

# THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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THE REAL TRINITY.

## THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON II.

*“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.”—Ecclesiastes ix., 10.*

The book from which this text is taken is part of the Bible or Scripture, and as all Scripture was given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, this portion also must have been inspired by that individual. But at that time the Holy Ghost was not so old nor so widely experienced as now—should he still be living. And his comparative youth may account for a serious omission or oversight in the text. And if I should be bold enough to correct mine author, let no one charge me with want of reverence; for I do but follow the practice of all orthodox divines, who, indeed, spend much of their time either contradicting or emending the language of the Holy Ghost. And if “all the plagues” of the Apocalypse should unfortunately be “added to” me for adding to the “words of the prophecy of this book,” I fear there is no orthodox commentator or critic but will share my unhappy fate for the same crime; and to be damned in such good and pious company takes away all its shame, and, no doubt, much of its misery as well.

The text as it stands would justify every kind of roguery and wrong-doing: the pirate, the highwayman, the pick-pocket—Mr. Newdegate for example, who is doing his utmost to pick Mr. Bradlaugh’s of £500 and costs—and all other wretches who plunder and persecute, may shelter themselves under this text as it stands in the Bible. Their hands are ever finding mischief to do; and the text counsels them to do it with their might! But as we, like commentators and preachers in general, are wiser and more experienced than the Holy Ghost, or, indeed, than any other god that ever existed, we emend and improve the text thus: “Whatsoever good and useful thing thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,” &c., &c.

Like most Bible texts, this one naturally divides itself into three heads. And here I may remark, in passing, that this singular threefold division of Bible texts cannot be regarded otherwise than as one of the best, if not the very best, proofs of that sublime and mysterious doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

I. The first subject we notice is the duty enjoined:—Whatsoever good and useful thing thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. 1. Every human being ought to work; but many of them skulk from cradle to grave. And there will always be parasites of that kind living on the body politic till the body politic is cleansed and purified; and then such vermin must either die or work. But thou, do

thou whatsoever good thing thy hand findeth to do. This is a duty every man owes to society; for no man has anything to begin with except what society bestows. The wealth and intelligence and art and science of the world are one vast entailed estate, which every generation and every person should do all in their power to hand down to our successors better than it descended to us. 2. It should be our business to “find” out what we are best suited for, and to do that. 3. Whatever we honestly take in hand should be done with all our might—might of intellect, of learning, of experience, of attainments, of brain, and blood, and muscle; and with all the might of influence we may honestly exercise over others.

II. A man’s life is the only period he can ever have in which to do his duty. So, I pray you, let there be no postponement. To postpone for an hour is to postpone for ever; for every hour should discharge its own duty. If not, some duty will be neglected and never done. To the Atheist this should be more pressing than to any other. The religious man vainly hopes for a future in which he may right the wrongs of the present; we have no hope of that sort, and should therefore use our hours as a miser spends his money.

III. The strong reason why we should do now all that we can is this. We are going to the grave, and in that place there is “no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom,” that is, no work, nor the remotest possibility of any. Could a stronger motive be urged? But (1), my reader, do not start at the thought of going to the grave. It were unworthy of a brave man to fear even if the grave were full of danger, and no man who is under the direction and sway of fear should be an Atheist. But the grave is not a place of danger. Indeed, its inhabitants are the only contented people known. Life is a fever, a delirium, a battle, a ceaseless struggle, a lottery (of more blanks than prizes), a chain of disappointments. But in the grave there is no work, no toil, no weariness, no pain, no disappointment, no fever—only rest, absolute rest for the person, though not for his elements; these never have rested, never will. The dead! You may bury them, dissect them, leave them to the fierce sunshine or to the frost and snow, burn them!—they never complain, they never frown; they laugh not, neither do they cry. There is *nothing* like death for giving absolute satisfaction. Then why dread the grave? The most downy bed in the world must be harder than a couch of fresh road-metal compared with the grave.

2. But in the grave there is no “device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom.” It is refreshing to read this honest truth in the book of inspiration, this honest and open confession of the Holy Ghost that the future life and Heaven and Hell are all a delusion. Other parts of the book, too, are equally outspoken; and thus we have the pleasure of seeing Christianity divided against itself. The dead know not anything, they have no reward, nor love, hate, nor envy (Ecc. ix., 5-6); they go down to the grave never to rise (Job vii., 9); the wise man and the fool die alike (Ecc. ii., 16); men are beasts and die like beasts; they have the same breath or spirit and no sort of pre-eminence (Ecc. iii., 18-21).

It may be too much to expect Christians to believe what Atheists say; is it also too much to expect them to read their Bible without prejudice? Perhaps so. But my hand finds it to do to endeavor to enlighten them; and I do it with what little might I have. The dreams of heaven and hell are perfectly useless for all good purposes; they are, in fact, a curse; and every honest and enlightened man should, “with his might,” try to explode them. Honest, lifelong work, “well and faithfully done,” will, in most cases, destroy the very desire for endless life: it is present misery, and present idleness and uncertainty, that beget the feverish dream of heaven.

J. SYMES.





## RELIGIOUS TYRANNY.

[ALFIERI, the great Italian dramatist, wrote a remarkable work on Tyranny, one chapter of which, devoted to Religion, is well worth the trouble of translating for the readers of the *Freethinker*. In concluding his noble Dedication to Liberty, Alfieri says that the work was written in his youth, but revised at a more advanced age; and he adds, "If there no longer survive in me the courage, or rather the fire, necessary to compose it, I nevertheless retain intelligence, independence, and judgment enough to approve it, and to let it stand as the last of my literary productions."]

WHATEVER idea man has conceived or entertained respecting things he does not understand, such as the soul and deity, that idea, I say, is often one of the firmest supports of tyranny. The idea which has been generally formed by the vulgar of a tyrant so resembles that which nearly all peoples have falsely conceived of a God, that one may infer that the first tyrant was not the strongest, as is generally supposed, but the most cunning and the most learned in human nature, and hence the first to give them any notion of deity. It is for this reason that among the majority of peoples religious tyranny has engendered political tyranny. Often they are united in a single head, but they have never failed to render each other mutual support.

The Pagan religion, in multiplying without end the number of the gods, in making Olympus a kind of Republic, in subordinating Jupiter himself to the laws of Fate, in making him respect the customs and privileges of the celestial court, was calculated to be, and in effect was, very favorable to liberty. The Jewish religion, and afterwards the Christian and the Mohammedan, which admitted only one God, the terrible and absolute master of all things, were calculated to be, have been, and always are, much more favorable to tyranny.

I pass lightly over these things, which are not my proper concern, and which others have said before me. I return to my subject. I shall not examine any other religion than ours, and that only in relation to its influence on the tyrannies of Europe.

