament, the little Jesus soon displayed his supernatural powers. While he was in swaddling clothes, and sucking his mother's breast, he cured an old woman of an unspecified malady. Perhaps it was the gout, or rheumatism, or sciatica; or perhaps he cured her of old age by making her twenty years younger. Anyhow, this old woman vowed to serve him, and she carefully preserved the fragment of his circumcision in an alabaster box of old oil of spikenard; indeed, it was out of this very box that Mary afterwards anointed the Master's head and feet.

When little Jesus was taken to the Temple, and blessed by old Simeon, the angels stood round him adoring, like a king's guard. Down in Egypt the principal idol fell prone, owing to his being in the city, and a possessed boy was cured of devils by touching his napkins which were hung on the clothesline—the demons flying out of the lad's mouth in the shape of crows and serpents.

After frightening a lot of robbers, little Jesus cured a tongue-tied young woman by kissing her, to the great delight of all the inhabitants of the town, who thought that God and his angels were come down among them. He also assisted a lady in peculiar circumstances. Going to the river to bathe, the devil flew at her in the form of a serpent, coiled himself about her body, and would not be dislodged. But little Jesus sent him packing, and the next day the relieved lady gave him a washing in perfumed water, which she kept as a memento of the incident. A girl standing by, being washed in this water, was cured of leprosy; and some time afterwards the leprous son of a great queen was healed by the same treatment. Unfortunately that water is lost, or it would have saved Father Damien a world of labor and self-sacrifice.

The next exploit of little Jesus seems suggested by the Book of Tobit. He assisted a young bridegroom who had been prevented by sorcerers from consummating his marriage. There was also a young man who had been turned into a mule by witchcraft; little Jesus was placed on his back, and the mule became a young man again. After this we may credit the

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story of the Golden Ass so charmingly told by Apuleius and Lucian.

At Matarea little Jesus caused a well to spring forth, and a balsam was produced from his perspiration. At Memphis he saw Pharaoh, and did many miracles which are not recorded severally.

Returning to Bethlehem, he cured two sick youths with the water in which he was washed. This seems to have been a common miracle. It is wonderful that Joseph did not set up a sanatorium and make a big fortune out of the babe's ablutions. As he had to keep the child, without begetting him, it was only fair that he should make what he could by the connection.

Saint Bartholomew, when a child, was cured of a deadly sickness by being placed on the bed of little Jesus. What healed him was the smell of the Savior's garments, which was probably far from delicious. A leprous woman and a leprous princess (we are not told of what family) were cured by the contents of his washtub.

A more startling miracle was performed in the case of a young girl, whose blood was sucked every night by Satan in the form of a dragon. She also patronised the washtub, and took one of little Jesus's napkins; with this she confronted the dragon, and he fled from her for ever.

Judas Iscariot is next brought upon the scene. It appears that he lived in the same village as little Jesus, and was a very naughty boy. Satan got inside him and made him bite the people around him. In default of such victims, he bit his own flesh. On one occasion, while out at play, he tried to bite Jesus, but could not; he then punched little Jesus in the ribs and made him cry. At that moment Satan flew out of Judas and ran away like a mad dog.

When seven years of age, Jesus was playing with other boys. They made clay horses, donkeys, and birds, and Jesus made his figures walk, and fly, and eat and drink. For this he was avoided as a sorcerer, and had afterwards to play by himself.

Little Jesus also took all the clothes out of a dyer's shop, put them in the fire, and brought them out again with the proper colors. He was also of great assistance to Joseph, who was a clumsy carpenter; when the things he made were too short Jesus stretched them, and when they were too long he shortened them. Once he spent two years in making a new throne for the King of Jerusalem—a gentleman who only existed in the story-teller's pious imagination. When he came to fix it, he found it was of the wrong size; so Joseph laid hold of one side and Jesus of the other, and they pulled it out to the required dimensions.

Little Jesus turned boys into kids, and the kids into boys again. He made a serpent, that had bitten a boy called Simon, suck the poison out of the wound, so that the serpent died of its own venom. He cured James, who had been bitten by a viper, by blowing on the wound. Being accused of throwing a boy from the top of a house in playing, he made the dead boy cry out that another lad was the culprit. He also gathered up in his mantle a pitcher-full of water that Mary had spilt on the ground. On a Sabbath day he played at making clay birds, and being rebuked for his desecration, he made the clay sparrows fly away chirping. The boy who rebuked him was sent to kingdom-come for his presumption.

Little Jesus went to school to learn his letters, but the precocious child taught his schoolmaster, who exclaimed "I believe this boy was born before Noah." A more learned master offering to whip him, the poor pedagogue's hand withered, and he soon died. When Jesus went up to the Temple, at the age of twelve, he argued with the doctors on law, astronomy, physics, and philosophy. But afterwards he concealed his miraculous powers and knowledge until he was baptised by John, when the Holy Ghost roosted upon his head or shoulder in the form of a dove.

Here endeth the Gospel of the Infancy. It delighted, and possibly edified, many of the early Christians, who accepted it as the Word of God. It is now treated, at least by Protestants, with neglect or contempt. But its stories of Jesus are essentially of the same character as those in the four Gospels. They are told with less art and unmixed with doctrine, yet this is a proof of their primitive origin. Had they been redacted by the writers of the third and fourth centuries they would not have displayed so faithfully the childish credulity of those who first developed the legends of Jesus Christ.

G. W. FOOTE.

PAINE'S APHORISMS.

It has justly been objected to proverbs, maxims, and aphorisms, that they are seldom exactly true. But this is, as Stuart Mill observes is, unfortunately "an objection to all human knowledge." An aphorism should not be taken as an axiom. Time does not permit of setting down every possible qualification of any statement, and the good writer is he who gets nearest to the mark, not with a hundred little taps, but at one single blow.

Thomas Paine had all the leading qualities of a great style. His thought was clear and simple, his expression direct, forcible, and illuminated by those strokes of invention which show the master.

Paine's incisive turn of mind led him to lay down some pregnant saying, or telling truth as the keynote, which was at once the starting-point and summary of his theme. The laconic compactness of many of his sentences warrant their being classed as aphorisms, for aphorisms should be, as Sancho Panza says of his proverbs, "short sentences drawn from a long experience," or, as some others have said, "the wisdom of many concentrated in the wit of one." Paine's aphorisms, however, are not like so many proverbs and sayings, mere trite truisms, which serve as substitutes for thought—they are rather thought-provokers.

"These are the times that try men's souls," he wrote at the head of No. 1 of his *Crisis*, published during the American War of Independence, and the saying became the war-cry of the colonists. Little enough in itself, the phrase was just the spark to fire enthusiasm and make his readers feel their times were equal to all that had gone before, and contained as great opportunities for heroism.

Another phrase, "He pities the plumage and forgets the dying bird,"* exposes the sentimentalism of Burke with his fond regard for dead chivalry and his callousness to the sufferings of the "swinish multitude." Shelley was so struck with Paine's phrase that he made it the title of one of his pamphlets. On Burke, too, Paine use the telling simile, in his *Letter to the Addressers*, "He rose like a rocket, he fell like the stick.'

"A man may write himself out of reputation, when nobody else can do it," says Paine, and the caution is one that should be kept before the minds of prolific authors. "The press is a tongue to the eye," is another of his suggestive similes.

"From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step" is a saying ascribed to Napoleon. It was, however, taken from Paine, for whose works Napoleon, in early life, expressed great admiration, saying the *Rights of Man* should be printed in letters of gold. What Paine says in the *Age of Reason* (pt. ii., *ad fin*, note) is, "One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous,

* My friend, Mr. W. H. Burr, who contends that Paine was Junius, may be glad to notice the parallel of Junius speaking of the "divinity that doth hedge a king" saying, "The feather that adorns the royal bird supports his flight. Strip him of his plumage and you fix him to the earth."

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and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again."

"The pen is mightier than the sword" is another saying found in Lord Lytton's play of *Richelieu*, yet, if my memory does not deceive me, I have come across the same sentiment in Paine. "A man never turns a rogue, but he turns a fool" is another of those sayings of Paine which have been attributed to various authors, and which is vastly more suggestive in its inexactness than any careful disquisition.

How much geology is anticipated and called up by his saying "The caverns of the earth are museums of antiquity." How true is Paine's saying that "the learning any person gains from school education serves only, like a small capital, to put him in the way of learning for himself afterwards."

"It is error only, and not truth that shrinks from inquiry," is a saying which occurs in one of his political pamphlets, but is especially applicable to religion. "If I do not believe as you believe, it proves that you do not believe as *I* believe, and this is all it proves." Of mystery, he says, "Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion." How forcible, too, is the observation that "any system of religion that has anything in it that shocks the mind of a child cannot be a true system."

What can be better than this, on citing the Bible against the Bible: "False testimony is always good against itself;" this on the story of the Crucifixion: "They make the transgressor triumph and the almighty fall"; or this, on the Incarnation: "The belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God, begotten by the Holy Ghost, a being never heard of before, stands on the authority of an old man's dream."

Many of our best writers, from Bacon downwards, have dealt with death, but few have excelled this from the *Crisis*: "Death is not the monarch of the dead, but of the dying. The moment he obtains a conquest he loses a subject."

"The world is my country and to do good my religion" is a splendid saying, dividing at once the cosmopolitan humanity of the *Age of Reason* from the exclusive intolerance of the past.* "Where there is no liberty there is my country" is an equally splendid phrase which Paine used on coming to Europe just before the French Revolution.

I have only culled a few of the sayings of Paine almost haphazard. It would be easy to gather a text-book of political wisdom from his writings, but such passages I have avoided. Pope, who perhaps herein magnified his own office, declared that "Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well," and Dr. Johnson said that anyone who wished to attain this art must give his days and nights to the study of Addison. I venture the suggestion he will also do well to devote an odd hour or so to the study of the much-abused "rebellious needleman," Thomas Paine.

J. M. Wheeler.

"What's the admission to this here show, stranger?" "No charge for admission, sir; this is a church." "Wall, for a free show there don't seem to be much of a rush."

A writer in *Notes and Queries* has re-opened the question of the derivation of the word "religion," citing Cicero for *relegare*, to read again; Lactantius for *religare*, to rebind; St. Augustine for *re-eligare*, to re-elect; and Aulus Gellius, for the ascetic view, *relinquere*, to leave. The controversy about the word is, however, simple compared with the controversy as to religion itself.

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* The *Age of Reason*, by the way, is a capital title, which we conjecture may have been suggested by the famous phrase of Burke's, "the age of chivalry is gone." The *Rights of Man*, another good title, was perhaps suggested by Burke's speech on the Army Estimates, Feb. 9, 1790, in which he said the Revolution had set up a sort of institute and digest of anarchy called the Rights of Man.

A HELPLESS GOD.

By Hugh O. Pentecost.

(From the *Twentieth Century*).

[concluded.]

"Ah, but," says my Theistic or Christian friend, "give him time; God will make everything right in his own good time." Give him time! If you will give *us* time we ourselves can do what is necessary to be done, without God's help. But in the meantime see how many people are hungry, and suffering the torments of the damned—privation, fear, mortification, sickness, ignorance, despair and death at the end of a life that has yielded little but pain and defeat.

"It is a matter of evolution," says the man who tries to fit Darwinism into his theology. Then let us worship evolution, or curse it because it is so slow, but let us not say we have a God if he is bound hand and foot by evolution.

I protest that I do not mean to be irreverent. If I could in any way find a good god, and he would make me understand how his goodness and the world's badness are reconcilable, I would worship him. I cannot now see how he could justify himself for his failure to do something, but if he could I would worship him. If he would satisfactorily explain to me how it happens that the people who say they know him best, know all about his purposes and his will, know that he would do a great deal for the world if the rulers, and legislators, and monopolists, and policemen would only let him, are generally themselves the very people who are hindering him from doing anything, or else are they who do all they can to strengthen those who are standing in his way—if he would satisfactorily explain this curious and puzzling circumstance I would worship him. If I could find this God I would point out to him a number of causes that make the people poor and miserable—they are not far to seek; thousands of persons understand them as well as I—and then if he would satisfactorily explain to me why he does not influence the minds and move the hearts of the people to see these causes and remove them—they are all removable—I would worship him.

I do not mean to be irreverent; I do not hate God, as people say. How can I hate a being whom I never saw, and who never did anything for or against me that I know of? I do not wish to escape the restraints of religion for the purpose of doing evil. I am willing to submit my daily life to the scrutiny of anybody, and will venture to say that it is not more stained with evil than that of the average Church member. I would even be willing to stand a comparison with those who are a little above the average. I do not wish to uselessly crash into people's beliefs, from which they derive comfort or moral strength. But I do wish you to be sensible; to not hug delusions to your breasts; to see clearly that there is no God who can do anything, either for good or evil; that the word God is only a word which means nothing at all; that the clergyman is not the messenger of God, but just a man hired to preach many things that are not true, and whose salary would at once be cut off if he did not defend, by speech or silence, the causes of poverty and misery; that the lawmaker, office-holder, and policeman are not God's ministers of justice, but simply men hired by the persons who spend the taxes, to uphold the system that breeds poverty and misery; that everything that is done to make human life less miserable must be done by men of thought and action; that nothing can be hoped for from God, for if there is any God he is deaf, dumb, blind, and paralyzed—a helpless God.

Teacher: "Now, can any one of the pupils tell me what is meant by the nave of the church?" Bright Boy: "The man who takes up the collection."

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THOSE PIGS ONCE MORE.

HUXLEY'S reply to Gladstone in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century* is a charge of dynamite blowing his *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* to fragments. After giving abundant reason to believe that the keepers of the herd of swine were not, as alleged by Mr. Gladstone, "Hebrews bound by the Mosaic law," but Gentiles, he returns to the real misdemeanor, the wanton destruction of other people's property. He says :—

"But really, whether they that kept the swine were Jews, or whether they were Gentiles, is a consideration which has no revelance whatever to my case. The legal provisions which alone had authority over an inhabitant of the country of the Gadarenes were the Gentile laws sanctioned by the Roman suzerain of the province of Syria, just as the only law which has authority in England is that recognised by the sovereign Legislature. Jewish communities in England may have their private code, as they doubtless had in Gadara. But an English magistrate, if called upon to enforce their peculiar laws, would dismiss the complainants from the judgment seat, let us hope with more politeness than Gallio did in a like case, but quite as firmly. Moreover, in the matter of keeping pigs we may be quite certain that Gadarene law left everybody free to do as he pleased, indeed encouraged the practice rather than otherwise. Not only was pork one of the commonest and one of the most favorite articles of Roman diet; but, to both Greeks and Romans, the pig was a sacrificial animal of high importance. Sucking pigs played an important part in Hellenic purificatory rites; and everybody knows the significance of the Roman suovetaurilia, depicted on so many bas-reliefs."

"Suppose a modern English Sabbatarian fanatic, who believes, on the strength of his interpretation of the fourth commandment, that it is a deadly sin to work on the 'Lord's Day,' sees a fellow Puritan yielding to the temptation of of getting in his harvest on a fine Sunday morning—is the former justified in setting fire to the latter's corn? Would not an English court of justice speedily teach him better?"

HEAVEN ON THE STAGE.

