

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

[TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

FREETHOUGHT IN THE CHURCH CONGRESS.

ONE of the first proceedings of the Church Congress was a palaver on Secularism. The Archbishop of York commenced it, and he was followed by several minor lights who sang the chorus to his solo. When we have dealt with what these said, we will examine Dr. Thompson's address. For the present we content ourselves with remarking that his account of Secularism is just as accurate as a character of Mr. Gladstone written by Lord Randolph Churchill.

The Rev. Harry Jones, who led the chorus, is we believe the rector of St. George's in the East, whose mis-statements in a circular asking for subscriptions in aid of his work against infidelity, Mr. Bradlaugh has more than once had occasion to correct. This clergyman complained of our "scoffing," our "unphilosophic bitterness," and our "flippant sneers." What nonsense! Courtesy to persons is right enough, but courtesy to ideas is preposterous. Ideas cannot feel. They are no man's property. They are free to all the world. They are things to be accepted or rejected, loved or hated, approved or despised, just as they strike us. Let the Christian hit our beliefs as hard as he can. We shall not complain. We ask no quarter, and we shall give none. If a principle be true let us champion it if need be to death, but if it be false let us smite it and spare not. In such a warfare any weapon is fair so long as we say nothing false and practise no concealment. Argument, invective, and irony may all be used. The only question is which succeeds best. It makes no difference whether a lie is reasoned or sneered away. The one important thing is to kill it.

Curiously enough, the Rev. Harry Jones is himself guilty of the very "offence" he condemns, and of something still worse. Not satisfied with denouncing our principles, he must satirise our persons. He likens some of us to "asses braying over the hedge." We don't mind this; it amuses him and doesn't hurt us; but we think it rather absurd of him to use such language and then complain of our want of manners.

Mr. Jones also complains that there is a want of originality about us. Of the Secularist he says, "The best of the coals that he burns have been dug out of the Christian mine." We retort that the best coals that the Christian burns were dug out of the mines of Judaism, Platonism, and oriental Mysticism. We defy the Rev. Harry Jones, or any other parson, to find us a single moral maxim or religious idea in the Gospels which did not exist before Christ. The one doctrine unique in Christianity, if there be even one, is that of everlasting torture in hell. That is not much to be proud of. It is an outrage on humanity and a blasphemy against God.

Another defect of ours is "treating scriptural imagery as scientific prose." Christ, he remarks, spake in parables. For what reason? Why, as he himself said, "lest at any time they should understand." If the whole Bible was written on this principle, its authors have achieved a remarkable success. Who can understand it? There are scores of Christian sects that flatly contradict each other on vital points, yet each claims to be based on a true interpretation of Scripture. How are we to know what parts of the Bible are to be understood literally, and what parts are to be taken as poetry? Is the Rev. Harry Jones to decide? Would infinite wisdom have inspired writings so liable to be misread? If God meant our salvation to depend on faith, would he not have stated the doctrines he wished us to believe so clearly that the most stupid could not mistake them? God is said to be the father of all, and fools have souls to be saved as well as parsons.

Mr. Jones says that we misunderstand Christianity. He says that we "drive away about a pen-and-ink inspiration,

a chemical hell, and a future materialistic salvation." But we have the warrant of his Bible for all this. The last verses of Revelation confirm the "pen-and-ink inspiration" theory, and Christ's words about the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" confirm the "chemical hell." If Christ and the Apostles did not mean what they said, why did they take the trouble to speak at all?

There is, however, Mr. Jones admits, "good in Secularism," and "the best among its promoters are sincerely facing the great questions of the day, and, according to their lights, seeking to benefit their fellows." But this is more than the Church does. What problems of the day does it face? It dare not rebuke the greed of capital, the tyranny of privilege, or the wantonness of wealth, but reserves all its admonitions for the poor and oppressed. It is afraid to open its mouth when the rights of man are trodden under foot. With all its fine sentiments about justice and liberty, it allows a representative of the people to be thrust out from his seat because he is true to his own intellect, and holds conscience as higher than authority. If the Church Congress had spoken a brave word for freedom, we could have honored it; but without that we are obliged to treat its affectionate wailings as mere hypocrisy. A straightforward resolution on behalf of religious liberty, and of Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take his seat, would have been worth more than all the hollow mouthings which sceptics see through and despise.