The Christian religion, which is that of nearly the whole of Europe, is not in its nature favorable to liberty, but the Catholic religion shows itself altogether incompatible with liberty. It will suffice, I think, in order to prove the truth of the first of these propositions, to point out that Christianity neither calls, exhorts, nor leads men to liberty; and yet men should receive the first impulse towards an object so important from religion itself, since there is nothing which has so much power over their souls, which engraves any idea so strongly on their hearts, or which incites them so powerfully to execute great designs.

In fact, in Pagan antiquity, Jupiter, Apollo, the Sibyls, the Oracles, commanded the various peoples that worshipped them to emulate each other in love of country and of liberty. Born amongst a people slavish, ignorant, and already entirely subjugated by priests, the Christian religion knows only how to enjoin the blindest obedience, and is unacquainted even with the name of liberty; and the tyrant, whether priest or layman, it likens unto a God.

If we inquire in what manner Christianity was propagated, we shall find that it spread and established itself more readily under despotisms than in Republics. It could not establish itself in the Roman Empire until liberty had been entirely destroyed by military power; and at the fall of the Empire, the barbaric nations that first occupied and afterwards established themselves in Italy, in France, in Spain, and in Africa, under their various leaders, soon embraced the Christian religion. And this seems to me the reason. Those leaders wished to remain tyrants, and their followers, accustomed to freedom when not engaged in war, would only render obedience as soldiers to their captains, and never as slaves to their masters. Christianity entered among these conflicting humors, as a means whereby the people might be convinced of the necessity of obedience, and tyrant-captains be assured of despotic power, provided they were ready to yield a portion of their authority to the priests. In proof of this, it will suffice to observe that those of the northern peoples who remained poor, simple, and free in their native forests, were the last in Europe to embrace Christianity, and even then they were converted more by violence than by persuasion.

The few nations outside Europe that accepted it were nearly always constrained by force and fear; for example, the various countries of Africa and America. But we may plainly perceive from the ferocious fanaticism with which it was received and embraced in China, and still more in Japan, how it would have grown and prospered under those two despotisms. The great number of abuses it includes, in the course of time obliges some peoples, much more prudent than enthusiastic, to mitigate it by divesting it of its worst superstitions; and those peoples, distinguished therefore by the title of heretics, thus opened for themselves a road to liberty, which returned amongst them, after being long banished from Europe, and brought happiness in its train. Switzerland, Holland, some German towns, England and America, prove the truth of this. But the peoples who, not daring to bridle this religion, consent to preserve it intact, deprive themselves for ever of the means to regain their liberty. When I say intact I do not mean as it was preached by Jesus, but as disguised by fraud, falsehood, and violence through his successors. I shall not at present produce all the reasons, but only the principal

ones, from which it appears to me impossible that a Catholic state could become free, or remain so, while it continued to be Catholic.

The worship of images, the real presence in the Eucharist, and the other dogmatic points, are assuredly not those which, whether believed or not, have any influence on political liberty; but the Pope, the Inquisition, Purgatory, Confession, Indissoluble Marriage, and the Celibacy of Priests, these are the six links of the sacred chain which give to the Secular chain such strength that it becomes heavier and harder to break. Beginning with the first of these, I say that a people who believe that there can exist a man who directly represents God, a man who can never err, such a people must necessarily be stupid. But if, not believing it, they come to be plagued, persecuted, and compelled by a superior and effective power, it will happen that the first generation will believe in the Pope through fear, their children through habit, and their grandchildren through stupidity. This is the way in which a people who remain Catholic must necessarily, by the influence of the Pope and the Inquisition, become the most ignorant, the most stupid, and the most slavish of peoples.

But, I shall be answered, the heretics believe in the Trinity, and the Trinity appears to the eyes of common sense still more absurd than the things enumerated above; the heretics are then not less stupid than the Catholics. I reply that the Romans also believed in the flight and cackle of birds, which is even more puerile and absurd, and yet the Romans were great and free. They only became stupid and vile when, stripped of their freedom, they believed in the infamous divinity of Cæsar, of Augustus, and of the tyrants still more wicked. In like manner our Trinity, not being an element of experience, whether believed or not, can never influence political life. But the authority more or less of a man, authority without limits over matters of the highest importance, authority which conceals and covers itself with the sacred mantle of religion, produces great results; results, indeed, of such a nature that every people who believe or admit such an authority, enslave themselves for ever.

[Here comes a trenchant criticism of the six practical dogmas of Catholicism, which we omit as of less special interest to our readers.]

I know not whether we owe to sacerdotalism the first invention of respecting political despotism as something holy and sacred, or whether despotism created the idea in favor of sacerdotalism. However that may be, this reciprocal and deceitful idolatry is very ancient, for we see in the Old Testament the priests and kings giving each other the title of sacred; but never have these two usurping orders called sacred the natural and incontestible rights of human society. The truth is that almost all the peoples of the earth have been, are, and alas! perhaps ever will be, oppressed and dominated by those two classes of men, who, although recognising each other as iniquitous and tyrannical, none the less continue to make themselves respected as sacred. Their crimes have sometimes been unveiled; the people have often abhorred them; but alas! they have always regarded them as divine.

It is a well known fact that in our century\* professed Catholics have very little belief in the Pope, that the Inquisition has lost nearly all its power, that none but idiots go to Confession, that Indulgences are no longer bought, except by some pious and vulgar thieves. But at present, among the Catholics, the military, and the military alone, easily maintains the Pope, confession, purgatorial offerings, and the rest; that is to say, the tyrant obtains now through the terror inspired by his numerous armies the same results which he formerly obtained through the superstition and the gross ignorance of his people. It matters little to him now whether we believe in God or not, it suffices the tyrant that we believe in him; and to assist that belief, more degrading to us and much less consoling, he employs the persuasion that lies in the standing armies which he maintains at our expense.

There are, however, still in Europe some tyrants who, to cover their actions with a mask of hypocrisy, proclaim themselves the supports of religion; whether to gain a reputation for piety, or to please the majority, whose belief in and respect for religion have not died away. Every prudent and cunning tyrant must act thus; either not to deprive himself, by a useless incredulity, of that precious branch of absolute power which springs from the fury of the priesthood directed by him, and, *vice versa*, of his own directed by them; or because he fears, in acting otherwise, that some religious fanatic will arise to fulfil the duty of a fanatic of liberty, and these religious fanatics are less rare and more audacious than the others. Why are the fanatics of liberty more rare? Because the name of religion is in all mouths, while that of liberty is in the mouths of only a few, and in the heart of almost none.