They get a lot of work out of Heaven, on the stage. Heaven does all the odd jobs for them that they don't want to go to the trouble and expense of doing for themselves. Heaven's chief duty, on the stage, is to see to the repayment of all those sums of money that are given or lent to the good people. It is generally requested to do this to the tune of "a thousandfold," an exorbitant rate, when you come to think of it.

Heaven is also expected to take care that the villain gets properly cursed, and to fill up its spare time in bringing misfortune on the local landlord. It has to avenge everybody, and to help all the good people whenever they are in trouble. And they keep it going in this direction.

And when the hero leaves for prison, Heaven has to take care of his wife and child till he comes out; and if this isn't a handful for it we don't know what would be.

Heaven, on the stage, is always on the side of the hero and heroine, and against the police.—*Jerome K. Jerome*, "*In Stage Land*," p. 25.

Our esteemed and ever-lively contemporary, the *Ironclad Age*, of Indianopolis, Nov. 29, reprints Mr. Wheeler's "Why we Attack the Clergy" and Mr. T. Clark's lines on Job from our pages. A Happy New Year to you, Dr. Monroe. May the shadow of the *Ironclad Age* never grow less!

Col. Ingersoll nails another lie on the head, as the following from the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* will show:

A clipping was shown me to-day from your paper, in which it is stated:

1. That ten years ago I made a prediction that ten years from that time two theatres would be built for one church; and
2. That Chaplain McCabe had written me a letter calling my attention to the prediction, and stating that the Methodists were building four churches a day.

There are two mistakes in this articles: First, I never made the prediction; and second, I never received any letter from Chaplain McCabe on the subject. With these exceptions the article is correct. R. G. INGERSOLL.

REVIEWS.

Discovery of the Action of Oxygen on the Heart and Brain. By E. T. CRAIG.—In this pamphlet Mr. Craig claims to have been the original discoverer that excess of carbonic acid in the blood was the cause of heart disease, and cites a letter from Dr. C. Black, who made this discovery known in the pages of the *Lancet*, in which he says: "My testimonial makes you safe on the question of priority."

The Status of American Spiritualism. By J. J. MORSE, 80 Needham Road, Kensington, Liverpool; 1890.—Mr. Morse is a spiritist lecturer who paid a four years' visit to the United States. His account of the movement in that land of its rebirth will repay the perusal of those interested in spiritism, whether as a phase of philosophy or survival of superstition. Mr. Morse confesses: "There can be no question that the bulk of the public movement has been considerably contracted, that the meetings are not so large as in former years, that the places holding meetings are not so numerous, that the effort to sustain meetings involves a greater strain, and that the quality of many of the lectures does not equal that of former years." The Mind Cure, Christian Science, Theosophy and other phases of credulity have superseded spiritism in the minds of those ever on the look out for some new fad, while also, as Mr. Morse observes, "numerous exposures of rascality have left their slimy tracts across our fair fields." Mr. Morse does not mention the recantation and reversion of Maggie Fox, one of the original founders of modern spiritism. He gives the usual statement about the number of active spiritualists being between three and four millions. But the circulation of the three or four weekly papers advocating it does not corroborate this estimate. With this exception Mr. Morse's statement seems fair and moderate. Spiritualism is among the forces helping to break up Christian orthodoxy, even if it replaces it with another delusion.

THE SALE OF SOULS.

Here is an advertisement from the circular of an Ecclesiastical Office which does business by selling the cure of souls: "The Advowson of a Very Desirable Rectory.—Situation very beautiful and healthy. Soil, gravel. Climate dry and bracing. Two miles from railway station, and within easy reach of several good towns. Good hunting, shooting and fishing. Society select. Population, 290. Income, net, £784 15s. 9d. Weekly services. Very little visiting required. The Church and Rectory House are in good condition and certified by Diocesan surveyor. Immediate possession."

This means £780 a year, with next to nothing to do, to any sky-pilot who can lay down sufficient money to purchase the living. But how can the buyer be assured of immediate possession? The matter is worked in this way. The person in possession, presuming him to be the seller, cannot resign, but what he can do is to accept another living, whereupon his own becomes *ipso facto* vacant. Or if, as is usually the case, the possessor of the living is not the owner, and refuses to die or quit, he is offered a consideration to accept another living. The clerical agents keep in hand a small stock of meagre livings of the class known as donatives, and these are used as instruments for the removal of a man who is wanted out of the way. The latter accepts one of the livings, and a certain sum of money which, of course, comes either directly or indirectly out of the agent's clients' pocket, and leaves the road open for the future incumbent.

A peculiarity of these "donatives" is that they are, to a great extent, independent of the bishops. They can be accepted or resigned without his interference, and so, judiciously used, serve for the traffickers in souls a very useful purpose.

The *Brighton Guardian* replies to a letter from Mr. C. E. Ford, in which that gentleman gives the criminal statistics of Hindustan as under:

Europeans	criminals	1 in 274
Eurasians	"	1 " 509
Native Christians	"	1 " 799
Mahommedans	"	1 " 856
Hindoos	"	1 " 1361
Buddhists	"	1 " 3787

The *B. G.* says Mr. Ford is somewhat rash in assuming that the introduction of Europeans always means the introduction of Christianity. But how is it the native baptised Christians have a larger proportion of criminals than the native Hindoos and Buddhists. Christ said "By their fruits ye shall know them."

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ACID DROPS.

Price Hughes has been spouting at Accrington and boasting as usual of the power of Nonconformity. He instanced its driving Parnell from the leadership of the Irish party, although that was done (if it *is* done) principally by Mr. Gladstone's letter, and Mr. Gladstone is a Churchman. After boasting in this way, it was curious to hear the little Methodist Pope admitting that the men of every country in Europe are regularly absenting themselves from places of worship. Well, and what is the reason of this? Oh, says Price Hughes, it is because we don't apply the principles of Jesus Christ. Stuff and nonsense, sir! It is because Christianity is played out, intellectually and morally. Men of sense and education will have nothing to do with it, unless they are committed to it and their living lies that way. They leave it to showmen like Booth and epicene spouters like Price Hughes, well aware that as it began in lies so in lies it will end.

Price Hughes takes his wife about with him as the head of the Sisterhood. This is a leaf out of Booth's book, but Mrs. Hughes will never equal the woman whose corpse was trundled about by the Grand Old Showman.

By the way, Price Hughes, like the consummate (though not colossal) humbug he is, talked to the Accrington folk for half an hour on the drink question. He has the impudence to pretend that Christianity is in favor of teetotalism. Now, in the first place, it is not, for the Bible contains many a good drinking text, and the most miraculous of Jesus Christ's miracles was the turning of seventy-five gallons of water into wine; and, in the next place, what a time of day to find out that the Bible is a temperance book! It was never discovered until the Temperance movement won ground without the help of the clergy. When the clergy saw the thing was succeeding they shouted "Hallelujah! we did it!" It is a lie; it is also a lie to say that the Bible favors teetotalism; and it is a greater lie to say that Price Hughes has any partiality for the truth.

Said one of the Indian ghost-dancers to an agent who wished to have dancing stopped, "It is our Church just the same as the white man's Church, only that we don't pass round the hat."

It is not generally known how large a feature dancing was of ancient religious worship, though Bible readers have some hint in David's dancing before the ark, and in Ps. cxlix., 3, "Let them praise his name in the dance." Our word *choir* comes from the Greek "to dance," and dancing was at one time a part of worship, even in the Christian Church. Corybantic Christianity did not commence with the Salvation Army.

The Indian Messiah's full name is Johnson Sides, not merely Johnson, as we gave it out recently. Let us be accurate about the names of the white and red men's gods and saviors—Jesus Christ and Johnson Sides.—*Ironclad Age.*

Mr. Pain (we are glad he spells it without the *e*), dating from the "Prizeries," Folkestone, advertises a curious Prize Competition. The entrance fee is two shillings, receivable of course by Mr. Pain; and the prizes are from £30 to £1, also payable by the said Mr. Pain. The competitors have to count the number of times certain letters occur in stated portions of the Bible. Mr. Pain's method of earning a living is, to say the least of it, peculiar; and our readers will notice with a smile that he baits his hook for Bible fish.

The Rev. T. N. R. James, rector of Luckington, Wilts., got off easy with a fine and costs of £7 16s. for hitting a choir-boy over the head with a Prayer Book, in brutal fashion. If the boy had hit the parson he would probably have got a month.

An action for libel seems likely to arise out of the Passion Play. A German lady novelist has just published a story in which the Christus of the play is made to fall in love with a lady of dubious propriety. The scene is laid in our own time; and as Joseph Mayer has played the part of Christus for three decades in succession, he considers himself libelled by the story, and has demanded redress.

In one of Carlyle's letters in Wemyss Reid's *Life of Lord Houghton*, he speaks thus of religion and priests in Belgium: "They have still a remnant of quasi-worship among them, and crowds of the nastiest, ugly, fat priests, whom you could not occasionally divest yourself of a horrible passing desire to slaughter, and cure as bacon."

The Rev. N. E. Howe, vicar of Swindon, has been suspended from his living for three years for improper conduct with a young lady.

Another little massacre of Christians at Sze-chuen indicates that the heathen Chinee has not lost his loathing of the foreign devils and their religion. In the eyes of the celestial Christianity is a pernicious religion which comes to destroy filial affection, the basis of their own morality and religion.

The appeal of Father Cas, the Belgian missionary, to the High Court of Calcutta against the sentence of one hundred rupees fine, or two months' imprisonment, passed upon him by the magistrate of Lohardugga, Bengal, has not merely failed, but has resulted in the substitution of a sentence of eight months' imprisonment. This curious case appears to have arisen in a quarrel between the missionary and a Bengal Zemindar which resulted in a hostile affray with Zemindar's retainers, in the course of which shots were fired on both sides, and Father Cas broke the arm of one of his antagonists by a ball from a Winchester rifle. Father Cas, it appears, after the manner of missionaries, forced his presence where he was not wanted.

Thomas Henderson, a prominent pietist of Newark and secretary to the Barnbygate Wesleyan Sunday-school, is wanted to answer a charge under the new Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Last Sunday evening a parson and a lady were sitting in a certain railway waiting-room. A porter was cleaning lamps outside, and as he worked he whistled a popular hymn. The parson and the lady looked pleased. *She* remarked that the Church service was ingrained in the working people's minds, and *he* said "Yes, in spite of much Atheism being abroad." Just then the porter started singing—

> There was a man in Kensal Green,
> He was an ancient sire,
> He drank so much of whiskey hot
> That he set the Thames on fire.

Curtain! N.B.—We didn't hear this from the parson.

Was Moses a Writer? is the *ad captandum* title of a book by the Rev. A. Sayce. One might fancy he had some evidence that the traditional law-giver went in for journalism. Not at all. All he does is to show that the art of writing was in existence before the time ascribed to Moses, and then you can jump to the inference that Moses wrote down the elaborate ceremonial laws of tabernacle worship in the wilderness—if you like.

The *Maldon Express* records the death of an eccentric, who, when walking out, would never look back, fearing that if he did so he would, like Lot's wife, be changed into a pillar of salt. If anyone marvels that this old legend should exercise such senseless influence at the present day, they should observe that Jesus Christ said "Remember Lot's wife," and this utterance is regarded as divine by all orthodox Christians.

A clear proof that Christian charity don't begin at home. First Tramp: "Where did you get that fine overcoat?" Second Tramp: "In the big house at the corner." First Tramp: "I went there this morning shivering with cold, and they wouldn't give me a rag." Second Tramp: "I didn't ask for clothes for myself. I told 'em it was for the poor heathen in Central Africa."

It is reported that an occurrence unprecedented in any religious service happened at a confirmation held at St. Paul's Church, Deptford, by the Bishop of Rochester.

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Whilst the last hymn was being sung, a collection was started. Thereupon the Bishop exclaimed, "An offertory during confirmation? Never heard of such a thing. Let us pray."

The *Inquirer*, noticing Mr. Wheeler's article on Unitarianism, or, rather, noticing a letter from the Rev. W. Rodger Smyth, sent to that journal in answer, takes exception to the latter part of the statement that Dr. Martineau is "the ablest exponent of the least advanced school of modern Unitarians." The editor goes on to say that Dr. Martineau belongs neither to the least nor the most advanced school of Unitarians. This is a matter of opinion, but when he says "Probably the writer has not read *The Seat of Authority in Religion*" he is wrong on a matter of fact. If the editor had read Mr. Wheeler's article he might have gathered that that work was referred to as a proof that the least advanced school of Unitarians had advanced. The editor of the *Inquirer* would have done well to leave the article to be dealt with by Mr. Smyth, who did read it.

Liverpool has two bishops, both full of the Holy Ghost, though supplied from different taps. One is a Protestant and the other a Catholic, and the love that is lost between them would not add to the warmth of a toad. One of the Catholic bishop's underlings, Father Dubberly, has been holding forth on the Archbishop of Canterbury's judgment in the Bishop of Lincoln's case. Throughout his discourse Father Dubberly was girding at Bishop Ryle, who is a sturdy plain man (having buried two wives and married a third), and objects to all kinds of ritualism. All the chief points of Christ's life are taken, and the Catholic preacher shows that from Bethlehem to Bethany (or wherever it was the Savior levitated) there was plenty of display. Indeed, Father Dubberly goes so far as to surmise that Bishop Ryle would regard the ascension as a transformation scene in a pantomime. Certainly these Christians are a happy family.

Miracles pay nowadays better than in Palestine. There is, says the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, much jealousy in the French Episcopacy at the sudden rise of the See of Tarbes, owing to the pilgrimages to Lourdes. It was one of the least important in France thirty years ago. The Episcopal income is now higher than that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all because of the miraculous fountain above which the girl Bernadette claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary. The priests always take care that the Almighty works his wonders for their benefit.

The *Christian Million* sees a sign that England is still religious in the fact that next after "fiction" the largest number of books published are classed under the head "theological." But query. Should not this division come in the same category as the first? Some prefer their fiction to be human, others superhuman.

They say that Stead's telegraphic address is (or ought to be) "God, London." Perhaps "Tartuffe" would be equally recognisable.

According to the *Speaker*, the late Dean Church was offended by Buckle's dogmatism. He liked men to be honest but also—and especially, it would seem, if they were Freethinkers—to be humble. "Thus the fact that Mr. John Morley disowned the creed of Christendom did not prevent him from writing two of the most charming volumes in Mr. Morley's series of 'Men of Letters.' He believed Mr. Morley to be profoundly sincere, and he disclaimed the right of sitting in judgment on his attitude towards the Christian Faith."

This is very comforting, but we should hardly have given humility as one of Mr. Morley's distinguishing characteristics. Nor, on the other hand, did Buckle display any immodesty. He said what he thought the truth as though he meant it, just as Huxley does; and no doubt this is offensive enough to the scholarly trimmers of the Church of England.

It is also comforting to know that Dean Church would not sit in judgment on Mr. John Morley. But as that is already done by the Athanasian Creed, which is part of the Church Prayer Book, little is gained by the Dean's forbearance.