The Rev. Randall Davidson spoke on "the cheap Secular press and its lessons." His information does not seem very extensive. He might have got it all by an investment of eightpence. He mentioned the *Secular Review* and Mr. Holyoake, and these names were allowed to pass quietly. Probably Mr. Holyoake's attitude on the oath question has ingratiated him with the parsons. But when the *National Reformer* was mentioned, edited by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, these names were greeted with "hisses." O loving Christians! O worthy preachers of the gospel of charity!

But although the *National Reformer* reeked with the "coarsest blasphemy," there was, said Mr. Davidson, another paper still worse; within the lowest deep a lower deep still opening wide. There was, he said, "a third paper, called the *Freethinker*, which had been only recently started, and it outdid even the *Reformer*. It consisted of profanity from the beginning. Of its writers, one would say no more than 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" When the Rev. Dr. McCann declined to debate with the editor of the *Freethinker* we reckoned that we had scored our first bull's-eye, and we account this our second. The more the clergy hate us and revile us, the more we feel that we are succeeding in our mission. They are enemies of mankind, and we prefer their hatred to their love. But we are pleased when they advertise us, and we are glad that the Rev. Randall Davidson has done his share of the good work.

(To be concluded.)

G. W. FOOTE.

HOW MANY WAS IT?

AN American newspaper submits to its readers the following calculations respecting the number of Apples that Adam and Eve ate:—"Some say Eve 8 (ate), and Adam 2 (too), total 10; others, Eve 8, and Adam 8, total 16; others say if Eve 8, and Adam 8 2, the total is 90; but if Eve 8 1, and Adam 8 2, the total is 163; if Eve 8 1, and Adam 8 1 2, the total is 893; if Eve 8 1 1st (ate one first), and Adam 8 1 2, the total is 1,623; if Eve 8 1 4 Adam, and Adam 8 1 2 4 Eve, the total is 8938; if Eve 8 1 4 Adam, and Adam 8 1 2 4 2 oblige Eve, the total is 82,056. Still wrong:—Eve when she 8 1 8 1 2 many, and probably felt sorry for it, so Adam in order to relieve her grief 8 1 2; therefore, if Eve 8 1 4 1 4 2 40fy Eve's depressed spirits, they both ate 81,896,854 Apples."



THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON VII.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.”—1 John, ii., 15.

THE apostle John, or indeed, all the apostles together, might utter this cry on any Exchange in the world, from morning to night, and from January to December, but he would make no impression. The assembled merchants, traders, stock-brokers, and what not would vote him a nuisance, laugh at his fanaticism, chaff him and quiz him, or send for a policeman to take him in charge. The most pious present as well as the profane would all concur that the apostle was out of place; that he should keep his sermon for Sunday, a day specially set apart in protestant lands for hearing denunciations of the week's transactions and for forming resolutions and pious resolves—to be—more worldly during the week to come.

And if our Exchanges and emporia are not the appropriate places for such sermons, where shall they be preached? In the churches, of course: where, no doubt, the preacher would be listened to with profound and prayerful attention; his words would sink deep into the hearts of the clergy, who would confess their sins, bewail their worldly-mindedness, acknowledge themselves “miserable sinners,” as they really are, and declare that they desired only to hold the world with a slack hand, that they really valued nothing so little as the dung and dross which constituted the world's wealth, that they cared only for the wealth that did not fade, the riches of the kingdom of heaven; and would pour out volumes of twaddle and heartless excuses, and resolutions never to be kept.

Tell the Archbishop of Canterbury that he will be shut out of heaven or be clapt into hell, and you hardly impress him. Tell him his palace is on fire or his bank broken, his railway and other shares rendered useless through some commercial disaster, and he would turn white as a sheet and be ready to give up the ghost. Of course his grace does not really love the world and the things in it; but then it looks so much as if he did that neither you nor I, the Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost, nor all together, with the Archbishop to assist us, could tell the difference between real worldly love and his grace's counterfeit.

If you and I, having none of the grace of God, had a splendid palace to live in, and £15,000 per annum to live upon, and great titles and huge honors into the bargain, we should almost certainly love them. But an archbishop has divine grace sufficient for his very trying position, and his strength is just sufficient to his day, and so exactly balances his income, perquisites, and privileges, that this Right Rev. Father in God can love the world and the Father (*i.e.*, himself) both at once and about equally. And besides God the Father is not so particular now-a-days. In olden time when he, like the Pope, ruled much of the world, he insisted upon all his rights and monopolies; now he has to beg a favor where he could formerly command; and, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread, he accepts what he can get—just as all his followers do.