The sublimest and most useful of all fanaticisms, that which would produce greater men than any who have yet lived, is the fanaticism which should create and propagate a religion whose God, under the gravest penalties, present and future, commanded all men to be free. But the men who have fanned the fire of fanaticism in the hearts of others have scarcely ever been fanatics themselves, and they have had too great an interest in proclaiming a religion and a God that have severely commanded all men to be slaves.

\* The eighteenth.



## THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE.

MR. W. MORRISH, of Bristol, has published in the form of a large twopenny pamphlet Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on the Religion of the Future, which was originally delivered to an overflowing audience in New York. We have no doubt that the reprint will have a large sale; and although there is no international copyright between England and America, we have as little doubt that Mr. Morrish will remember Colonel Ingersoll's moral claim to a share of the profits.

Those who expect to find a developed religion in this lecture will be disappointed. Ingersoll declares that "it is not yet time to write a creed." He bids us "wait until teachers take the place of preachers, until followers become investigators, until the world is free" before we write one. But he ventures to prophesy that the supreme word of that creed will be Liberty.

The lecture breathes a noble spirit of freedom and humanity. It contains much wise counsel, sage reflection, impassioned eloquence, and touching pathos, and nearly every paragraph is lighted up with the orator's inimitable wit. Here is a racy satire on the Christian theory of the

## ORIGIN OF EVIL:

"Nearly every religion has accounted for all the wickedness in this world by the crime of woman. What a gallant thing that is! And if it be true, I had rather live with the woman I love in a world full of trouble, than to live in heaven with nobody but men.

"I read in a book—and I will say now that I cannot give the exact language, as my memory does not retain the words, but I can give the substance—I read in a book that the Supreme Being concluded to make a world and one man; that he took some nothing and made a world and one man, and put this man in a garden. In a little while he noticed that the man got lonesome; that he wandered around as if he was waiting for a train. There was nothing to interest him; no news; no papers; no policy; and, as the devil had not made his appearance, there was no chance for reconciliation, not even for civil-service reform. Well, he wandered about the garden in this condition, until finally the Supreme Being made up his mind to make him a companion.

"Having used up all the nothing he originally took in making the world and one man, he had to take a part of the man to start a woman with. So he caused a sleep to fall on this man—now understand me, I do not say this story is true. After the sleep fell upon this man, the Supreme Being took a rib, or as the French would call it, a cutlet, out of this man, and from that he made a woman. And considering the amount of raw material used, I look upon it as the most successful job ever performed. Well, after he got the woman done, she was brought to the man; not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her, and they started housekeeping; and they were told of certain things they might do, and one thing they must not do—and of course they did it. I would have done it in fifteen minutes, and I know it. There wouldn't have been an apple left on that tree half an hour from date, and the limbs would have been full of clubs. And then they were turned out of the park and extra policemen were put on to keep them from getting back.

"Devilment soon commenced. The mumps, and the measles, and the whooping cough, and the scarlet fever started in their race for man. They began to have the toothache, roses began to have thorns, snakes began to have poisoned teeth, and people began to snarl and divide about religion and politics, and the world has been full of trouble from that day to this.

"Nearly all of the religions of this world account for the existence of evil by such a story as that!"

This is followed by the beautiful Hindu story of our first parents, in which the man shields the woman by saying the fault was his, and the woman asks to share the man's curse because she loves him, and the supreme Brahma says "I will spare you both, and watch over you and your children for ever." After which the Colonel asks, honor bright, if that is not a better and grander story than the one in Genesis. Then comes one of the most splendid appeals for justice and tenderness to women and children that we have ever seen. Every husband and wife should read it over once a week. Ingersoll is a great manly man. He says that woman should have justice because she is human, and chivalrous protection too, because she is physically the weaker. We wish we had room for all the beautiful things he utters on this subject. With respect to children, he cries out against whipping them, and recommends love, kindness, and a little patience.

"When one of your children tells a lie be honest with him; tell him you have told hundreds of them yourself. Tell him it

is not the best way; that you have tried it. Tell him, as the man did in Maine when his boy left home, 'John, honesty is the best policy, I have tried both.' Be honest with him. Suppose a man as much larger than you as you are larger than a child five years old, should come at you with a club in his hand, and in a voice of thunder shout, 'Who broke that plate?' there is not a solitary one of you who would not swear you never saw it; or that it was cracked when you got it. Why not be honest with these children? Just imagine a man who deals in stocks whipping his boy for putting false rumors afloat! Think of a lawyer beating his own flesh and blood for evading the truth, when he makes half of his own living that way! Think of a minister punishing his child for not telling all he thinks! Just think of it!"

There is a characteristic passage on the

## PURITAN SUNDAY.

"In the olden time, they thought some days were too good for a child to enjoy himself. When I was a boy Sunday was considered altogether too holy to be happy in. Sunday used to commence then when the sun went down on Saturday night. We commenced at that time getting a good ready, and when the sun fell below the horizon on Saturday evening, there was a darkness fell upon the house ten thousand times deeper than that of night. Nobody said a pleasant word; nobody laughed; nobody smiled; the child that looked the sickest was regarded as the most pious. That night you could not even crack hickory nuts. It was an exceedingly solemn night. Dyspepsia was in the very air you breathed. Everybody looked sad and mournful. I have noticed all my life that many people think they have religion when they are troubled with dyspepsia. If there could be found an absolute specific for that disease, it would be the hardest blow the church has ever received.

"On Sunday morning the solemnity had simply increased. Then we went to church. The minister was in a pulpit about twenty feet high, with a little sounding board above him, and he commenced at 'firstly' and went on and on and on to about 'twenty thirdly.' Then he made a few remarks by way of application; and then took a general view of the subject, and in about two hours he reached the last chapter in Revelations.

"In those days no matter how cold the weather was, there was no fire in the church. It was thought to be a kind of sin to be comfortable while you were thanking God. The first church that ever had a stove in it in New England, divided on that account. So the first church in which they sang by note, was torn in fragments.

"After the sermon we had an intermission. Then came the catechism with the chief end of man. We went through with that. We sat in a row with our feet coming in about six inches of the floor. The minister asked us if we all knew we deserved to go to hell, and we all answered 'Yes.'

"Then the same sermon was preached once more, commencing at the end and going back. After that we started for home, sad and solemn—overpowered with the wisdom displayed in the scheme of the atonement. When we got home, if we had been good boys, and the weather was warm, sometimes they would take us out to the graveyard to cheer us up a little. It did cheer me. When I looked at the sunken tombs and the leaning stones, and read the half-effaced inscriptions through the moss of silence and forgetfulness, it was a great comfort. The reflexion came to my mind that the observance of the Sabbath could not last always. Sometimes they would sing that beautiful hymn in which occurs these cheerful lines:

'Where congregations ne'er break up,  
And Sabbaths never end.'