The late Baron Huddleston was a bigoted old gentleman. We shall never forget the look of horror with which he held up our prosecuted Christmas Number for 1882 in the Court of Queen's Bench and said that "no man could doubt it was a blasphemous libel on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." His dear brother North sat on the bench beside him and concurred in this pious sentiment. However, it was a good while ago, and Huddleston is dead, and will never hear any more blasphemy, unless he is gone to the wrong place, where blasphemy is said to be pretty common. Besides, the old gentleman (we mean Huddleston) did one sensible thing before dying. He ordered his body to be cremated, and the process was duly carried out at Woking.

Maurice Philips, writing from Madras in the *Independent*, says: "Nearly 2000 years after the coming of the Son of Man, nearly nine-tenths of the human race are ignorant of him, and even of those who know him only a small number have found life in him." D'Holbach said, last century, that if God had spoken all the world would be convinced. That so many are ignorant of Christianity or reject it is a sufficient refutation of its divine claims.

The Bishop of Nova Scotia has an exalted view of the authority of priests. The congregation of a church in Charlottetown deposed their pastor on account of ritualistic practices. The bishop elevated him to an archdeaconry. Being called upon to induct another rector chosen by the parishioners, his lordship said: "It is not the people's place to watch if their rector teaches orthodox doctrine, or to criticise his preaching. They should be *willing to learn* from their minister. They should receive him as Jesus Christ himself. Then (exclaimed the bishop with emphasis) would you dare to criticise Jesus Christ?" Yes, when Christians dare to examine their own idol the days of priests will be over.

There is a story of a former preacher at the Temple Church, who, one hot Sunday, thought he would refresh himself by a walk in the Temple Gardens until the time came for his sermon to be delivered. The garden was locked during service time, and an old woman temporarily in charge of the gate was deaf to all appeals for admittance. "I think you cannot know who I am," said the preacher with dignity. "I am Dr.——and have come here to preach the sermon to-day." "Then the more shame of you to want to be walking about the gardens, instead of going in to the service," retorted the undaunted old dame.

The Rev. C. Lambert, vicar of Baydon, Wilts., tells a strange story of having met a man without any head on a moonlight night, between Aldbourne and Baydon. He (the man without the head, not the vicar) suddenly disappeared. The vicar (not the man without the head) does not say what he had been eating and drinking previously.

Mr. Robert Buchanan's bouncible letter to the *Times* in reply to Professor Huxley is justly censured in the *Speaker*. Our contemporary, however, thinks the Professor himself is too apprehensive as to the dangers of a silly fanaticism which is being nursed into colossal proportions. Those whom Booth rescues from the Slough of Despond "may be trusted to exercise their faculties like other citizens," and "in that event the probability is that General Booth's theological fold will not contain them." Certainly there is some force in this contention, but we believe it will only apply to a certain per centage. Whether any real social good is effected or not, the gain to the Salvation Army in money, prestige, and recruits, is hardly contestible.

Blasphemy is spreading with a vengeance! Some of our readers have heard the story of the Cornish parson whose congregation was given to wrecking. One morning, in the middle of the sermon, the news was spread through the church that a ship was ashore, and the whole male half of the congregation prepared to leave the house of God. "Stop," cried the parson, "stop sinners and resume your seats." They did so, and the man of God, bounding down the pulpit steps, cried "Now then, let us start fair!" Such is the old yarn, and it was actually worked up into a three-column story in last week's *Speaker*—a respectable sixpenny journal!

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 21, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "The Son of a Ghost."

Dec. 28, Hall of Science, London.

January 4, Milton Hall; 11, Hall of Science; 18, Huddersfield; 25, Hall of Science.

February 1, Hull; 8, Leeds; 15, South Shields; 22, Newcastle.

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Hall of Science.

April 12, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Literary communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

S. **Standring.**—Glad to hear of your encounter with Celestine Edwards. We suspected that the *Eastern Argus* report was unfair, but did not know its full depth of meanness. Such "victories" are easily won. Edwards himself is a stupendous ignoramus. He once charged Thomas Paine with helping to kill Louis the Fourteenth!! Thanks for your good wishes, which we reciprocate.

J. **Kaspary.**—If you want a letter inserted in any journal you should write civilly. You have a perfect right to think Atheists ignorant, conceited and dishonest, but you must have a good deal of the middle quality to expect us to print your effusions.

A. **Willcox.**—See "Acid Drops."

Lecture Notices must reach us not later than first post on Monday, Dec. 22, as we go to press on that date, owing to Christmas holidays.

P. **James.**—(1) We are quite aware that Mr. G. B. Shaw is still an Atheist. Only a few months ago we printed his public profession of Atheism at a meeting of the Shelley Society. (2) Yes, the Booth articles will be reprinted. (3) We have a notion of reprinting the Atheistic part of the *System of Nature*. But we should have to make a fresh translation, as the current one is not too accurate, and often exaggerates the diffuseness of the original. (4) Thanks for the cuttings.

Bible Romances.—The date referred to is that of the Babylonian originals. The word you inquire about denotes a dog-headed ape. Witches were butchered for raising a tempest so late as the reign of James I.

E. **Sims.**—We agree with you that Mr. Forder deserves a good testimonial. You speak of his kindness and attention. So do all. We do not believe he has a single enemy.

T. **Clark.**—Your newsagent should insist on his wholsale agent exchanging unsold copies. We supply the trade on sale or return. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

J. P. **Silkstone.**—The Booth articles will be reprinted.

B. C. H.—May be useful. Thanks.

C. **Doeg.**—See "Acid Drops."

R. G. **Lees.**—We know of no limit.

H. **Lyon.**—All right. The date is now entered.

P. S.—No bequest for a Freethought purpose is legal. Four years ago a sum of £500 left by Mr. Spencer, of Manchester, to assist the local Secularists in raising a hall, was intercepted on this ground. Your Christian friend may be too dense to understand this, but the Freethinkers who lost the £500 cannot share his scepticism.

W. **Thomas.**—We have lost sight of our old artist, otherwise we should have issued a double number next week. If we can manage it our first number in the new year shall be a double one with illustrations, but we are not able to make a definite promise.

Forder Testimonial Fund.—We have received the following: Dr. Laing, 10s.; J. Lumb, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Paul, 5s.; E. Sims, 5s.; S. H. Coles, 2s. 6d.; C. Fitzwater, 1s.; Blackburn Branch, 10s.; J. H. Levy, 10s.; J. G. Fisher, 2s. 6d.

R. **Weightman.**—It is rather too long for reproduction in our pages. Delighted to learn that the Sunderland Branch is making good progress. Mr. Foote's health is all right at present.

W. **Johnson.**—Thanks for your offer to take 10s. worth of the Booth pamphlet. We should be glad to see an active Branch at Wolverhampton.

J. **Saunders** (Reading).—We note your emendation of the story, that the sovereign was given for a lecture against tobacco not against Freethought. The verses are hardly up to your former level.

Converted Catholic.—The Confessional is a delicate subject and needs to be dealt with by a dexterous pen. We are glad to hear that your conversion to Secularism has made you sober and studious. You will find a tract by Mr. Wheeler on the Bible and Teetotalism in our cheap "Freethinker Tracts." You do not say in what special subject you desire our literary guidance.

Papers Received.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt — Freidenker — The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought — Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Midland News—Wolverhampton Express and Star—Watts's Literary Gazette—Flaming Sword—Maldon Express—Marlborough Times—Lancashire Evening Post—Countryman—Midland Free Press—Grimsby News—Northampton Reporter—Twentieth Century—Progressive Thinker—Echo—Brighton Guardian—Portsmouth Evening News—Sussex Evening Times—Swidon Advertiser—La Verité—L'Eclair—L'Egalite—Bulletin des Sommaires—Ironclad Age—Temperance World—Brighton Gazette.

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

Correspondence should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Next week's *Freethinker* will be published on Tuesday instead of Thursday, in order that the Christmas holidays may not interfere with our circulation. It will contain a special article by Mr. Foote on "The Son of a Ghost." Mr. Wheeler will also contribute an article on "Old Christmas Customs."

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science on Sundays, December 21 and 28. He will deliver two special discourses on "The Son of a Ghost," and on "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith."

Manchester was very cold and foggy on Sunday, but fair audiences came to the Secular Hall in the morning and afternoon, and a full one in the evening. Mr. Foote's opponents were the Rev. Mr. Coller, who was didactic, as usual, and a comical person named Coleman, who, without being witty, caused immoderate laughter. Such discussion is not very edifying, but it seems to be the best the Christians are prepared to offer.

We are glad to learn that the Manchester Branch is fairly prosperous. The committee works very hard, and certainly deserves success.

The London Secular Federation's annual dinner is looked forward to by many who have attended the previous gatherings. It will take place at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, on Monday, January 5. Dinner will be served at half-past seven. The tickets are half-a-crown, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, of any Branch secretary, or of the Federation secretary, Mr. E. Pownceby, 9 Finsbury Street, E.C. Mr. Foote will preside, and the list of other speakers includes Messrs. A. B. Moss, G. Standring, S. Standring, J. H. Ellis, J. Hunt, J. M. Wheeler, R. Forder, and Miss Vance. Besides the after-dinner speeches there will be plenty of good music. Altogether the diners may expect a very enjoyable evening.

Mr. Bradlaugh was of course invited to the Federation dinner, but his health is too uncertain to allow of his forming an engagement. Our old President was evidently far from well the other evening when lecturing for the Forder Testimonial Fund. Unfortunately the evening was very foggy, and most of the audience would gladly have spared Mr. Bradlaugh the infliction. It is to be hoped that he will be careful of his health and not run the risk of another breakdown.

The London Secular Federation has arranged a fresh course of Free Lectures. They will be given in the Athenæum, Tottenham Court Road, on Thursday evenings, January 8, 15, 22, and 29. Mr. Foote opens and closes the course. The other lecturers are Messrs. R. Forder and G. Standring.

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Freethinkers in the district should, if possible, induce their orthodox friends to attend these meetings.

The *Grimsby News* gives insertion to a long letter on the Four Gospels from Mr. J. W. Wittening, who quotes with effect from the *Crimes of Christianity*.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures at Grimsby to-day (Dec. 21). We hope our friends in that quarter will give him a good reception.

Mrs. Besant and Mr. F. Millar debated "Socialism *v.* Individualism" together at Nottingham. A report of the discussion is published (price 2d.) by C. J. Welton, 42 Milton Street, Nottingham, and can also be obtained of Mr. R. Forder. The copy sent us is marked "For review"; but, instead of passing a judgment, we refer our readers to the report, and let them judge for themselves.

A story is related in legal circles concerning the new judge of the Queen's Bench Division, which may now be told (writes the London correspondent of the *Birmingham Post*). When Cardinal Newman was entertained some five or six years ago at Oriel College, Oxford, Mr. R. S. Wright, who is an Oriel Fellow, happened to be his next door neighbor. The Cardinal, with an earnest desire to be friendly, asked Mr. Wright what was the state of religious feeling in the university. It is stated that the new judge, whose theological opinions are understood to be like those of Mr. Justice Stephen, replied, "It is now distinctly against Christianity."

Wit and Wisdom reports a remarkable interview with the Rev. W. A. Momerie, Professor at King's College. Dr. Momerie goes farther than the editor of *Lux Mundi* in regard to Inspiration. Witness the following passage:—"The Bible does not make the ghost of a vestige of claim to inspiration in the orthodox sense. All that is good and great in it is inspired. But the Bible is full of contradictions and inaccuracies which are not inspired, therefore it cannot be inspired as a whole. No educated man can honestly believe it is inspired in history or science. Huxley in science or Freeman in history are far more inspired. The inspiration of the Bible must be restricted to moral and spiritual matters, and even then it is as low at times as any book. I consider that 'In Memoriam' is in advance of St. John's Gospel, but 'In Memoriam' would never have existed if Christ or St. John had not first lived. Its best part, the power of suffering, is taken from St. John. Both the writers of *Lux Mundi* and Gladstone in his *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, admit the bad science and history of the Bible. Take the Bible at its best in philosophy and then it is only on a level with German criticism. St. Paul at times is quite up to Hegel. It is a mere question of degree and subject. All that is highest and best in us is inspired."

With regard to Hell and Miracles, Dr. Momerie expressed himself thus: "Hell is another word for punishment, which is a matter of experience. I of course do not acknowledge the orthodox hell. As regards miracles, I simply say that the whole trouble is explained thus: Miracles are seen by those who *expect* to see them. There is no reason to suppose that when a miracle occurred a violation of nature took place. Some of Christ's 'miracles,' such as those with the 'unclean spirits,' may have been akin to the modern hynoptism. The Evangelists were honest but ignorant. Remember, the unscientific mind looks upon the unusual—not the usual—as the special proof of God." The interviewer then asked, "Don't you believe Christ rose again?" Dr. Momerie replied: "Certainly not physically. Why, do you? Come, I shall have to interview *you*. All great religious teachers have had an immaculate conception, a physical resurrection—Gautama as well as Christ. But Christ did not rise in his body. Flesh and blood *cannot* inherit the kingdom." It must be a spiritual resurrection."

Dr. Momerie's Christianity is thus devoid of every distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith. He falls back on God and Immortality, which are pre-Christian ideas. Indeed, it seems pretty evident that the Churches are being driven back point by point, and are retreating to the immemorial basis of religion. Whether they will be able to defend it, in the long run, is open to a difference of opinion.

The *Athenæum*, noticing the third volume of Renan's *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, says, "The strength of the illustrious author lies in recalling to life a history not only dead, but for the majority of us, buried beneath traditional misinterpretation. In his pages the dry bones of the vanished actors live."

Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker, of Boston, has produced a translation of *My Uncle Benjamin*, by Claude Tillier, a French Freethinker little known in this country, but of whom there is a sketch in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

Mr. A. C. Swinburne contributes a paper on Victor Hugo to the December number of *The North American Review*.

Helen H. Gardener, authoress of *Men, Women, and Gods*, has issued at Boston a Freethought novel with the curious title, *Is This Your Son, my Lord?*

The Wolverhampton *Express* reports a lecture by Mr. S. Bransby in reply to the Rev. D. A. J. Harrison. Mr. Bransby had a capital meeting, which included many Christians, and we have no doubt he dropped some Freethought seed into promising soil. The *Express* also inserts an outspoken letter, on the Secular side, from Mr. James Davidson.

Any one who wants to see what the average Londoner really thinks of Sabbath observance should go to one of the parks on Sunday during a hard frost. God should be much gratified if his worshippers exhibit half the zest shown by the skaters and sliders in enjoying themselves while the season lasts.

The Countryman writes energetically in favor of the Sunday opening of the Leicester Library Art Gallery and Museum, and cites the following testimony from the Sheriff of Norwich:—"Our Free Library Reading Rooms have been opened on Sundays for about ten months, from three to nine p.m. The conduct of the people is all that can be desired, and the numbers frequenting it are from 200 to 300, and apparently not the same people who use the rooms on week-days." By a majority of one the Town Council has decided to open on Sunday, as an experiment, for one year.

The opponents of Sunday opening at Leicester, took the ground that it was a Secularist movement advocated by the same persons who wished to place Freethought literature upon the library table. That after this a majority of one was gained for the experiment shows that Leicester is not recreant to her Radical traditions.

Mr. Symes writes very encouragingly in the *Liberator*. He says that despite the strike the sale of the paper has kept up, and that there are signs of the extension of Freethought in Western Australia. All he asks of his friends is, that like himself, they shall "keep pegging away."