"These lines I think prejudiced me a little against even heaven. Then we had good books that we read on Sundays by way of keeping us happy and contented. There were Baxter's 'Call to the Unconverted,' Milner's 'History of the Waldenses,' and Jenkyns 'On the Atonement.' I used to read Jenkyns, and often thought that an atonement would have to be exceedingly broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man who would write a book like that for a boy.

"But at last the Sunday wore away, and the moment the sun went down we were free. Between three and four o'clock we would go out to see how the sun was getting on. Sometimes it seemed to me that it was stopping from pure meanness. But finally it went down. It had to. And when the last rim of light sank below the horizon, off would go our caps, and we would give three cheers for liberty once more."

Ingersoll concludes his lecture with a magnificent peroration in praise of Liberty. But as we have no room for further extracts we must send our readers to the lecture, where they may find it for themselves with a lot of other "rich and rare" things.

UTILITARIANISM AND THE DELUGE.—A calculating friend who seldom employs any other interpreter to the Bible than the "Rule of three," being asked his opinion of the Deluge, replied in a manner worthy of Jeremy Bentham: "I think it a great waste of water, which might have been more profitably and humanely employed in quenching hell-fire."



## ACID DROPS.

THE *Corriere Mercantile* reports that at Comunaglia, province of Chiavari, suffering like the rest of Italy by continuous drought, the country people decided to implore their patron saint, San Rocco, with three days' prayer for abundant rainfall. After having given the saint a few days' grace and no rain appearing, the faithful fetched the saint's statue out of the parish church, bound it, and threw it ignominiously into a well, accompanying the feat with loud curses and furious cries. The parish priest fled to the country, frightened by the fury of his parishioners.

THE *Christian World*, while deprecating public prayers for a change of weather, says there is much force in Professor Corrington's remark that "it is better to pray than to fret." Wouldn't work and foresight be better still? As a matter of fact, whenever people pray much they work little, and whenever they work much they pray little.

THE same paper has undertaken to defend John Calvin. "Because Calvin," it says, "acting not only under an imperative sense of duty, but doing what every Protestant of his time held to be Christian duty, contributed to bring Servetus to his death, expressly remonstrating against that death being by fire, he is reviled as a torturer." Similar reasoning would prove it wrong to call a Hindu Thug a murderer. Further, it is not true that Calvin merely contributed to the death of Servetus, for he was the principal agent in that dreadful business. Lastly, to remonstrate against death by fire, when there were a dozen other methods of killing a man just as cruel, is very questionable mercy. Perhaps the *Christian World* will now whitewash the character of Judas Iscariot. There are people who believe that he was actuated by very lofty motives in betraying Jesus.

IN the same article, the *Christian World* speaks of "the profoundly ignorant audiences" addressed by sceptical lecturers. Let the editor of that sublime paper address them on the subject of Christianity and invite discussion; he will then see for himself whether they are quite as ignorant as he describes them.

ACCORDING to the *World* a funny incident recently occurred at Braemar. Mr. Herbert Spencer was staying there at the Fife Arms for several days before he was found out by a Free Church clergyman who lighted on the philosopher's name in the visitors' book. The clergyman was seen to shudder, and on being asked what was the matter, in tremulous accents said that Antichrist was living under the same roof, and straightway convened a prayer-meeting in the billiard room as a fumigatory measure.

FATHER MALONEY, a Catholic priest of Erie, Penn., is again credited with a miraculous cure. His last patient is a man named James Burns, who for years suffered from paralysis to such an extent that he could not stand up. Father Maloney laid his hands upon him, ordered him to arise and walk, and the man was soon out in the streets giving thanks to the priest for his miraculous cure.

COLONEL INGERSOLL says:—"Rev. Dr. Newman, of New York, tells us that the crime of Guiteau shows three things: first, that ignorant men should not be allowed to vote; second, that foreigners should not be allowed to vote; and, third, that there should not be so much religious liberty. It turns out, first, that Guiteau is not an ignorant man; second, that he is not a foreigner; and, third, that he is a Christian. Now, because an intelligent American Christian tries to murder the President, this parson says that we ought to do something with ignorant foreigners and infidels. This is about the average pulpit logic."

GUITEAU says that God told him to. We cannot reach the God, but as we have his agent in our custody, let us give him such an experience that his principal will think twice before again meddling in a murderous manner with mundane affairs.—*New York Truth*.

LITHOGRAPHED sermons are quite a drug out in Chicago. They have dropped down to thirty cents each. Why don't

the Americans export some to England? On this side the Atlantic they would fetch a better price.

WE have received the second number of *The Little Soldier*, a Salvationist paper for children. It seems to be a profitable concern. The editor says, "We sold 40,000 copies of No. I., and we want you to help us sell 60,000 of No. II. But we do not want to hurt the *War Cry*. You can get a *War Cry* and a *Little Soldier* all for a penny." It would be difficult to beat the foxy unktion of that.

LITTLE children who ought to be at school humbly learning from their elders prate about Jesus in the *Little Soldier*, and brag of what they are going to do. Under the head of "Our Experience Meeting in Print," one juvenile says, "Thank God, I am still the Converted Pot Boy, washed in the precious blood of Jesus." Annie, eight years old, says, "Jesus has forgiven my sins, which were many." Anything more infamous than this spiritual debauchery of boys and girls is hard to conceive. We can only console ourselves by reflecting that all these youthful outpourings probably came from the editor's tap.

THE *Little Soldier* gives a list of sins which "a great, big, roaring lion got loose out of hell" incites little folk to commit. It runs thus—Disobedience, Lying, Swearing, Fighting, Stealing Drinking, Gambling, Doubting. Doubting comes last. Scepticism is ever the worst of crimes in pious circles.

ANOTHER fine passage—"Everything that tends towards leading children after the human sources of instruction must be ever guarded against, and put down." The only way to make people Salvationists is to train them as lunatics, and the more ignorant and stupid they are the better.

THE paper contains two portraits; one of Major Taylor, who looks a mixture of fatuity and conceit; the other of Captain Kate Watts, whose mouth and jaw are of the lowest type. These people call themselves converted sinners, and we can readily believe one half of the description.

A LAST note. At the top of *Little Soldier* two urchins, a boy and a girl, are drawn carrying flags with "Blood and Fire" on them. The religion of the Prince of Peace is taught to children in the language of the slaughter-house and the battle-field. The whole thing strikes us as rank humbug, and best explained by the "pence envelopes" and "collecting cards" which the youngsters are asked to send for.

AT a recent Church Union meeting in Exeter the Rev. C. Stanley Churton uttered a wail over the prevalent scepticism of our age. It seemed to him that "the educated men of our universities and public schools were leaving Christ in shoals, while the working classes and mechanics were ready to throw over Christ; the large towns were like heathen cities; the bestial form of undisguised Anti-Christ reared its scowling head over Europe and America; the church was bracing itself up for a series of conflicts with the subtle powers of darkness which would usher in the closing years of the world's life; and only one per cent. of the men in towns attended a place of worship." The world went on all right after the lamentations of Jeremiah, and it will, no doubt, survive those of Parson Churton. The clergy always fancy the world is going to the devil when their trade is slack.

CAN anyone explain why Joseph Cowen, the eloquent member for Newcastle who delivers so many speeches against Coercion in Ireland, says so little about the exclusion of Mr. Bradlaugh from his seat in the House of Commons and the partial disfranchisement of a large English constituency? Mr. Cowen is strongly suspected of sharing a good many of Mr. Bradlaugh's irreligious views. Why then is he so silent? Does he find it convenient to humor the Irish party, or does his sympathy with justice and liberty reach to every part of the world except England?

WHY is the *Radical* so annoyed at the very name of Bradlaugh? Is it because he does not puff the paper, or because T. P. O'Connor is ambitious enough to think that he can lead the English Radicals, and wants to see Bradlaugh out of the way?



## CORRESPONDENCE.

ALL business communications to be addressed to Mr. W. J. RAMSEY, 28, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

F. HARRISON.—The fellow you enquire about was one of the regular staff of contributors to the *Shield of Faith*, when it was a Christian Evidence organ. He used to denounce the immorality of Freethinkers, until his literary career was cut short by his being sentenced to three months' imprisonment for indecently assaulting a little girl on Wimbledon Common. For any further information you had better apply to the Christian Evidence lecturers with whom he was familiar, and who doubtless could give you present intelligence.

GEORGE NEWNHAM, 2, Alma Cottages, Sussex Road, Hayward's Heath, Sussex, supplies the *Freethinker* in that district, as well as other Secular literature.

A. D'EDUARTE.—You can obtain copies of *La Bible Amusante* (The Comic Bible) through Mr. Ramsey at 6d. a number. Ten numbers are already published.

W. H. HARRIS.—Mr. Paul Bert's attack on Catholicism has not been published in English. A good report appeared in the *République Française*. We intend to make our readers better acquainted with what is going on in France.

H. BECKWITH.—Received.

A. T.—We are making arrangements for a series of comic illustrations which will doubtless give great satisfaction to our readers.

A. BURCHELL.—The mistake was certainly unfortunate, but Mr. Foote was announced to lecture in Victoria Park last Sunday without his knowledge. Mr. Goodship's slanders are beneath contempt. Mr. Foote has, of course, never described Mr. Bradlaugh as "a would-be murderer." As for the pious sausage maker who sells vile meat and seduces young girls, he is quite too dirty to touch.

F. MORTIMER.—See our answer to A. Burchell. Mr. Goodship is not worth slaughtering. He seems to have taken the opportunity last Sunday when Mr. Foote's back was turned to void his hoarded venom. Before Mr. Foote's face he is always civil enough. It is not true that Mr. Foote has ever "run away from any parson." He is glad to meet them, but they shun him, as witness the correspondence with Dr. McCann.

J. PARSONS.—We do not know any English edition of "Delphine." It is published in French at 3s. We cannot answer such questions by private letter.

L. JONES.—Parton's "Life of Voltaire" is well written and a perfect mine of facts. We shall introduce it to our readers soon.

INQUIRER.—By all means join the National Secular Society, but do so through the local Branch. Freethinkers should not remain unattached: union is strength. If a Tory reaction sets in we shall have a fiercer fight than ever.

A. CARDIFF FREETHINKER wishes the town could be placarded with bills of Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances," and that thousands of Christian young men could be got to read them.

WELL-WISHER.—Thanks. Send it by all means.

W. C. G.—The verse is hardly up to the mark. We are glad to hear there are a good few Freethinkers in Dover. Why don't they organise?

R. CHAMBERS.—Mr. Foote lectures in Liverpool on the Sunday, but he will travel up by the night train so as to be present at the International Freethought Congress on the Monday.

We were unable to secure a full report of the debate on Secularism between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. Howard. The *Middlesboro' Gazette* gave several columns of small print, but it was just enough to excite curiosity without allaying it.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

As an example of how the first report of a calamity always makes an impression on the minds of the people that subsequent corrected information never fully eradicates, is the fact that the general impression still prevails that the two shots fired at the President by Guiteau both entered his body. Whereas, while one ball entered the back of his right side, between the hip and kidney, the other passed through the right coat-sleeve just below the shoulder. Another incident of this tragedy that received little notice was the almost involuntary though none the less noble and devoted action of Colonel Robert Ingersoll, who was present in the ladies' room of the Potomac depot at the time of the shooting, and heard the shots fired. Not being near enough to the assassin to stay his hand, he sprang forward and covered the wounded President with his body, facing Guiteau, who still held the revolver in his hand.—*Church Union* (New York).

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S sparkling lecture, "The Religion of the Future," is commanding a large sale. The little brochure is just entering upon a third edition.

MR. D. M. BENNETT, of the New York *Truthseeker*, has arrived in London. He will visit many places in England before the International Freethought Congress, after which he will continue his trip round the world. Mr. Bennett's expenses are paid by his friends and admirers, who consider themselves compensated by his letters to the *Truthseeker* from abroad.

THE International Congress will be held in the Hall of Science, London, on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, September 25th, 26th and 27th. Most of the leading Freethinkers of England will attend. Mr. Bradlaugh will deliver an address on the Sunday evening. There is likely to be a good muster of Freethinkers from all parts of Europe and America.

WE learn from a correspondent that Mr. Snell, of the Scottish Secular Union, made some splendid speeches on the Oath Question during the recent electoral stir in Edinburgh, and completely eclipsed all the local speakers.

THE London *Cuckoo*, poor thing, is dead. The melancholy event happened on Saturday, September 3rd. After its attack on Mr. Foote, it made a more disgusting one on Dr. Aveling. These efforts seem to have exhausted its meagre vitality, and a few days after it perished. Let it rest in peace.