"The Freethinkers' Pictorial Text Book" comes to us from the New York *Truthseeker* office. It contains the best of Watson Heston's cartoons which have appeared in that journal, with interesting letterpress on the opposite page. We do not know the price of this bulky volume. Mr. Heston has ideas, though his drawing is rather crude, and his sketches will be prized by many Americans and, perhaps, by some Englishmen.

Having abolished the State Church, and put religion in its proper place, the Brazil Republic has taken Education in hand. Quite ninety per cent. of the population are illiterate, and to remedy this grievous state of things schools are to be erected in all parts of the country and adequately provided with teachers. After this it is idle to expect the restoration of the Monarchy or any serious reaction.

Comprehensive Cookery is the title of an excellent shilling volume published by Pitman. The author is Mrs. E. May, and her remarkably clear directions are based on the rules of Dr. Allinson's hygienic establishment.

Mr. Foote has decided to reprint his articles on Booth's Book in pamphlet form. They will be carefully revised and augmented. Many persons have pressed Mr. Foote to do this, and several friends have promised to take a considerable number of copies for distribution. We hope to have the pamphlet on sale next week.

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A SPIRITUALISTIC SEANCE.

CHRISTIANITY renders men susceptible to very undesirable developments of the various false beliefs it inculcates. Even among partially emancipated people who have already rejected the more incredible and inhuman features of Christianity, the liberty thus acquired is apt to be misused in the eager pursuit of some of the primary animistic delusions on which their former orthodoxy was based. It was in some such frame of mind, I suspect, that a friend of mine once commenced "investigating" Spiritualism—or rather, as it seems to me, commenced falling into the spiritualistic trap, in company with some of his religious friends and relatives who were more credulous than himself. A private *séance* was arranged, and among the people he invited to be present were myself and two or three others who contributed a much needed element to the party. I think, indeed, that our friend had the sense to secure our presence for the special reason that our "hard headed" sceptical tendencies would be a valuable corrective to the too ready belief likely to be accorded to spiritualistic phenomena by the rest of the company.

Wishing to see the expected phenomena in full force if possible, and thoroughly appreciating the shy habits of the spirits when confronted by the chilling influence of *evident* unbelief, we of the sceptical element had arranged that no signs of doubt should be displayed by any of us. Repairing to the house where Mr. and Mrs. X., as I call them, were to introduce the spirit world to our notice, we sat down quietly with some twenty others in a double parlor with the folding doors thrown open. Presently a young married couple were introduced and appeared to act as decoy ducks on behalf of the actual medium, who had not yet arrived. They professed to be only unbiassed inquirers, but entertained us with plenty of gushing talk in which they gave artless statements of what they had seen and heard from thoroughly trustworthy friends. After (as it seemed to me) the ground had thus been prepared and tested, Mr. and Mrs. X., arrived. Mr. X. entered the room first. He was a nervous insignificant individual with a sneaking furtive look about his eyes. He did not seem to know where to let his glances rest. I quite pitied him for the anxieties and difficulties attending a life of imposture. He explained that the room would have to be in perfect darkness, and that the fires must be put out at once. The hostess urged that as the weather was so cold and the fires were burnt down to red cinders they might be allowed to remain to keep the room warm, but as Mr. X. was inexorable the glowing ashes were duly raked out and left to extinguish themselves while he talked spiritualistic rubbish sprinkled with misapplied scientific terms and direct misstatement of scientific facts.

When Mrs. X. came in it was at once evident that in this case the grey mare was the better horse. It was she who had the gifts as a medium, and the husband merely played a very weak second fiddle. She was a bold, full-sized woman, who went through her work in a most business-like way. There was no nonsense about her. She seated herself at a corner of the table, the gas was turned out, and she did not keep us waiting long for the "evidences" of the presence of the spirits. Conditions were pronounced favorable, and slight knocks were heard. The lady said she would run through the alphabet to see what the spirits wanted. She did so in a hasty fashion that indicated frequent rehearsal and consequent impatience of the tiresome repetition, till she came to the letter S, to which the spirit replied by knocking. "Oh, *sing*, dear," she said to her husband; "that's what they want. Let us sing something." Then in the pitch-black darkness the company sung a religious song or hymn about the "land beyond the river," which was evidently intended to put the audience in a solemn spiritualistic frame of mind.

After the fitting introduction of religion and darkness, the real business of the evening commenced. Knocking, however, was too slow a method for the enterprise and ability of our lady medium. She would endeavor to bring us into more direct communication with the spirits, as they seemed in a sympathetic humor that night and might be induced to *speak* to us. Presently a peculiar voice was heard, and she said to her husband, "That's Peter, dear." Then she gave us some pretty good specimens of ventriloquism, or rather voice-mimicry, all supposed of course to be the direct utterance of various visitors from the land beyond the river. She had names for the different spirits, who were supposed to speak as they floated about somewhere or other in the room, and in the intervals of the ventriloquism she resumed her natural voice and talked familiarly of them to her husband. One spirit spoke in a hoarse bass voice, which must have cost the lady considerable effort. Another spoke in a small piping tone. She individualised the voices by broad contrasts, just as a common ventriloquist would do. The language was mostly of a vaguely religious and didactic character, but with nothing decisive on doctrinal points.

I sat next but one to Mrs. X., and the pretended voices of the spirits all came directly from her, and from no other part of the room. I managed to just see the edge of her face against a crack in the folding window-shutters. I fancied I could detect the motion caused by her ventriloquial exertions, but the circumstances were too adverse to allow me to speak positively on the point. A friend who was next the lady told me afterwards that he felt some of those slight particles of saliva which are thrown out in energetic vocal efforts.

After the company had been duly impressed by short sermons and messages from the spirits—and most of the company, I believe, were very seriously impressed thereby—the gas was lit again. A number of questions were then asked concerning the state in which the spirits existed and their occupations. The lady fenced with these questions rather than answered them, and added suggestions or questions of her own, so that curiosity was provoked rather than satisfied. She was most anxious, however, to be told where the voices seemed to come from. There was a general hesitation on this point, and signs of a disposition to assign them to any quarter but the right one.

Who, even if he fancied he had rightly detected the exact direction from which these strange voices proceeded amidst perfect darkness and unusual circumstances, would care to point out that they came from the mouth of the lady herself, and thus directly make her out to be an impostor? Ordinary politeness and ordinary timidity would alike shrink from taking the bull by the horns in this rough manner. As to such observers as myself, it was of course our business simply to see the thing through—which we could not have done if we had discouraged the spirits by manifest hostility. Mrs. X. tried hard to get expressions of opinion as to the voices proceeding from different parts of the room, but was not altogther successful. Friend Z., for one, happened to be challenged by her as to whence *he* thought the voices appeared to come, and he just had the grace to soften his bluntness by pointing about a foot over Mrs. X.'s head, as the source whence all the utterances seemed to come. This may have been a bit of a shock to the performers, but if it were they were quite ready with an explanation. It was only through favored mediums, of course, that the spirits usually cared to manifest their presence. Mrs. X. was a powerful medium. What could be more natural than that the spirits should be attracted to her and that they should materialise a voice out of the emanations from their favorite medium? Hence the voices would naturally appear to be produced just above her head. Q.E.D.

No expressions of doubt or dissent had as yet been heard, and the silence of most and the respectful questions of others encouraged the lady to proceed with a further performance. She produced a large iron ring, which was handed round for inspection, and then placed on the table. By her directions, two gentlemen held her hands and the gas was turned out. After some rather violent struggling and wriggling on the lady's part, on the gas being lit it was seen that the ring had disappeared from the table and was on the lady's arm. The spirits had put it there, we were told.

So successful was this ring trick that the lady was induced to try it again. But the spirits were now obstinate or frolicsome. The ring disappeared from the table, indeed, during the darkness, but when the gas was lit again it was not on the medium's arm. It was finally found under the table, whither it had been spirited away by "Peter"—or by the hands of mischief-loving sceptics who were no longer afraid of spoiling the performance by their interferenee.

This concluded the *séance*. The spirits were developing ways of their own, and were evidently not to be relied upon.

After a little conversation filled up with anecdotes of the spirits, pretended explanations of their little peculiarities, and plausible but rather evasive replies to further inquiries concerning the condition and happiness of the disembodied spirits in general, the lady took her departure. I ascertained that she charged no fixed fee, but as she left she received a piece of gold from the host by way just of paying her railway fare, which would amount to about 6d. return. My own conclusion was that this little formality was the real key to the whole performance. Given the primitive belief in souls and disembodied spirits, it will be exploited as long as it

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remains exploitable. People who are at their wit's end for a living, or who prefer an easy livelihood gained by deception to one of hard work, will naturally adopt such methods of winning both money and influence.

The strangest and most discouraging feature of the whole affair was the amount of credence displayed by the bulk of the company. If we of the sceptical element had not been present I am afraid that the *séance* would have been generally accepted as evidence of the truth of Spiritualism. We counteracted this lazy, kindly, superstitious credulity by contemptuously denouncing the performers as evident impostors. We pointed out that nothing had been done but the commonest feats of ventriloquism and conjuring, and that while honest professionals succeed in defying detection in such feats even in open daylight, Mr. and Mrs. X. had insisted on absolute darkness as indispensable for the success of their inferior performance. The ring trick was nothing to what was done daily by other people without the slightest aid from the spirits. Why should the spirits lend themselves to such absurdly childish trickery? Why did they never manifest themselves or their materialised voices in public matters of importance? Why did they not tell us something new and something worth knowing? Why did they hide in darkness and refuse all tests? Why could they not work in the light? Why did they do just such things as could be most easily imitated by impostors? Why did the spirits speak from the woman's mouth or its immediate neighborhood? Questions and arguments such as these seemed to have some influence in checking the tide of superstition. I believe that our host, for instance, never troubled himself any further about Spiritualism.

W. P. Ball.

NORTH EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

The final arrangements for the Grand Social Gathering to be held under the auspices of the North Eastern Secular Federation, in the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on December 26th, are as follows: First, sitting down for tea, 5 p.m. Concert to commence at 7 p.m. Dancing and other parlor games commence at 10 p.m., and continue till 4 a.m. Draughts, dominoes, chess, etc. for non-dancers. Friends arriving late are still entitled to their tea. Refreshments, and supper can be had of the proprietor at the rooms. Tickets 1s. 6d each, can be had at Mr. Peter Weston's, newsagent, 77 Newgate Street, Newcastle, or by writing to my address. The Council are also preparing for an active propaganda early next year, and there is every prospect of new Branches being formed in different parts of the two counties. There are now twelve Branches affiliated with the Federation, some of these being in outlying districts it is only by the aid of the Federation that lecturers can visit them; and the Council earnestly hope that every well-to-do Secularlist will do his utmost to aid financially and otherwise in the good work we are at present doing. Contributions, however small, are thankfully received, and should be sent to my address, when they can either be acknowledged in this journal, or privately. R. S. W. 5s.; Mr. Bennett, 1s.

Joseph Brown.
86 Durham Street, Bentwick, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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Special Fund.—W. Stewart, 5s.; collected at Mr. Forder's lecture at West Ham, £1 1s. 6d.; S. A., 5s.; Mrs. Marks, 5s.—R. Forder, Secretary.

A TRUE TALE.

When God stuck up his man of clay
And set his eyes a'blinking,
I wonder what poor Adam thought?—
If capable of thinking.
Did he essay to chew his toes?
Or suck his little digits?
Or did his teething miseries
Give God the Lord the fidgets?

Nay. Adam was a full-grown man,
With all his wits about him:
For this is what good Moses says—
And who shall dare to doubt him?
God said, "You see this garden ground
Is sadly wanting tilling;
Go catch a' hold of that there spade,
And show that you are willing.

"The garden bears all kinds of fruit,
Sufficient to sustain you:
But if you touch the tree of life,
By Jesus Christ I'll brain you!"
Quoth Adam: "I, your humble slave,
Shall ask but one boon only,
That you provide me with a wife—
I feel so deuced lonely."

"All right," said God; "all beasts and birds
And snakes that I've created
I'll cause to pass you in review—
Just see that you get mated."
Then all the live stock God had made
Filed by with due decorum,
But Adam failed amongst the lot
To find "an helpmeet" for him.

However, he gave each a name,
From platypus to pigeon,
From tall giraffe to humble flea,
From walrus down to widgeon.
And when God saw he'd found no wife,
With chloroform he plied him,
And when he woke, behold, there stood
A charming maid beside him!

What Adam thought, or how he looked,
The "truthful" fails to tell us;
No doubt he seemed as great an ass
As nineteenth century fellows.
But thus he got a wife for life,
And "truthful" Mo has told us
How she, through flirting with a snake,
For evermore has sold us.

T. Clark.

The history of religion is a long attempt to reconcile old custom with new reason; and to find a sound theory for an absurd practice.—*J. G. Frazer*, "*Golden Bough*," vol. ii., p. 62.

I would rather give my daughters a set of physiological and obstetric books for their perusal, than allow them to read the Levitical law, or the stories of the two Tamars, of Bathsheba, Lot and others. I know that while the one will give information which may be serviceable, and which can never generate premature passion, the other is calculated to confound the distinctions of right and wrong.—*Emma Martin*, "*The Bible no Relevation*," p. 15.

PROFANE JOKES.

Connoisseur: "I tell you what it is, M'Daub; those ostriches are simply superb. You shouldn't paint anything but birds." Artist (disgusted): "Those are not ostriches. They are angels!"

Curate (to old man who is beating his donkey): "Fie, fie, my good man, do you know what happened to Balaam once?" Old Man: "Ees, sure, zur—the same as has just happed to me—a ass spoke to him."

Mother: "Johnny, you said you'd been to Sunday-school." Johnny (with a far-away look): "Yes, mother." Mother: "How does it happen that your hands smell fishy?" Johnny: "I—I carried home the Sunday-school paper,—an'—an' th' outside page is all about Jonah and the whale."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on MONDAY, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Uselessness of Prayer."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?" Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8.30, committee meeting.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E., 7.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "What has Christianity Done for the World?"

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30 Mr. B. Hyatt, "With God All Things are Possible."

Finsbury—Loyal United Friends' Hall, Banner Street, St. Luke's, 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Has Christ Saved the World?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 11.15, Mr. Herbert Burrows, "Objections to Socialism Considered and Answered; 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Son of a Ghost."

Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road, 7, Mr. A. Beadle will lecture. A meeting of members after the lecture to transact important business.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The God of Israel." Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Where and When was Jesus Born and Crucified?"; 7, Mr W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "My Life—Forty Years of Secularism."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "Christmastide."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Snell, "From Creeds and Priests Good Lord Deliver Us."

Tottenham — Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, Mr. Sam Standring, "A Few Words in Conclusion."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Protestant Reformation—How it Affected Christianity."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, 7, Mr. C. C. Cattell, "The Origin of the Universe.'

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. W. Gilmour, "Monarchy and Republicanism"; 6.30, Mr. Shaw, "The Ancient Astronomers."

Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, Mr. Rothera, a reading from Joseph Symes.

Hull—Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Mr. W. Heaford, 10.30, "Bruno, Freethought Martyr"; 2.30, "What is Blasphemy?—a Vindication of Atheism"; 6.30, "The Bible: what it is and what it is not."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street. — 3, discussion class, Mr. J. Hall, "Christianity Progressive, not Retrogressive"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Butler's 'Analogy' Considered."

Manchester N. S. S.—Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saint's, 6.30, debate between Rev W. E. Coller (of Manchester) and Mr. Stanley Jones (of Liverpool) on "God Revealed in Jesus Christ." Free; collection for charitable institution. Ball on Christmas Eve; gents. 1s. 6d., ladies, 1s.

Nottingham — Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, debate between Mr. J. Hooper and Mr. W. Shepherd on "Is God All-wise and Beneficent?"

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class: 7, Mr. Martin, "Freethinking."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, Mr. W. Houlden, "Edward Carpenter, Poet." Dec. 30, Soiree and ball.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, a reading.

Spennymoor — Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 10.30, general meeting; 7, Mr. Israel Hirst, "The Teachings of Secularism."

Sunderland — Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. R Weightman, "The Bible and Common Sense."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E —Dec. 21, Grimsby; 28, Camberwell. Jan. 5 (1891), Annua Dinner; 18, Rushden. Feb. 8, Camberwell; 22, Camberwell.

Stanley Jones, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 21, Manchester. Jan. 18 (1891), Liverpool.

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Vol. X.—No. 52.] SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1890. [PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE SON OF A GHOST.

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."—*Apostles' Creed.*

WERE a revival preacher to go about in this age, pretending to be the Messiah, he would in all probability end his days in a lunatic asylum. It is very unlikely that his followers would multiply after his death into a powerful sect, that a vast literature would accumulate around his memory, or that his devotees would gradually repudiate his human parentage and assert his entrance into the world by a supernatural process of generation. Many changes have taken place since the beginning of the Christian era. Superstition still exists, but is less gross and active; it is like a retired tradesman, living upon his old capital, and unwilling or unable to add to his store. Sporadic miracles still occur in the most benighted parts of Catholic countries, but to the majority of Catholics, and nearly the whole of Protestants, a miracle is a thing of the past. The order of nature was once broken, but is now invariable. Faith turns it face to antiquity, and reads its charter in the dubious records of ignorant and credulous ages. It believes, by an effort of imagination, the wonders of ancient times, although reason would laugh them to scorn if related of yesterday. Distance lends enchantment to the view. The far-off is dim, and appeals to the sense of wonder. Lies become credible when they are hoary, and venerable when they are imposed on the minds of successive generations.

No man in his senses would believe that a child was born last week, or last year, without a father; but many men, who in other respects are rational, believe that such a prodigy once existed, and are perfectly ready to regard those who are sceptical on this point as heretics and blasphemers, deserving of punishment in this world and everlasting torture in the next. At this time of the year they are accustomed to think of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Holy Ghost. They hear sermons on the Nativity. They stimulate a faith which was possibly waning. They do not, indeed, examine the evidences of their belief; that is a duty they never contemplated; no, they simply hear the old story reiterated, and go away convinced that what is told with such confidence *must* be true. For the moment they have no doubt about it. Christ *was* born of the Virgin Mary, and his real father *was* the Holy Ghost.

Now the Holy Ghost is only a ghost, and that such a shadowy personage should beget a lusty boy is enough to stagger the stoutest credulity. "If God had not said it," wrote old Donne, "I would never have believed it." Well, if God *did* say it, we have something to go upon. Jesus Christ himself, in the whole of the gospels, never so much as alludes to his supernatural birth. Nor was it suspected by his countrymen, who regarded him as an ordinary carpenter with several brothers and sisters; or even by the apostles, if we are to rely upon the Acts. Joseph and Mary give us no testimony. Everything is related in the third person by the writers. And who were *they*. Not a man on the face of the earth is able to answer this question. God only knows (at least no one else does) where, when, and by whom the four gospels were written. This much is certain, and admitted by every scholar, that the gospels *as we have them* did not come from the pens of Christ's apostles. Earlier documents may have existed, and probably did, but what they were like is altogether unknown. Judging from St. Paul's epistles, they could hardly have contained a tithe of the miraculous stuff which the Church preserved as the Life of Christ.

Orthodox Christians are fond of declaring that the miraculous birth of Christ was predicted by the prophet Isaiah.

"Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (vii., 14-16).

Now this is a fraudulent translation. According to a Christian divine like Canon Driver, the word *almah* "is not the term ordinarily employed in Hebrew for *virgin*, and cannot be shown to be exclusively applicable to one who was unmarried" (*Isaiah: his Life and Times*, p. 41). *Almah* simply means a young woman, and that such a person should conceive and bear a child is too common to be miraculous.

Anyone who will read the context in Isaiah must see that the prophet was referring to the immediate future. He simply meant that the land of king Ahaz should be in peace before a then unborn child could come to years of understanding. Isaiah, indeed, fulfilled *his* part of the prophecy, though God did not fulfil the rest; for he "went in unto the prophetess, and she conceived, and bare a son." After this the pretended prophecy of the Immaculate Conception may take its place with the thousand other tricks of a designing priesthood.

If superstitionists were less muddle-headed, they would see the fallacy of this argument from prophecy. Suppose Isaiah did prophesy that a *virgin* should bring forth a child, how does that prove that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin? The prophecy does not prove the event; it is the event which proves the prophecy; and the event, or rather the allegation of it, has to be proved by the proper evidence. It is a pretty argument in a circle to make the prophecy prove the event, and then the event prove the prophecy. When this principle is carried out in commercial life, the gentlemen who use it are designated the Long Firm.

Now what is the real evidence that Jesus Christ was born without a father? We are not asserting that it was easy (or difficult) to find his father; we merely say that the presumption is in favor of any baby having two human parents.

Mark and John are out of court, having no testimony to give. Matthew and Luke relate the miraculous conception and birth of Christ. But they contradict each other, as well as history, on several

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important points; and in any case they do not pretend to be giving first-hand testimony; indeed, Luke plainly avows, in his preamble, that he is only putting into a literary form the things that had been *handed down*; and if Matthew had been honest he would have made exactly the same confession.

From the very nature of the case, all who first promulgated this story of Jesus Christ's father being a ghost, if they did not invent it themselves, must have taken it on trust from Jesus, or Joseph, or Mary. The three wise men (Magi) who came from the East (a very extensive region) to worship little Jesus after he was born, were no authorities on the subject; and even if they were, they were not interviewed, and their evidence was never taken down. They came from the East, and went back to the East, and for all we know they are still in the East. But that is all the information we have about them.

Jesus himself never breathed a word of his miraculous birth; or if he did, the evangelists failed to record it. Of course it may be urged that he told his disciples in private, and hence the account Matthew; but how, on this theory, can we account for the silence of John?

Witness number one being dismissed, let us address ourselves to number two. According to Matthew, Joseph was astonished, and grieved to find his *fiancée* in the family way, and was going to break the engagement. Supposing this to be true, it proves that Joseph was *not* the baby's father, but it does not prove who *was* the baby's father. True, it is said, but Joseph was afterwards satisfied. But *how* was he satisfied? An angel appeared to him in a dream, and told him that the baby was the offspring of the Holy Ghost. Well, if the angel had appeared to him while he was wide awake, and given him this information, it might have been worth considering; but as the angel only appeared and spoke *in a dream*, the whole story, even if Joseph told it, is nothing *but* a dream; and what man in his senses would build upon such a shadowy basis the tremendous edifice of the Incarnation?

A man finds his sweetheart somewhat prematurely in an interesting condition. He knows he is not the cause of the phenomenon. He is puzzled and grieved. He resolves to leave her to the other gentleman. But he goes to bed and dreams that his sweetheart's condition is miraculous. He wakes up satisfied and marries her. All this is very interesting, and proves him to be a man of easy good-nature. But it proves nothing else. There is not an atom of evidence in it that would be received in any court of law; and if a husband nowadays were to go about telling such a story, civil people would shrug their shoulders, and other people would laugh at him as a silly wittol.

So much for witness number two. And now for witness number three. Mary knew, if anyone did, all about the matter. Apparently she did not tell Joseph; she let him find it out in a dream. Let us suppose, then, that she told *some one*, who told some one else, and so on *ad infinitum*. What reason is there for believing she told the truth? Surely her bare word on such a matter is scarcely sufficient. Her situation was embarrassing; she had every reason to lie or prevaricate; her evidence, in short, was that of a deeply interested witness. No young lady would be believed to-day in such circumstances, and the laws of evidence were just the same two thousand years ago.

So far we have failed to discover a scrap of satisfactory testimony. But our task is not ended. Let us examine the story which, if Mary said anything, she must have told.

An angel appeared to her. Such visitors usually call at night, and it was probably in her bedroom. Now in what shape did the angel appear? Several writers say in the form of a young man. Well, if some one, to all appearance a young man, came to Mary surreptitiously, his being an angel was a matter of inference, while the baby who came to light nine months afterward was a very solid fact.

Luke informs us, without telling us who informed *him*, that the angel Gabriel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." Now these "overshadowings" are familiar to the students of ancient history and mythology. Sometimes a priest induced a pretty woman to spend the night in a temple, on the pretence that the God was in love with her, and Mary may have been the victim of a similar imposition. But in other cases, the deity took a physical form; witness the multitudinous amours of the gods of the ancient pantheon. Will the orthodox Christian, then, be good enough to say whether the incarnation of the Holy Ghost was a preliminary to the incarnation of Jesus Christ? It passes all comprehension how a ghost, while remaining a ghost, could become a physical father; and if the phenomenon is possible, it behoves us to be on our guard against haunted bedrooms.

For our part we acquit Mary. The story of her "misfortune" is a posthumous libel. We believe, as, according to the Gospels, the Jews believed, that Jesus Christ (if he ever existed) was born in lawful wedlock. Long after her death the dogma of his divinity was established; the farcical story of his being the son of a ghost was devised to support it; and as *avatars* or incarnations of deity in the form of men were universally credited, both the story and the dogma gained a ready acceptance, and ministered to the success of the Christian faith. Nevertheless the pious impostors overreached themselves. They did not allow for the scepticism of a later age. They failed to foresee the time when men would be sensible enough to say that the divinity of Jesus Christ does not stand on two legs. He dispensed with a *father* in coming into the world, but thousands of children have (ostensibly) done the same thing, and no one calls it a miracle. What he should have done was to dispense with a *mother*. That would have been simple and satisfactory. What is more, it would not have given rise to endless obscenities on the part of Christian writers in explaining Mary's virginity, nor would it have insulted the motherhood of the whole human race. Dispensing with maternity would then have been a necessity of the case, whereas the birth of Jesus Christ from a virgin, in order to secure his purity, is an outrage on the mothers of mankind, who press the fruit of human love to their devoted bosoms.

G. W. FOOTE.

OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.

As Christmas comes round, bringing delight, let us hope, to at least the younger portion of the community, some few may be curious to know the origin and meaning of our annual customs. Fashion is the most fluctuating, but custom is the most conservative of things. Students of comparative religion, that is, comparative mythology, are beginning to see that ritual is more enduring than legend, and that ancient customs gave rise to the stories rather than the stories to the customs. The Passover, for instance, did not arise from God having determined to kill all the first-born of Egypt and pass over the Jews who sprinkled their doorposts with blood; but this legend was told because the old sacrifice of lambs at the spring season was called Passover, whether from the passing over of the sun or from the substitution, as a sacrifice, of first-born lambs instead of first-born children, or from whatever reason. So Christmas was not instituted to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Palestine at a time when shepherds could not watch their flocks by night; but Christ was said to have been born at this time of the year because this was the old Pagan season for celebrating the rebirth of the sun.

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There is little apparent connection between Jesus Christ and kissing under the mistletoe, or between indulging in goose and plum-pudding and partaking of the sacrament. The Puritans may be excused for denouncing Christmas as a Pagan custom opposed to the Christian conception of life, and more worthy of the worship of Bacchus than of Jesus. But Christmas endures as a Christian festival despite the Puritans, just because it goes back to the elements which Christianity has in common with paganism; because indeed, the religion that made its way under the name of Christianity was but a modified paganism.

To illustrate this fully is impossible in our limited space. One or two points may suffice. The custom of decorating houses with evergreens, evident symbols of life continued through the dead of winter, prevailed long anterior to Christianity. The Christian Father Tertullian, early in the third century affirmed it be "rank idolatry" to deck their doors "with garlands or flowers on festival days according to the custom of the heathen." Polydore-Virgil says, "the decorating of temples with hangings of flowers, boughs, and garlands, was adopted from the pagan nations, who decked their houses and temples in a similar manner." The Christmas tree, derived from our Scandinavian forefathers, with its fruit of good things for the little ones, is another sign of faith in returning spring and harvest. The mistletoe—I have recently given my opinion (*Freethinker*, Nov. 2)—was regarded by the Druids as the seed which carried over vegetable life from the old year to the new. Hence, to kiss and pluck a seed was a sign of union and fertility.

Mr. Foote points out that Christmas occurs at the period of the Roman Saturnalia. The Emperor Julian says in his fourth oration, "When the last month, which is sacred to Saturn, is nearly out, just before the beginning of the new year, we celebrate the most magnificent sports dedicated to *Sol Invictus*." The Saturnalia was a period of universal license and merrymaking. Temporary freedom was given to slaves. Everyone feasted, and presents were interchanged by friends. In the now extinct Lord of Misrule and schoolboys "barring out" may be traced a remnant of the Saturnalia.

But where does Jesus Christ come in? Just here. The infant Christ is as much a symbol of the returning year as the holly or the Christmas tree. The birthday of Christ is the birthday of the new year. Just as they now sing carols to the new-born king, so, in ancient times, they sang carols to the vegetation itself, of which Shakespeare's "Heigh-ho the holly" is a remnant. In the North they carry round the Christmas tree, so the southern Catholics carry round the infant Christ with his mother. In English villages this used to be the custom. In Yorkshire, girls carried a wax-doll in a box surrounded with evergreen and fruits. Whoever gave them money took a leaf which, carefully preserved, brought luck. This was good tidings of great joy, so that there was a proverb, "As unhappy as the man who has seen no advent images." So bakers would bake Yule-doughs or little images, with currants for eyes, which were presented to their customers. And this brings us to the great sacrament or feast, the central feature of Christmas, the dinner.

Man early learnt that a good feast was a capital thing to tide over the wintry weather. In early religions we find feasting was as much a part of the religion as fasting—indeed more so, for the gods could also partake of the sacrifice and thus enter into the true communion of food with their worshippers. The word "holyday" had a real meaning. It was consecrated to the deities.

Formerly in England the Christmas dinner was opened with a boar's head, a sacred Scandinavian dish. The boar, with the lemon in his mouth, probably represented the spirit of vegetation. Mr. J. G. Frazer says:

"In Sweden and Denmark at Yule (Christmas) it is the custom to bake a loaf in the form of a boar-pig. This is called the Yule Boar. The corn of the last sheaf is often used to make it. All through Yule the Yule Boar stands on the table. Often it is kept till the sowing time in spring, when part of it is mixed with the seed-corn and part given to the ploughmen and plough-horses or plough-oxen to eat in expectation of a good harvest."