## ON RIDICULE.

THERE is nothing fools dislike more than having their opinions laughed at. Fools and priests go together in this "Priests of all persuasions," says Goldsmith, "are enemies to ridicule, because they know it to be a formidable antagonist to fanaticism, and they preach up gravity to conceal their own shallowness of imposture." With such wit is always "wicked," and reason "carnal." The Christian missionary who goes to convert the heathen, however, does not, like the early Christians, admit the reality of Pagan deities, nor does he usually allow how much of worth may be found in heathen systems. Nor is he always content with preaching Christ and him crucified. If able, he generally tries to use such wit as a not too bountiful Providence may have bestowed upon him in order to make the idols of the heathen appear as ridiculous to them as they are to himself. He follows Elijah, who told the priests of Baal to cry aloud upon their God, as peradventure he was asleep. But when the Freethinker, emancipated from the fetish-worship of the Bible and the superstitious absurdities of Christian dogmas, uses his mother wit in exposing these old wives' fables and fooleries, pious eyes, hands, and noses are raised in holy horror at the audacity of the blaspheming wretch. Verily there must be some difference between the Christian missionary with divine truth on his side and the Freethinker deceived by the father of lies.

## UNHOLY BIBLE.—A SONNET.

By John Rowell Waller, F.R.I.S., Author of "Unstrung Links," "Wayside Flowers," "Men we Meet," etc.

Oh! fateful book, dark womb of every crime  
That stains, priest-blest, the annals of our time;  
— Since drunken Noah left his stranded ship,  
And lies leapt quick to faithful Abraham's lip;  
— Since brutal Moses first his God adorned  
With deeds that Marshal Tully might have scorned;  
This earth of ours, king-crushed, religion-ruled,  
Hath fooled itself as priests their gods have fooled:  
But, ah! a few brave hearts who dared to doubt  
Have wrung thy hydra-neck and hurled thee out.  
Rot! sink of faith! and each succeeding day  
Shall watch thy gradual but sure decay;  
So shall our sons Truth's unstained banner bear  
Throughout a world, pure, bibleless, and fair.

## THE CREED OF CHRISTENDOM.

WHAT Mr. Greg calls the creed of Christendom has for three centuries been crumbling away. One by one its worst features have been discarded and its impracticable maxims relinquished, until now a real Christian is as rare as the fabled Phoenix. The Fall of Man, the Curse of God, the Atonement by Christ, and Salvation by Faith, are industriously preached every Sunday, but they are altogether alien to our Secular life. They have been left behind on the road of progress, and we can never return to them. The story of the miraculous birth of Jesus is discredited as a fairy tale and relegated to the domain of mythology. His miraculous works, resurrection, and ascension have shared the same fate. And this process will assuredly continue until all that remains of the gorgeous fabric of Christian faith is a few great spiritual truths which existed before it and are imperishable while the human heart endures.



A WONDERFUL INFIDEL SHOEMAKER.

ONCE upon a time there lived an infidel shoemaker, who was the most wonderful "infidel shoemaker" that ever doubted God Almighty or cobbled old shoes.

He didn't get drunk every night and fling chairs and tables at his wife and children. He didn't burn the Bible, and was not in the habit of going about with a stop-watch giving the Lord five minutes to strike him dead. On the contrary, he was rather a sober fellow, liked his children and home, and, not being a lunatic, never thought of defying a being he did not believe to exist. In fact, he differed entirely from all those outrageous infidel shoemakers who figure in pious tracts and religious periodicals.

His little girl didn't ask him one lovely Sunday morning who made the little birds, and he didn't get licked with this terrible poser and fall down on his knees and call himself the wickedest shoemaker in all the wide world. And he didn't become a new man from that day, attending chapel without missing a turn, and eventually rising to the dignity of minister's beadle. In fact his little girl was too sensible to ask him to answer such a stupid question. The only person who ever asked him who made the little birds was a converted poacher, and the shoemaker's reply was "Nobody; they were hatched."

A holy old vicar with long white hair didn't come and give him a lot of perfect clenchers, making him confess his folly and take a seat in the good man's church.

He once or twice went by sea to visit his friends, and, strange to relate, it didn't on these occasions come on a terrible storm, and he wasn't nearly killed by a flash of lightning, and he didn't get converted all of a sudden and start to rave and howl and turn the ship into a prayer meeting.

This is what the infidels do in the religious tracts, but the infidel here referred to didn't do anything of the kind.

Good Church people didn't come giving him and his family all sort of charities till they converted him with right down kindness. On the contrary, they used to turn up their noses when they saw him in the streets and, though he was an honest enough shoemaker, many of them refused to let him mend their boots because he didn't hold their views. There are people who even insist on the orthodoxy of their cobbler.

This wonderful infidel shoemaker didn't turn pious on his death-bed and send for a missionary man or a minister. He didn't call himself a wicked old sceptic, who loved the Devil and hated the Lord, and used grey paper instead of leather. A dying man is hardly in a mood for theological controversy—theology never entered his head. He died just as people generally do, and from the way he passed out of the world a stranger could no more have told that he was a sceptic than that he was a cobbler.

So passed away the wonderful infidel shoemaker, who didn't burn the Bible, didn't defy God, didn't get drunk every night and smash his family, and who didn't get converted—not even on his death-bed. Was there ever such a wicked infidel shoemaker since the world began?

W. NELSON

A T H E I S M.

THERE be Gods many and Lords many; which of the theological list is to be selected as the God? A God, like everything else from the heights to the depths, can be known only by his attributes; and what the Atheist does is not to argue against the existence of any God, which would be sheer lunacy, but to take the attributes affirmed by Theism as composing its Deity and inquire whether they are compatible with each other and with the facts of life. Finding that they are not, the Atheist simply sets Theism aside as not proven, and goes on his way without further afflicting himself with such abstruse questions.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S FREETHOUGHT OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LECTURERS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1881.

STATION AND TIME.	Chairman	4	11	18	25
MIDLAND ARCHES, ...11.30	Leekey	Job	Forder	Moss	Job
CLERKENWELL GREEN 11.30	Hilditch	Forder	Symes	Ramsey	Haslam
VICTORIA PARK, ..... 3.30	Jones	Foote	Symes	Thurlow	Moss
GIBRALTAR WALK, ...11.15	Ramsey	Ramsey	Moss	Haslam	Grout
MILE END ROAD, .....11.15	Reeve	Haslam	Ramsey	Job	Moss
STREATHAM COMMON, 11.15	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey
BALHAM, ..... 6.30	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey

J. WILLIAMSON, Secretary,  
28, CLOUDESLEY ROAD, ISLINGTON, N.

REVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

WE hear a great many remarks made on this subject, and all sorts of opinions given, but perhaps Uncle John's opinion is about as near right as any of them. Coming into town the other day Uncle John was asked by one of our prominent citizens what he thought of the revision.

"Well, Squire, I think it's a d—d swindle. You know, Squire, I make free use of Bible words in my family; not that I always use the same words that the parson does, but they're Bible words all the same, and we always got along well enough till this new version come out."

"What is wrong about the new version, Uncle John?"