The plum-pudding, like the earlier Christmas pie, is a compound of all good things originally taken sacramentally—that is, it was supposed to contain the spirit of the past year's products, partaking which would ensure prosperity for the ensuing year. Hence the saying, as many pieces of pudding or mince-pie are partaken, so many happy months. As the communion was originally taken by all the clan, to this may be traced the family re-unions at the present day.

Christmas, then, symbolising the re-birth of the sun, the entrance of a new year, the return of light and vegetation, is one of the old-world customs the new world will not willingly let die. Each fresh generation will delight in cheering the depth of winter with festivity, in twining the holly and kissing under the pearl-eyed mistletoe. Let, then, the older ones join the youngsters in celebrating the old pagan festival in its true spirit of sociality, hope and delight.

J. M. Wheeler.

THE ORTHODOX RELIGION.

The orthodox religion consists in profession of certain beliefs and in the performance of certain ceremonies. It is not necessarily connected with right or wrong doing, or with truth or justice as between the believer and his fellow creature. Incidentally, and to win the favor of moral and just people, the clergy approve, and some of them teach, right living as well as right believing. But right living is not an essential feature of the orthodox religion. A man may deal unfairly with his neighbor; he may be a hypocrite; he may be deceitful and revengeful; he may cheat in weight and measure; he may lie and steal and be an adulterer, and yet stand high in the church. The voices of these crimes religion can drown by heavy groans and loud amens. Religion imperatively demands the outward show and the openly-expressed belief. If good works for man are added religion approves, but it does not insist upon these as essential accompaniments. The worst men we have in every walk of life have their outward garments labeled with the essential demands of religion.

But religion being a business in which the clergy are the operators and the chief beneficiaries, they are shrewd enough to see that their trade should be respectable; so if a professing Christian cannot conceal his cheats, his deceptions, his seductious and other crimes against society, the clergy sometimes call him to account. This is done through fear of the moral element of society, and not because these crimes are inconsistent with a truly religious life, because on every hand we find the brightest church ornaments, including clergymen, notoriously guilty of them. So long as immorality is so muffled in religious wraps that its deformity is not visible to the casual observer, religion is content to march through the streets hand-in-hand with it.

Morality, right doing and right living, keeping house and excluding religious sentiment and ceremony, true religion abhors and shuns. Hence individual infidels and families, noted for correct morals, pure lives and high character, are ostracised, envied and slandered by religion. Religion will lovingly herd and graze with immorality and vice so long as belief is the herdsman and worshipful ceremony guards the outposts, But it disdains association with that conscientious and blameless morality which attempts to do business without loudmouthed belief and worshipful ceremony.

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Religion and morality are rival families, living on opposite sides of the street. Their tastes and pursuits are so different and uncongenial that there can be no warm neighborly attachment between them. Religion regards morality, as it does the theatre, as a rival attraction; hence its envy and jealousy and denunciation of anything good that goes forth without its own brand upon it.

ON THE ADVANTAGES OF GOING TO HELL.

As it is commonly assumed—as a joke by most people, but as a grim reality by many earnest Christians—that all Secularists and Freethinkers are on the road to the regions whose brief and emphatic name is now somewhat too strong and vulgar for polite circles, we may as well look the grim joke or the terrorizing insult in the face. Christians are pleased to dilate upon the disadvantages of the destination they so kindly assign us. Surely it ought not to be rank blasphemy on our part if we glance at the other aspect of the question, and take note of the advantages which may mitigate or counterbalance the alleged inconveniences of the future home provided for us by the charitable imaginations of fervent believers.

In the first place there will obviously be no idiots, lunatics, or imbeciles in hell. As these unfortunate beings cannot be held morally responsible for their actions or belief, theologians admit that God cannot punish them below, and will have to take them to heaven instead, where they will form an enormous proportion of the population—for only "few" of the sane among the Christian minority of mankind are expected to be saved, while *all* the lunatics of all races and of all periods of history will be collected in the glorious mansions above. The pious belief prevalent in so many countries that the insane are special favorites of the Deity is evidently a correct one, and Christians ought not to despise it.

Credulous people, fanatics, saints, and simpletons generally, will find their way to heaven by the faith which is easy to them but difficult to philosophers and men of intellect. Hell, on the other hand, will be enriched with an extra proportion of the "wise and prudent" from whom God has hidden his message of salvation, and it will be freed from the "babes and sucklings" who so readily absorb the gospel milk provided for them. Who would not rather enjoy the precious and inspiring companionship of Darwin and Socrates and Marcus Aurelius and Garibaldi and Spinoza and thousands of other eminent unbelievers in Christianity, rather than take part in the antics of General Booth or the follies and fanaticisms of the Christian Fathers? The idea of pleasant intellectual intercourse among great and good unbelievers whose want of Christian faith condemned them to remain for ever in hell, is no mere "Infidel" assumption.

Few believers have been more ardent or more orthodox than Dante. Yet, even amidst the darkness of the Roman Catholicism of the Middle Ages, the stern poet softened the rigors of hell for great "Infidels" like the magnanimous Saladin and all the noble heathens of antiquity. He depicts them as conversing as they walk in dignified leisure beside the clear streams and over the emerald fields surrounding a beautiful castle that forms their home. Even Gladstone might feel tempted to pay a visit to these delightful lower regions for the sake of the glorious company of the Homer whom he so much admires, and whom otherwise he will never meet. That going to hell or being in hell is not necessarily disgraceful or painful might also be argued from the alleged fact that Jesus once went to hell, and that God being everywhere, must always be in hell as well as in heaven.

Christians may urge that criminals are sent to hell and that their presence will render the place unendurable. If Dante's idea is correct—and the ideas of the great genius, who was popularly supposed to have actually been to hell, are at least as likely to be correct as those of the more commonplace Christians of to-day—the criminal part of the population of hell is carefully shut up in gulfs or circles appropriated to the punishment of each particular offence. Even if this is not done, and the Secularist has to mingle with vicious and dishonest companions, he will not be worse off than he would be in heaven. He may be even better off; for the worst murderers commonly accept Christ's unfailing assurance of salvation at the eleventh hour, and inflict their presence on the saints above rather than on the Secularists beneath. Many of the heroes of the Bible and of Christianity have been men of blood. Moses massacred the Midianites and distributed the young maidens among his warriors. Joshua massacred the Canaanites. David tortured his prisoners and took Uriah's wife and life in the most treacherous manner. Secularists will be relieved from the presence of such individuals, and from the company and conversation of fanatics, who, like Jephthah or Abraham, sacrificed, or were ready to sacrifice, their own children as burnt offerings. They will also be safe from the savagery of inquisitors and persecutors, and from the tedium and inanity of religious observances.

W. P. Ball.

(To be concluded.)

AT THE LAST.

When my life work is done, and I lie down to die,
And the death-shadows creep like the slow rising tide;
When the unseen bourne is o'erwhelmingly nigh,
Then I want no Bible nor creed for my guide.

I want no ignorant priest to come near,
With his hypocrite sighs, and his bigoted airs,
To frighten my heart with visions of fear,
And torture my ears with meaningless prayers.

Who would speak of a God and his vengeance dire,
As he gazes unmoved from his home in the skies,
And a demon who dwells in a red lake of fire,
And the fabulous reptile that never dies?

There is trouble enough in this world for us all,
Without dreaming of one a hundredfold worse;
'Twere better to preach no future at all,
Than prate of a God and his infinite curse.

"God's word" has driven fond mothers insane;
Of friendship and love it has severed the ties;
Of genius and worth it has maddened the brain,
With its blood-curdling tales and its mythical lies.

It tells of a place, where, in darkness and chains,
Eternally suffer the good and the true;
And it threatens to punish with hell and its pains
The many, and "save" the credulous few.

"The light of the gospel."—Its *darkness* has shed
Whole oceans of blood and rivers of tears;
Its wars, its follies, and its crimes dark and dread,
Have blighted the earth for hundreds of years.

"Glad tidings of joy."—Ah! a joy indeed!
When it threatens to burn in perpetual flame,
The honest who dare to ignore a creed,
And all who refuse to "call on his name."

A curse and a blight the Bible has been,
And will be as long as its pages are read;
Then away with a book so vile and obscene,
And give me the true light of Reason instead.

When my final adieu to this old earth is given,
And my loved ones I bid a dying farewell,
If I cherish no hope of a blissful heaven,
I'll harbor no fear of an endless hell.

Talitha C. Sylvia

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ACID DROPS.

Macdonald, the brutal Bolton murderer, who killed a young lady in the most shocking manner for the simple reason that he did or didn't like her—it is not clear which—is still writing pious letters from Kirkdale Gaol. In one of these missives, dated Dec. 15, he exclaims "Thank God for his mercies to us all," but he forgets to say whether among the "all" he includes the poor murdered schoolmistress. God's mercies to her—or, at any rate, Macdonald's mercies—were such as the recipient would gladly have declined, with or without thanks.

"I hope everybody will forgive me, as I forgive them," says this graduate for glory. How much he has to forgive other people is an open calculation. We suspect it doesn't amount to much. On the other hand there is a lot to be forgiven *him*; and perhaps for that very reason he is satisfied to cry "quits." But where does the morality come in? The religion, of course, is obvious.

Macdonald says he is "taking great interest in reading the lives of the early martyrs." Yes, the martyr of the nineteenth century looks back to the martyrs of the first, second, and third, and hails them as brethren.

That American gentleman who was hung last week for pushing his wife into the Niagara Falls, spent his last hours in singing hymns. He was very pious but not very truthful. The nearest approach he made to a confession was denying his guilt with a little less vehemence.

The Rev. C. W. Bond apologises to Mr. Bradlaugh for using the story mentioned in our issue of a fortnight ago, and promises never to repeat it. He says he heard it from 14 to 18 years ago. He might have inquired into its truth in the meantime.

Canon Lloyd, lecturing on Christian Evidences at Blackburn made a little mistake. He made out that Bentham, Mill, Comte and others borrowed their morality from Christianity. So far from this being the case, the three mentioned took exception to Christian rules of conduct, Bentham especially denoucing them as immoral.

The *Sydney Bulletin*, speaking of Christian missions, says: "Everywhere the result has been much the same. Even among the more peaceful and intelligent tribes of the South Sea Islands the triumphs of the faith have merely produced a state of things in which rival congregations grasp each other by the hair on minute points of theology, and prospect for each other with texts and axes and boiling water and Confessions of Faith, until all is chaos and general disaster."

The *Bulletin* concludes that the European teacher's theology is a misfit, and the attempt to crowd the unhappy "native" into a creed which is too light for him is merely hurrying him on the road to extermination.

The good Canon reads evening prayers to his household every night, as every good man should (*Vanity Fair* says). One morning his new housemaid—she was a country girl, and had only begun service in the house the day before—gave notice, tearfully. No reason was assigned; but nothing could persuade her to stay in the Canon's house where, she said, she had been so grossly insulted. No one could understand the girl; but after much persuasion she explained: I was at prayers last night. I 'eard master say . . . '*O God, who 'atest nothing but th' 'ousemaid.*'"

An amusing defence was set up at the County Court, Newcastle, by a man who some years ago on the way to chapel, told another pietist that he was hard up. The friend came to his house at night knocking him up, saying the Lord had sent him. "Here is £2—pay it back when you can, or if you don't the Lord will." Afterwards he paid back 13s., and eventually the plaintiff sued him for the balance. The defendant was unable to prove his loan had been repaid by the Lord, and the Judge refusing to recognise the Lord in the matter treated it as an ordinary loan, which must be repaid.

The gentleman who complained that he had not where to lay his head would probably be surprised if he could come back to earth and see the style the Church he founded puts on, and the amount of money it squanders on useless ornamentation. Possibly he might conclude he died too soon.

The Two Worlds in its double Christmas number gives Mark Twain's humorous sketch, "Amongst the Spirits." To an ordinary reader this is a skit satirising the credulity of the spiritists, but the editor explains that "Mark Twain" is "a confirmed spiritualist," and that "in the early days of the investigation many scenes similar to the one herein described transpired, and very jolly spirits hesitated not to take part in them and to assure the sitters life in the hereafter had its jokes and its merriment just as surely as on the mortal plane."

We have reason to believe Mr. Samuel Langhorne Clemens is an Agnostic, and in the sketch reprinted by *The Two Worlds*, he declares himself not a spiritualist but an unbeliever. The proceeding reminds us of the common spiritist assertion that exposures by conjurors are really effected through the aid of spirits.

According to the *Indianopolis News*, Nov. 26, "a commission declared Sophia Barnhold insane to-day. The woman is violent on account of religious excitement. One of her hallucinations is that she is Jesus Christ. A few nights ago she escaped from her window on to a roof, and was barely prevented from leaping to the ground. She was removed to the asylum this afternoon."

Price Hughes has been holding forth at Blackburn on Sin. Now that is a large and varied subject. We wish the preacher would particularise. If he took that branch of sin which is called lying, we believe he would be competent to treat it exhaustively. At any rate, he would be able to speak from experience.

No man in Blackburn, said Price Hughes, was obliged to sin; if any man in Blackburn said he was, he was a liar, and he knew it! If the reverend liar—we mean the reverend gentleman—believes this he should settle accounts with St. Paul. In any case, this loose-tongued Methodist should decide what he means by "obliged." Five minutes' real thought, if he is capable of it, will show him that "obliged" may mean several different things. At present he makes a hopeless hodge-podge of external compulsion and internal motive.

In a certain sense it is gratifying to learn that Price Hughes believes in moral responsibility. But we wish he could believe it a little more effectually. When he stands before the Judgment Throne he will have to make a clean breast as to that Atheist shoemaker. No doubt something like this will happen.

God Almighty. Name, please?
Price Hughes. Don't know.
G. A. Address, please?
P. H. Don't know.
G. A. Real occupation?
P. H. Don't know.
G. A. Sister's name, please?
P. H. Don't know.
G. A. To hell, then, and find out.

Another good Christian gone wrong. Thomas Henderson, a leading light of the Methodist Church, Newark, and whose name was familiar as a household word for piety in that town, has been arrested and committed to trial without bail, for criminal assaults upon his domestic servant under the age of fifteen.

Kleptomania is the disease from which the Rev. W. L. Leeman, of St. Mary's, Willesden, is said to suffer. The reverend gentleman is accused of having stolen nineteen books and four pipes from the Army and Navy Stores. The articles were found in his bag. One of the books was *In Darkest England*. Clearly a case of "kleptomania."

The Rev. E. Smythies, rector of Hathern, was summoned under the Burials Act for refusing to permit a Nonconformist funeral procession to pass into the churchyard. The man of God locked the gates and refused to open until a certificate was handed over to which he was not entitled

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until after the funeral. The prosecutors were content with an apology.

The Messiah craze among the Indians has extended to the Aztecs of Mexico and the negroes of the Southern States. The medicine men and priests are always at the bottom of these crazes.

Ebenezer Congregational Church, Chatham, has been completely destroyed by fire. God does not seem to look particularly well after his property.

Prison Missionary—"You are not in a very creditable place now, my poor man."

Convict—"No, I'm a sad example of the results of early training."

P.M.—"Were you trained to a life of crime?"

Convict—"No. I was brought up in the most fearfully strict religious manner conceivable."

In the case of Hampson *v.* Guy and others, in which Mrs. Hampson's will, leaving property to the extent of £11,600 to a convent, is disputed, it appears the testatrix lived next to the convent, and they got her and her property inside through a hole in the wall. All for the glory of God.

Talmage ridicules the idea that he could be evolved from an ape in a million years. Well the process has been mighty slow. The change is extremely slight for so long a period.

James Russell Lowell, as he was about sailing for Europe, told an interviewer, "I don't like reporters. I believe that if a man should die a reporter would try to interview him and find out where he was going." "Scarcely, Mr. Lowell," says an Oregan paper. "In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the discerning reporter would know where he was going without asking."

An interesting piece of gossip is retailed at some of the literary clubs about Mr. Charles Dudley Warner and Mark Twain. Mr. Warner called upon his neighbour and asked him to join him in a walk. On the humorist's demanding what just cause or reason his friend could bring forward to justify such an untimely proposition, Mr. Warner at once advanced Scriptural authority in support of his request by quoting from Matthew v., 41;—"And whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." And Twain went.

An inquirer wants to know where the stuff is to come from for the resurrection. He says that "given 1,000 generations of men, and taking the average at 1,500,000,000, then you have to resurrect 1,500,000.000,000 human bodies; and you must not touch one particle of flesh-and-bone stuff belonging to other animals; you must resurrect each human being with just that stuff he possessed at death, or the resurrection is only a sham." He doubts if this is mathematically possible. But of course the resurrection is a miracle, and consequently is a subject for faith, not for calculation.

The sermon had been about the patience of Job, and when it was over a stranger who had listened quite attentively approached the clergyman and said: "Say, who was that chap that had them boils?" "His name was Job." "Where does he live?" "He has been dead for centuries." "Great Cæsar!" "Don't you admire him for his patience?" "No. I can't admire any man who will put up with a whole herd of boils when by sending to me he could get a box of my Egyptian Boil Remover, only 25 cents a box, warranted to cure——" "Let us engage in prayer."

God Almighty Stead no sooner hears that Joachim Pecci is ill than he settles in his *Review of Reviews* who will be the next Pope. A visit to the Vatican where he was not received by the present Pope constitutes sufficient authority for God Almighty Stead to determine his successor.

Max O'Rell, in his latest lecturing tour, has been telling how in a prayer preceding his discourse to an Ohio gathering, the Lord was asked to allow the audience to understand his jokes. The tale was told in Scotland, where it was delicate of M. Blouet to apply it to Ohio, for it sounds amazingly like a Scotch story.

The pious young Emperor of Germany fairly let the cat out of the bag in his speech at the final sitting of the Educational Conference at Berlin. He said he should make it his most sacred duty to see that the Christian spirit be cultivated and religious feeling increased in the schools, and thus fit the youth for the requirements of the State. That's the secret. Stultify the mind with nonsense about another world to make it content with this. Inculcate reverence for an irresponsible ruler in the skies to increase submission to earthly tyrants. "Fear God and honor the king" is a sacred text for despots.

An American writer has discovered that where angels are mentioned in the Bible it is a mistranslation. It should be rendered "balloons." This new rendering will hardly fit in the passage which speaks of angels' food.

When the Christian Evidence Society stationed Mr. George Wise at Liverpool—chiefly by the aid of pious Sam. Smith, M.P.—it appeared to think that the local Secular party would soon be exterminated; not reflecting that this would be bad business for Mr. Wise, and for the Christian Evidence Society too. Well now, the Liverpool Branch is stronger than ever. But was has become of Mr. Wise? We see he is advertised to lecture to "Men Only," which is the last refuge of a failing Christian speaker.

By the way, while Mr. Wise is lecturing to men only, he might tell his hearers some of the blue stories of *the Bible*. There is a perfect mine of blue, ay and of *purple, in the* Grand Old Book.

Jesus told his disciples that not a sparrow fell to the ground without the cognisance of God. They fall all the same and die in large numbers this weather. In America six children have perished in a snowstorm while returning from school, and over a hundred families are snowed in and described as in a dangerous situation.

Mr. Spurgeon is an enviable man. While London is a perfect purgatory of frost and fog, and men are swearing, and women are shivering, and babies are snivelling, and eyes are red and noses are blue—the Oracle of the Tabernacle is cultivating his own little section of the Lord's vineyard at Mentone. From that pleasant situation he writes encouraging letters to his sorely-tried brethren, like the Irish rebel-captain, who

Fled full soon on the first of June
But bade the rest keep fighting.

"The tidings of the extreme severity of the weather in London," he says, "not only makes me pity the poor and the asthmatic, but all of you." How considerate! How generous! Spurgeon is off to the land of sweet air and sunshine, and sends his blessing to the fogged and frosted ladies and gentlemen who pay him to stay there. Verily godliness is great gain, and hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of the life that is to come.

Spurgeon pities the poor and asthmatical, but how much pity is shown by his God? This paragraph is written on Monday morning about twelve o'clock. Gas is burning in the office, which is full of dirty fog. Outside you can only see about twenty feet around you. And the cold is intense and searching. Three weeks of this would persuade the greatest optimist that life is *not* worth living. Mr. Spurgeon believes that the Lord sends the weather, and we beg to ask him, in the words of Tennyson's Northern Farmer, "What be God Almighty about?"

The fact is, we want Home Rule for this planet. The imperial government of the universe is clearly incapable of looking after our local affairs. It is all very well to keep the fixed stars and planets in their places. But that is not everything. Earth's inhabitants have their special business and pleasures, and the weather should be handed over to a decent committee. At present we have a perfect chaos. One part of the world is too dry and another too wet. Here the people are scorching, and there they have chilblains and bronchitis. Really, is too bad. Jehovah and his two partners, his cabinet and executive, will have to give in. We are slaves to stand it; at any rate, we are fools to be always petitioning a government that won't listen to our grievances, or budge an inch to redress them.

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MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 28, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith."

January 4, Milton Hall; 11, Hall of Science; 18, Huddersfield; 25, Hall of Science.

February 1, Hull; 8, Leeds; 15, South Shields; 22, Newcastle.

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Hall of Science.

April 12, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Such matters lie outside our province.

A. BAKER.—Mr. Foote will try to give Wigan a date, and will wrtte as soon as possible.

R. W.—Already dealt with.

G. C. WALLIS.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with *Letters to Jesus Christ*, *The Creation Story*, and the *Refutation of Deism*. Your fresh order is handed to Mr. Forder. Please send direct to him in future.

J. BURRELL.—Sorry to hear the Westminster parcel of Freethought literature was lost, but hope, with you, it will do good to whoever found it. "Little Jesus" should be a Christmas treat to a Christian.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following: W. Trevilion, 10s.; G. M., 1s.; W. Griffis, 10s.; Three Swindon Friends, 7s. 6d.; C. Bowman, (per G. Standring), 2s. 6d.

W. S. SKINNER.—Glad to hear that our old Cartoon on Booth at the end of Self Denial Week is attracting attention.

C. DOEG.—Send us news of the Hall Company for our new year's number.

J. F. HENLEY.—It was good of Mr. Hunt to take Mr. Forder's place at such short notice. This is not fit weather for Mr. Forder to lecture in. At this time of the year he should be reserving instead of expending his strength.

C. E. SMITH.—Budget of Jokes received with thanks.

W. M. KNOX.—The date was engaged by Leeds. Mr. Foote will try to visit Belfast. Would April do?

P. H. ECHLIN.—Thanks for the cutting. We see that Mrs. Pearcey is not to be respited. Her expectation of going to "a better and purer world," without the expression of a single regret for her infamous crime, is one of the richest bits of Christian humbug we have ever noticed.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren — Liberty — Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt — Freidenker — The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought — Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Lancashire Evening Post—La Vérité Philosophique—Le Matin—Echo—Two Worlds—Newark Advertiser—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Isle of Wight Express.

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

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Sunday evening was wretched in London. A thaw set in—only to be frozen up more bitterly during the night—and the streets were turned into perfect sloughs. Mr. Foote scarcely expected to find a dozen people at the Hall of Science in such weather, and was agreeably surprised to meet so many. Of course, it is but a moderate audience absolutely, but relatively it was magnificent.

By the way, Mr. Foote's title, "The Son of a Ghost," was too much for Saturday night's *Star*; but the *Star* newsboys were calling out in the streets, "Result of the Great Prize Fight," and it was difficult to understand our contemporary's rules of discrimination.

This evening (Dec. 28) Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science on "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith." His metropolitan friends will probably find this lecture interesting.

Not only was the recent London Freethinkers' Ball a great social success, but a profit of £4 11s. 9d. was realised. This has been handed over to the Benevolent Fund.

The Montreal Pioneer Freethought Club, under the leadership of Captain R. C. Adams, has had a fight with the orthodox forces, and remains in possession of the field. The Club, after giving two Freethought lectures at the Rifle Armory's Association Hall, secured a lease of the premises for a series of Sunday evening lectures. Presently the Rifle Association got up a bazaar, and the bigots refused to assist because the hall had been leased to Freethinkers. The colonel then sought to cancel the lease, but his lawyer told him this could not be done without the consent of the Freethought Club, whereupon 400 dols. were offered the club to resign their lease. The Freethought Club refused to either be frightened out or bought out; and Captain Adams sent a letter to the Montreal papers, in which he says: "To those who object to our use of the hall, we wish to say that its platform is open to any reputable minister or layman who desires to discuss the momentous questions of the day. Instead of sending anonymous letters and seeking to cancel business engagements, let these people have the courage to oppose us openly and endeavor to prove to us that our opinions are false.—ROBERT C. ADAMS." We hope the incident will lead to the Montreal Club getting a hall of their own.

E. Chauvière, a municipal councillor of Paris, ridicules, in *La Vérité Philosophique*, the attempt of Theosophists to found spiritualism upon hypnotism. He says epileptics, hysterics, and somnambulists are now the apostles of religious resurrection.

An Asylum for Male and Female Invalid Freethinkers has been instituted at Philadelphia.

There is to be a census in Germany, and *Menschenthum* counsels its readers to write under the column "Religion" the word Freidenker. The subject has given rise to some discussion.

A list of Dr. Ludwig Büchner's volumes given in *Menschenthum* extends to twenty-three separate works from the celebrated *Force and Matter*, first published in 1855, to his latest work, *The Golden Age*, dated for 1891.

We gather from the *Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt* that there are now five indictments pending against Dr. Voelkel for his Freethought lectures, two in Berlin, and one each in Halle, Muhlhausen and Bernberg. No doubt our brave colleague in the Good Old Cause will come out of these trials as triumphantly as ever.

De Dageraad of Amsterdam gives its readers a very extensive account of the martyr Servetus from the pen of J. van der Ende.

Der Lichtfreund of Vienna commences a new volume on January 1st. During the past year it has had really valuable continued articles on "The Transformation of Paganism into Christianity," and on "The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century." We wish it prosperity in the new year.

The prospectus of the Liberal (Freethought) Association of Texas, recently founded at Waco, has been sent to us. Ex-Rev. J. D. Shaw is president, and J. L. Jackson secretary. We trust the Association will have success in the biggest of the United States.

The Liberation Society, Sergeant's Inn, Fleet Street, have followed up the announcement of their intention to give prizes for essays on the Disestablishment question by issuing the conditions of the competition, and supplying list of works which may be advantageously consulted by intending writers.

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Mr. Foote is to debate the Legal Eight Hours question with Mr. G. B. Shaw at the Hall of Science, London, on Wednesday and Thursday, January 14 and 15. Mr. Shaw is the most brilliant swordsman of the Fabian Society, and his fellow-members expect him to make mincemeat of Mr. Foote. On the other hand, Mr Foote has a good many friends, and if the saying be true that a man's friends taste a spice of pleasure in his misfortunes, most of them will turn up to be "in at the death." These are two excellent reasons for expecting large audiences.

Seriously, this question is a burning one, and Messrs. Foote and Shaw mean to do justice, if possible, to their respective sides. Both disputants are Atheists and advanced reformers, desiring the material, mental and moral elevation of the working classes. Further, there is not an atom of personal hostility between them. The question, therefore, will be discussed simply on its merits; and such a debate should be instructive.

Those who want to be present at the London Secular Federation's annual dinner should obtain tickets immediately. It is calculated that the big hall of the Bridge House Hotel will be taxed to the uttermost for sitting room.

The *Daily News* of Dec. 19 publishes extracts from a notable article in a Turkish newspaper on "Christianity and Islam." It describes Christian civilisation as summed up in the phrase, "Clear out, for I want to come there." It contrasts the rapid rise of Mohammedanism with the slow progress of Christianity, and compares their attitude to science. "What was the reward given by Christianity to the man who proved that the world moves? What investigator was ever approved by the Church? Are the writings of the Church to supply the needs of civil and military science and art and industry? To this very day 'profane' writings are not licensed by the Church. In this day can any man who has learning and scientific knowledge remain sincerely a Christian? No science or art is directly or indirectly praised in the New Testament writings. But there is none which is not approved and encouraged directly and indirectly by any number of texts in the Koran or by the traditional sayings of the Prophet. The greatest men of Europe—the Voltaires, the Darwins, the Buchners, the Flammarions, the Victor Hugos—are insulted by the anathemas of the Christianity of to-day as infidels, while Islam recognises them as believers in God who only need faith in his Prophet."

The Turkish newspaper is a little out in the last statement; but its further contention that wherever Christianity goes it exterminates the aboriginal inhabitants, whereas wherever Mohammedanism goes it saves them, is largely borne out by facts.

The South Shields Branch has its Annual Tea and Concert on New Year's Day. This gathering takes place at the Seamen and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation Street. Tea on the tables at 5 o'clock. Tickets, one shilling.

The Liverpool and Bootle Secular Tontine Society commence a new year next Sunday (Dec. 28). Just before the close of the last financial year the President (Mr. George Mitchell) met his death by falling down the hold of a ship on which he was working, and the £10 paid to his family will in some measure mitigate the privation caused by his death. Notwithstanding this, the sum of 16s. was paid over to each member.

The reprint of Mr. Foote's articles on General Booth's book will not be ready till Saturday (Dec, 27). With the considerable additions Mr. Foote has made, the matter will extend to thirty-two pages. The price is fixed at twopence, the lowest possible figure; and as a large sale will be necessary to cover the outlay, it is to be hoped that Freethinkers who can afford it will take copies for circulation among their Christian acquaintances. It is a case of striking while the iron is hot.

Some delay occurred in printing, but Mr. Foote's *Virgin Mother* is now on sale. As a seasonable piece of reading it would be hard to beat. We wish the Christians would read it through two or three times. There would be fewer Christians by next Christmas.

THE LORD'S SECOND COMING.

(From the "Liberator.")

[BY CABLELECTROGRAPH.]

Hallelujah Street, Heaven, October 26th, 1890.

DEAR SYMES,—No doubt you and the Christians are wondering why I haven't returned the second time according to promise.

The fact is, the Ghost and I see such queer carryings on down below on the earth, that really we don't consider the people worth bothering about. They are endowed with reason to work out their own ends on earth, but owing mainly to promiscuous breeding amongst humanity, things have got into such a mess that it will be the Devil's own trouble to set them right.