"Well, Squire, I'll tell you. When I tell my boy Jim to do anything and he don't start as soon as I want him to, I just sing out 'Jim, what in h—l and damnation is the reason you don't start?' He starts then, you bet. And when I go into the house tired and hungry and ask the old woman if dinner is ready, and she says no, I ask her what in h—l is the reason. You can just bet your boots I don't have to wait long for dinner. And there's my horses, too. When I get a big load on and they don't want to pull I just sing out, 'What in h—l and damnation are you doing here?' and that load moves or they go through the harness. But now here it is, when I tell my boy to do a thing and he don't I sing out, 'Why in hades and condemnation don't you start?' but do you think he starts? Not a bit of it. He jest sits there and laughs, and says, 'Old man, you must be getting lunny.' And when I ask the old woman what in hades is the reason dinner ain't ready, she looks sorter wild and then says, 'Jim, your father has got another of them bad spells, and I guess you'd better go for the doctor.' And the horses—they won't know a thing I mean when I sing out 'hades and condemnation.' No, sir, they'd stand there from now till the judgment day afore they'd start a peg for such d—d nonsense. No, Squire, that new version of the Testament don't work worth a d—n in our family."

A CELESTIAL CONFERENCE

TO CONSIDER AND CHECK THE PROGRESS OF INFIDELITY.

(By our Extra Special Correspondent.)

The news how heresy had grown  
Had reached at last unto Jehovah,  
Who called his son to make it known;  
He kind of feared their reign was over.

"Those mortal infidels," said He,  
"Now openly bid heaven defiance,  
Or heed us not, but quietly  
Transfer allegiance unto Science.

"What's to be done? The angels moult,  
Throughout wide heaven there's consternation!"  
Quoth Jesus, "'Tain't my fault, old dolt,  
Get up another Incarnation.

"Appear as oft as Vishnu did;  
You old folds need incessant urging.  
Send fifty thousand angels; bid  
Them try and find you out a virgin.

"I'm sick of this eternal song  
Of Holy, Holy, Holy! Garner  
You these praises; I but long  
'To join the Buddha in Nirvana."

"What—leave me lone here with this Ghost?"  
The old one shrieked, or blubbered rather,  
"Thou art my well loved son, thou know'st;  
O never leave your poor old Father!"

The angels here began to howl,  
Some mentioned "hell," some "gin" and "slaughter,"  
When, frightened by these feathered fowl,  
Fast earthwards hurried

YOUR REPORTER.

G. J. HOLYOAKE ON ATTACKING CHRISTIANITY.

PERISH the very name of God! If Voltaire ever did say *crush* such a fiction, I will endorse the saying henceforth and for ever. I have just read in an Edinburgh paper the sentence of Lord Justice Clerk on Paterson, and to me it seems not only brutal in substance but vindictive in form. How Paterson must rejoice that he has labored so well to destroy the cause of piety, which engenders such malignancy. When Hannibal swore eternal enmity against Rome, he had not half the cause to do it that every lover of justice has to swear eternal enmity against religion. For every hour that Paterson suffers a felon's fate shall I think it my sternest duty to "heap coals of living fire" on the bald and villainous head of orthodoxy. I announced his fate last night at the Rotunda, and received immediate subscriptions for his support in prison. May this example everywhere be followed.—*Oracle of Reason*, No. 101, Vol. ii.



## CORRESPONDENCE.

## ATTEMPT TO STOP OPEN-AIR LECTURING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Last Sunday I was appointed to lecture at Gibraltar Walk. On my arrival I found two police constables, who informed me that they had received instructions to clear away all speakers from the street. They advised us to adjourn to the waste ground occupied by the Christian Evidence speakers, which adjoins our old lecturing place. We accordingly did so, and brought down on our devoted heads a storm of yells and hisses from the few believers in the Christian Evidence Society assembled. At last Mr. B. H. Cowper, their lecturer, arranged with me that we should occupy opposite extremes of the ground, which was accordingly done. Appealing to the police to get us turned away is by no means a new way of expounding the scriptures. Over and over again it has been tried here, but always without effect, and even now we are only shifted for a few yards, so that even these Christian Evidences have failed to convince us of the error of our ways. The audience, as always at this spot, was a large and enthusiastic one, and a goodly quantity of literature was sold.

W. J. RAMSEY.

## SCENE—H E L L.

*Devils at work, stoking, &c. Chief Devil walking up and down. Arrival of a Spirit from Earth.*

*Chief Devil.*—What religion were you up there?

*Spirit.*—Church of England, sir.

*C. D.*—All right, that is your fire; in with you.

2ND ARRIVAL.

*C. D.*—Now, then, what religion were you?

*S.*—Presbyterian, sir.

*C. D.*—Oh, yes. That is your fire over in the corner.

3RD ARRIVAL.

*C. D.*—Hallo! what religion were you?

*S.*—Sure, your honor, and I was a Roman Catholic, sorr.

*C. D.*—In here with you; and on with some more coals, brimstone, treacle, sulphur, paraffin oil, &c., and stir him up well.

4TH ARRIVAL (Freethinker).

*C. D.*—Now, then, what was your religion?

*S.*—Religion! what is that; what do you mean?

*C. D.*—I mean, sir, what lot did you belong to up there?

*S.*—The National Secular Society; headquarters, Old Street;

*C. Bradlaugh, president.*

*C. D.*—What! You're one of those bothering Freethinkers, and there is no arrangement made for you. Here you fourteen Policemen and all the Doorkeepers, outside with this fellow. Bundle him out, and (*to gatekeeper with seven heads*) don't let any more of this set in here, or there will be hell to pay and a republic in no time.

## CURIOSITIES OF SWEARING.

THE "glorious uncertainty of the law" has just been signally illustrated. Mr. Bradlaugh is knocked about by a dozen strong menials of the House of Commons for attempting to take his seat as member for Northampton; and the reason assigned for this brutal treatment is that although he is willing to take the oath his fellow members do not choose to let him, because he has no belief in a God. In the light of these facts the following extract from the *Standard* for September 4th is very curious:—

"Dr. Diplock held an inquest yesterday at 65, Pembroke Villas, Notting-hill Gate, concerning the death of Elizabeth Cropley, aged 75, a widow. On the commencement of the proceedings a juror objected to taking an oath, and said he wished to make an affirmation according to Act of Parliament. The Coroner replied that there was not an Act on which he (the juror) could claim to affirm. The Juror was proceeding to read a clause of an Act of Parliament, when the Coroner explained that that referred to witnesses only. The Coroner then pointed out that the only persons who were exempt from taking an oath were Quakers and Moravians. Those persons, he said, could not conscientiously take an oath, and an Act of Parliament was passed permitting them to affirm, but it did not refer to Atheists. He cautioned the Juror that if he failed to perform the functions of his office he was liable to be prosecuted. After some deliberation the Juror consented to be sworn, and took the necessary oath, the Coroner remarking that it was a legal as well as a religious obligation."

Either the House of Commons or Dr. Diplock is wrong. The Home Secretary should look into the matter, and if Dr. Diplock is at fault he should warn other coroners against repeating the mistake, but if the House of Commons is at fault he should plainly tell it so. Two such opposite

rulings are a flagrant scandal. An Atheistic juror wishing not to swear is told by the coroner that he must, while an Atheistic M.P. wishing to swear is told by the House of Commons that he shan't. It is a pity that Dr. Diplock is not Clerk of the House. If he were, Mr. Bradlaugh would be sworn in before any member could say "Jack Robinson." On the whole, it is almost a pity that the nameless juror yielded, for the coroner was apparently in earnest, and we might have seen the public forced to contemplate the spectacle of two Atheists, one maltreated because he wanted to fulfil his "legal obligation" by taking the oath, and the other fined and imprisoned for refusing to do so. Such a spectacle is worthy of Bedlam, but it is a disgrace to a civilised nation.

## A F A C T.

*Scene: A certain street in a Populous City. Time: Saturday morning.*

ENTER a young Hebrew gentleman, softly humming one of the Psalms of David. He suddenly starts. His straining eyeballs focus their visual power on a certain spot just ahead of him. The signs of joy, anxiety, doubt, fear, chase themselves in rapid succession over his ingenuous brow. What is the cause of such violent emotion? There, shining before him in the path he would have trod, shining with as persuasive an influence as the heavenly light which in days of old guided his fathers through the desert, lies a bright, new shilling! It is the Sabbath, and the Chosen People are forbidden by a "jealous God" to touch money on that day. What will he do? Should he leave it the idolatrous hand of a dog of a Christian will gather it up! O Doubt! O Agony! Visions of toffee, of fruit, of all that delights the heart of youth, float across his already semi-sceptical mind. He leans against the nearest railings, while large beads of perspiration course along his pale cheeks. Ha! he has it! Eureka! He may justly seize upon the treasure. The law allows it. He radiantly approaches the piece of money. But hold—will not his crime be as black as that of Achan, even as that of him who preserved the "accursed thing"—to wit, a "goodly Babylonish garment" and some "shekels of silver"? No, it cannot be. The law allows it. He carefully draws from his pocket a gaudy silk handkerchief. Gently does he insert the edge of it under the coin. Coaxingly doth he insinuate the tempter among the folds of the kerchief. Behold he hath raised the "accursed thing" without the touching of it with his fingers! Possession! Rapture! He transfers it all to his breeches-pocket and goes on his way to the synagogue rejoicing!

## PROFANE JOKES.

AN uncultivated sailor upon finding himself becalmed appealed to one of his mates as to the best thing to be done, who, having a slight recollection of his youthful training, suggested that a short prayer might be servicable; which suggestion Jack acted upon by dropping down on his knees and holding forth as follows. "Dear Lord, I am sorry to have to trouble you, it ain't often I ask other people to lend me a hand tho' I've handled a marlinspike now close on thirty year, and if you'll only just give us a little wind to help get the craft into port I should be much obliged; I n'ere asked a favor of you before, and if you only do what I ask you this time I won't never trouble yer again, as true as my name's Jack Splicer."

A COLLEGE student looked up from his Bible and asked a professor of theology, "Do you think that the lion and the lamb have ever yet lain down together?"—"I don't know," answered the professor, "but if they have, I have no doubt that the lamb was missing from that date."

PIETY is going hand in hand with knowledge even in the most benighted districts. At a recent feast at one of those sinks of corruption, a civic corporation, a worthy alderman [was it Fowler?] remarked "Surely we ought to be thankful to Providence, that's where we get all the turtle from."

It is evident that when the editor of the *Christian Abstainer* writes upon spirituous liquors he is full of his subject. He lately expressed a wish that he might see all the whisky in the kingdom sent to hell. Some folks are dreadfully selfish.

A HOPEFUL seven year old boy, coming out of church, was heard to say, "I don't want to be born again, Ma, for who knows but I might be made a gal."

DEATH'S TEST is a favorite theme with Christians. The Duke of Buckingham on his death bed was asked to send for a priest, but refused. Sect after sect was named till the Catholic's were mentioned, "No, no," he said, "they eat their God, find me a fellow who eats the devil, and send him here."

A YANKEE was being rowed across the Sea of Galilee by some



lazy natives. "You take the business remarkable easy," said he; and they said "Yes, they did." "I guess," he continued, "that your fathers rowed in the same way before ye," and they said they supposed they did. "And your forefathers, too, I guess." Well, they supposed so. "I s'pose so, too," said the Yankee, "and, on the whole, I don't at all wonder that Jesus Christ got out and walked."

In Broadway there is a shop with the following inscription over it:—Trust in God—everybody else *cash*.

"DEFINE dogmatism," said a clerical friend to Douglas Jerrold. "Dogmatism is puppyism matured." instantly answered Jerrold.

## REVIEWS.

*Perpetual Pensions.* By CHARLES BRADLAUGH. (Freethought Publishing Company, London.)

This is a new edition, although no notice of it appears. The very wide circulation of the pamphlet hitherto is, we trust, a promise of a much wider circulation in the immediate future. Mr. Bradlaugh's attack on Perpetual Pensions explains the animosity of the Tories, and especially of Lord Randolph Churchill, whose family is made the subject of a frightful exposure. "His Lordship," says Mr. Bradlaugh, "has already shown some of the characteristics of his illustrious predecessors, but has not yet had the opportunity of displaying the undoubted physical bravery of John, first Duke of Marlborough." Every Freethinker and every Radical should study this pamphlet, and, if possible, lend it about as a political eye-opener. It concludes with a form of petition, which should be copied out, signed, and sent to an M.P. for presentation. The price of the pamphlet, twopence, places it within the reach of all.

*The Creed of an Atheist and Why I dare not be a Christian* By DR. EDWARD B. AVELING. Freethought Publishing Company.

THESE two fresh instalments of Dr. Aveling's series of propagandist pamphlets deserve, as we trust they will have, a wide circulation. They are published at the people's price, a penny, and are accessible to all.

*Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., his Portrait and Biography.* Southampton: J. F. Rayner.

FOR the small price of sixpence Mr. Rayner has provided a capital biography of Mr. Bradlaugh with an excellent photographic portrait. We heartily commend it to our readers, and we hope it will be largely bought by the outer public, amongst whom there is so much ignorance about Mr. Bradlaugh's character and career.

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## DEATH'S TEST

OR

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