What do you think of people who gammon to be ruled by us and guided by us, and then ignore us in everything, except when they are in danger of their miserable lives? Then they are ready enough to turn to us, but we haven't any patience with such people, and never, well hardly ever, grant their requests. They talk about immorality if they see a naked statue, or a picture of somebody undressed. Surely if we, the three in one, are satisfied with nakedness, people who profess to be inferior to us, and infinitely less in intellect, ought to be. We see we couldn't do any good by coming and arguing with them, because these things are plain enough to see without our being on earth, so we have concluded to stay where we are.

There is the locust question, too—we are ignored in that; in fact, the people make their own laws, and do *everything* without us; so we have decided to give them *the go-by*.

The Ghost and I often have talks over these matters. It makes little difference to us how the people get along—that is their look-out. They are so busy scheming and plotting how to get the best of one another, that little real thought is given to us even by the greatest of humbugs—those Christians. Why, therefore, should we care for them? It was either Mammon or us, and the people have decided for Mammon. So let it be.

I may mention that Luther is keeping a pub at the sign of "The Pearly Gates." Best brands of wines and spirits always on hand. (If you want this paid for as an advertisement, I will drop in next time I am down your way and give you a cheque.) Luther would like to see any of his co-religionists that come this way, and can accommodate them at a moderate tariff. He has unfortunately taken to drink lately, and is much *luther* in his conduct than he was. We are great chums, and when he runs short of sacramental wine, I get a barrel of water, and, hey presto! make wine of it in no time. (This isn't a miracle—the French can make wine without a particle of grape-juice being in it.) I get plenty of free nips from Luther on this account. Of course, you will keep this part private; it don't do to be too open while those temperance fellows are about. They will be pestering me with their tracts and statistics.

All the rest of the reformers are well, but they are always hatching some new scheme or other to improve heaven. Sometimes I feel inclined to sell out and let them run the concern themselves, but there's no place like home, you know (when the rent is free), and besides, the comic papers would be guying us if we cleared out of the old heavenly mansion and had to seek a haven among strangers.

Billy Shakespeare is running a Punch and Judy show, and Thomas Paine is editing a religious weekly. Satan is in the ice-cream business. He ran short of sulphur for his bonfire; and John Wesley and old Wycliffe, together with Dr. Watts, petitioned us to clap on a high protective duty on imported sulphur, which practically ruined Satan, and he sold out to Voltaire for a song, who now keeps the fire alight for burning poetical compositions sent him by the inhabitants of the planet Mars, with which we have telephonic communication.

We are excluding all residents of the earth from this place now, as those that are here cause such an infernal din with their harp playing and singing, that we have to put corks in our ears to get peace. They have formed a syndicate to smelt up the golden streets into shekels, and actually want to introduce Christianity here. God help us, Mr. Symes, if this comes about!

We are still experimenting with other worlds and forms of life, and have a large assortment of new and second-hand planets in all stages of development on hand and to arrive. Thomas Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, said it would take me all my time to go about getting crucified in every world that

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is inhabited. I don't intend to try; the earthly experience was quite enough for me. I got a sickener of crucifixion then. (Please spell it cruci-*fiction*, for that's just what it was, only the Christians are too blind to see it.)

Kindly drop a note to Baxter, of the *Christian Herald*, and tell him to stop his contemptible rubbish about the Bible prophecies, or I will turn him into a pillar of rock-salt, and rain fire and brimstone on his printing office. Tell him I ran the gospel chariot without feathering my nest—in fact, lost by it, and if he will do the same I will believe in his sincerity and won't trouble him. Baxter doesn't know any more than the man in the moon when I shall come. I never communicate with him, and he is practically receiving money under false pretences by pretending to prophesy my second advent. His dupes should take warning by this.

Excuse bad writing as I am not in good form. The landlord of the "Harp and Crown" here, advertised in the *Heavenly Times* and *Celestial Mercury*, that he had such good whisky on tap that there wasn't a headache in a barrel of it. I "sampled" a barrel—and got such a headache that Herr Von Ah Sin, the Chinese doctor of Luciferville (one of the outlying suburbs) dosed me with extract of dried alligator for six weeks without success. Professor Delirium, the noted head of the inebriate retreat here, said I had an attack of the "horrors," and prescribed accordingly; but nature eventually completed a cure. I was so bad, however, that I spoiled all the furniture in the throne-room, and pelted gold crowns at passers-by in the street. The place was in a devil of a mess, "when the wine's in the wit is out," you know, and I finished up the debauch by sitting on Gabriel's trumpet and ruining it completely. I am 19½ stone weight, and the trumpet was only a frail concern.

By-the-bye, old Gabriel is short-winded now, and unfit for trumpet practice. If he blew a blast you could only hear it for about a hundred yards; so you are not likely to see or hear him in the heavens. He was always puzzled to know how an old man like him could be expected to waken up the earth by one blast of his horn, and he says it is the biggest conundrum he ever struck. We had a talk over it, and agreed to give it up. Besides, he said it would never do for him to show himself now, even if he had armor on like Ned Kelly, as some Freethinkers would be sure to make a target of him with artillery, just to satisfy their inquiring minds as to whether chain-shot would penetrate a ghost or not. He says he has no fancy for that kind of welcome, neither have I.

In conclusion, Mr. S., I wish you would speak to your *Liberator* boys about playing pitch-and-toss when delivering the papers. My *Liberator* has been late for two or three weeks, and when I put on my white robe and went out to see about it, what should I find but the young monkeys playing "heads I win, tails you lose!" They swore that Pope Leo (who has a corner grocery here) taught them the game.

We have had several snow-falls here lately. The snow is black up in this quarter of the universe—it would seem strange to you, no doubt, but we are quite used to it.

Mary has had another son, still-born. We think either Louis 14th or St. Mark was the pater, but it is difficult to prove the paternity in these matters.—Yours infinitely,

J. CHRIST.

P.S.—Please tell the Christians that they may as well drop sending letters to the celestial post-office, as we make a point of never answering them, even when they are prepaid, as anyone but a fool could see. As to verbal prayers, we don't feel inclined to make asses of ourselves by answering all kinds of contradictory and absurd petitions. Besides, we should want ears as big as the Sun to catch all that is addressed to us from the earth, and of course the loudest shout man can give only penetrates a short distance into the atmosphere. Rest assured, Mr. Symes, we find ourselves fully employed in other ways, or you would soon hear of us unmistakeably. You will be doing a kindness to the Christians in pointing this out to them. There is the earth—it is large enough for those that like it; those who don't like it can lump it. Them's our principles, Mr. Symes. Vale—J. C.

Parson Bluff—"Remember you must give an account of all your actions and deeds when you go to the other world." Jimmy Fastboy—"I'm glad you mentioned it. I am studying a new system of improving the memory. I guess I'll drop it now."

Had Adam let the Apple be,
  Had Eve kept clear her skirts,
To-day we would not know the bliss
  Of wearing flannel shirts.

I F:

If I were a God, in a realm of light,
  Set up on a big white throne,
I wouldn't look down, with a frown that would blight,
  Or assume a chilling tone.
    I'd be cheery and gay,
    In a volatile way;
I'd address my creatures all,
    And my subjects true,
    I would welcome, too,
Whenever I gave them a call.
Away I'd fling my chastening rod
    If I were a God.

If I were a God, every hateful law
  I'd abolish right away;
No one should sigh; I'd close death's door,
  And work should be turned to play.
    The sick should be well,
    I'd send icebergs to Hell,
And the poor should all be rich;
    I'd abolish pain
    From my domain,
And sorrow I'd hang for a witch;
But the Devil should die of his own accord,
    If I were God.

If I were a God, the people should all
  Have loads and loads of fun,
With lives as gay as a fancy ball;
  And I'd look out for every one.
    No tuckers and bibs
    For his celestial nibs,
If you please, when I am he,
    In harmless folly,
    And melancholy
My children might drown and be free.
And you bet your life, care 'd be under the sod,
    If I were God. —*Boston Investigator*

LONG YEARS AGO.

The Theosophical Thursday is becoming quite an institution. There was a good attendance at Regent's Park Hall to hear Mr. Sinnett lecture on the "Earth and its Races." The Theosophical theory is that we have all passed through the different stages of the animal kingdom, and the human being has been evolved therefrom in a manner analogous to the materialisation of an ethereal body on the "Astral" plane. The lecturer then told us about the Atlanteans—the fourth race proper—people who dwelt on the earth a million or so odd years ago, and finally disappeared something like 15,000 years back, the main body having gone about 100,000 years previously. The Atlanteans represented in its maximum degree the localisation of the spirit in matter—they developed in the highest degree the material intellectuality, and embodied physical beauty in its advanced maturity. They were altogether a clever lot of people, overcoming gravitation and elements with as much comfort as we can eat a Christmas pudding. The Atlanteans were delivered, according to Theosophical theory, at the bottom of the cycle of evolution, and were without that impulse to spirituality, which is so characteristic of our race. In taking a general view of the seven races, Mr. Sinnett came to figures about the age of the world, and dealt with millions of years—"ages in cosmic development" he called them—with airy lightness. We—the people of the present time—are the fifth race, and as yet in our infancy. Before we really make a start in the upward spiritual progress a few more 100,000 years have to pass, when the "Karmic consequences" will find its next demonstration happening in the sixth race. But it is to be something like 10,000,000,000 years hence before we even get into the middle of the fifth round, so there is not much need to worry. When we are ultimately reincarnated in the seventh race of this world period, Mr. Sinnett says we shall all be so transcendantly beautiful and glorified that we shall not recognise ourselves. Coming to the age of the world, the *Star* man, who is good at figures and a believer in Geikie's assertion that the ice age occurred only some 20,000,000 years ago, has calculated that up to date the age of the world may roughly be estimated at 750,000,000,000,000,000 years or so. Mrs. Annie Besant, in conclusion, said this was the last lecture of the present year, and offered some Theosophical Christmas cards at 3d. apiece.—*The Star*.

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ONE OF BIERCE'S STORIES.

I heard a rather interesting anecdote the other day. Late one night some years ago a prominent Jewish physician, now of this city, was aroused from sleep and beseeched by a wretchedly-clad Irishman to accompany him on a professional visit to his family. There was evidently no fee in it, but the benevolent physician cheerfully complied, and was piloted to the most miserable part of the city, where, in an environment of indescribable squalor, he found his patient, the wife of the man who had summoned him. The poor woman was suffering from a terrible contagious disease, and was about to give birth to her first child. Beside the pile of rags npon which she lay was a priest of the Roman Catholic Church bravely administering the consolations of religion. What a spectacle for instruction of the cynic! In that palace of indigence and stronghold of terror, where one might almost feel the presence of anguish and almost hear the footfalls of Death, Man's love of Man had entered to medicine alike the body and the soul. About that couch of misery was no room for race hatreds and the warfare of creeds. The Angel of Mercy stood there invisible, and in the divine compassion of his eyes immemorial animosities melted like barriers of ice. The Jewish physician and the Catholic priest, no longer lightning calculators of their long accounts, were false to the traditions of their fathers and forgot to abhor one another. But that is not what I was going to relate.

When the poor woman had become a mother, when the physician had prescribed and the priest had prayed, and both were about to withdraw, the priest approached the physician, took his hand, lifted his hand reverently toward heaven for a moment, then, lowering them, said: "My son, I thank you in the name of the Father." "And I, sorr," said the patient's husband, with a sidelong glance at the new babe, "in the name o' the rest o' the family."—*Ambrose Bierce, in the San Francisco "Examiner."*

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

AFTER serving for fifteen years as Secretary to the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder is resigning the post. His best days have been spent in the party's service, and his health is now precarious. In these circumstances, it has been deemed an act of justice to present him with a testimonial in recognition of his invaluable work as a lecturer and organiser, and to assist him in the Freethought publishing business, to which he will devote the remainder of his life. The Testimonial has the hearty support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the Presidency during the period of Mr. Forder's service.

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PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher—"Is your father a Christian?" New Pupil—"No, ma'am; he's an ice dealer."

Tolstoi says marriage is a sin. Let this idea generally obtain and we expect to see a tremendous boom in the matrimonial market.

Aunt Theo—"Tommy, I am surprised you forget your I ble so quickly! Now, when the rain descended and smote the earth for forty days, what was it called? Tommy (promptly)—"Mud!"

Sowers—"I think religion is all policy, anyway." Crowley—"I don't see how you can look at it in that light." Sowers—"Why, it's nothing but insurance against fire, is it?"

LET us see what the Church, within a few years, has been compelled substantially to abandon—that is to say, what it is now almost ashamed to defend. First, the astronomy of the sacred scriptures; second, the geology; third, the account given of the origin of man; fourth, the doctrine of original sin, the fall of the human race; fifth, the mathematical contradiction known as the trinity; sixth, the atonement—because it was only on the ground that man is accountable for the sin of another, that he could be justified by reason of the righteousness of another; seventh, that the miraculous is either the misunderstood or the impossible; eight, that the Bible is not inspired in its morality, for the reason that slavery is not moral, that polygamy is not good, that wars of extermination are not merciful, and that nothing can be more immoral than to punish the innocent on account of the sins of the guilty; and, ninth, the divinity of Christ.—*Ingersoll.*

MAN will never attain his full powers as a moral being until he has ceased to believe in a personal God and in the immortality of the soul.—*Reade.*

INSPIRED OR INSANE?—The modern dervish, no doubt, presents the closest parallel which still exists to the Hebrew prophet of old. The poet, the madman, the enthusiast, receive, as of yore, the reverent homage of a simple folk; and false prophets were not less commonly found among the Jews (as they themselves admitted) than are charlatans and impostors among the fanatics who have attained in the Syria of to-day to a reputation for sanctity.—*Rabbi Jeshua, p. 9.*

WE are convinced that it is contrary to all moral ideas to teach that the guilty may be pardoned, because the innocent have suffered.—*Robt. C. Adams.*

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President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition: to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

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Address .....

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Occupation .....

Active or Passive .....

Dated this.....*day of*.....18

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary, with a subscription; and, on admission of the member, a certificate will be issued by the Executive.

The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Members are classed as *active* or *passive*. Passive members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. Active members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[*Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.*]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 38 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "Evolution *v.* Special Creation."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 8, quarterly meeting; 5.30, tea (tickets 6d. each); 7.30, select concert. Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E., 7, a lecture.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Plays and Players." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Finsbury—Loyal United Friends' Hall, Banner Street, St. Luke's, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 11.15, Mr. Herbert Burrows, ; 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Star of Christ in the Night of Faith."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Robert Forder, "Is Christmas a Christian Festival?" Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, Mr. C. Cohen, 11, "Agnosticism"; 7, "Origin of Species."

Westminster Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. V. Roger, "The Eight Hours Day Dream."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Bible: what it is and what it is not."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, debate between Messrs. L. Keen and Lockyer on "Can we Follow Jesus?"

COUNTRY.

Crook—Club Room, Commercial Hotel, Commercial Street, 6.30, a paper by Mr. Dent.

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class, Mr. Ellis, "Morality the Outcome of Experience"; 7, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, "The Struggles of Science."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, monthly financial meeting of members, important business.

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 2, social gathering of members and friends; 7, entertainment.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E. —Dec. 28, Camberwell. Jan. 5 (1891), Annual Dinner; 18, Rushden. Feb. 8, Camberwell; 22, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Jan. 18 (1891), Liverpool.

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