In dwelling profoundly upon this text, and with the assistance of the Holy Ghost who or which inspired it, I note that it is entirely out of harmony with, I won't say the world, but the churches of to-day; and, therefore, either the text or the churches must be faulty. The question is, Which? It cannot be supposed that so many churches are at fault; they would enlighten each other, and naturally criticise each other to so great an extent that any serious deviation from the truth amongst Christians is next to impossible, especially on so plain a subject as loving the world or the Father.

I presume it would be next to impossible for a person to have a strong liking for anything and yet not know it. If the Christians love the world, its wealth and pleasures, its pomps and vanities, they can hardly be ignorant of the fact. And if they love the Father to any great extent, they must know it, whether *he* does or not. It is also very unlikely that Christians could hide their preferences from their neighbors. If they love the Father and despise the world, people must know it; if they loved the world and despised the Father, they could not hide it. A tree is known by its fruits; and people's likes and dislikes are ascertained by their conduct.

Well, I know of no church that does not love the world most intensely; I know of no people who love it more than those who pretend to renounce it. And the text says the love of the father is not in such people. No doubt the text is a blunder. The Holy Ghost and John were but babies compared with the Christians of to-day. They thought that religion was to be distinguished from the world; the moderns have discovered that God and the world are both one, and that to love the Father is to love the world, and to renounce the world would amount to renouncing the Father, so they stick to both. Bravo! this is a grand discovery. And the Church was not long in making it when once those stupid apostles, who crucified the flesh, were dead and out of the way. Christians to-day crucify the flesh of others and spare their own—another great modern improvement.

To be sure, profane and illogical persons will say that if Christian conduct is right, the Bible must be wrong. Not at all. You must not understand either party seriously. When the Bible bids you not to love the world it means the *other* world, not this; and when Christians to-day profess to think lightly of the world, they mean “the world to come.” Christianity is a huge, grim, practical joke. The church started by renouncing the world, and culminated in the possession of most of it; then the civil power had forcibly to wring from her her ill-gotten gains.

Churchmen still roll in riches and bedeck themselves with honors, though they profess to be followers of that Jesus who for their sakes became poor, and to be the spiritual descendants of men who voluntarily went about in sheepskins and goatskins. In their baptism, by godfathers and godmothers, they renounce the world with its pomps and vanities, the flesh and the devil. This serves them for life. It is a wholesale confession, followed by plenary absolution for all the sins they will ever commit. Having thus hoodwinked the blessed Trinity, they ever after love the world with all their heart, and with all their mind, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and their neighbor, the flesh, as themselves.

I feel no doubt that Christianity and the churches' hypocrisy will some day stand exposed before all men, and become the world's laughing-stock. But the people are so blind and priest-ridden that it must take long to accomplish the work. In the meantime our duty is plain—to expose, to ridicule this greatest of shams with all our might.

J. SYMES.

THE DISGRACE OF CHRISTIANISM.

THERE are many things which make it a disgrace to bear the name of Christian, besides the disgrace of clinging to a dead superstition in an intellectual age like ours. In the march of human progress nothing can stand still and retain a claim on our forbearance and respect, and so soon as any one set of ideas essentially fallacious and obstructive to progress stand in the way, dogmatically re-asserting themselves, and reiterating their stupid cry for notice, when more serious and necessary things deserve attention, then it is that intelligent men become disgraced by holding by such ideas. Before the era of Christianity, Palestine was ruled morally and socially by the Mosaic creed, but as men's ideas grew and developed, Judaism was found insufficient for the altered times; for no fixed set of opinions, no code of government that may suffice for to-day, can assure sufficiency in every detail for a day and a people yet to be. A new day dawned in the introduction of a new creed, and inasmuch as the new creed was at least one step nearer freedom and a thing less evil than the old, it became a disgrace to retain the old idea, and that retention of the dying fallacy was dogmatism. To say, as do most Christians, that the religion of Jesus Christ is sufficient for all time is scarcely a serious and sober assertion, since every step that modern science has made has dragged the followers of the Nazarene further from their foundation, until they have long ago thrown aside their creed, and only retaining the name of their founder, they follow science in the more important matter of this-worldism, while they cling to the fancy that they are bending science down to their level, and fail to see, or refuse to acknowledge, that it is themselves who, despite themselves, are being lifted, and that the dogmas of their poor exploded Christianity are things of the past. Once the Church struck at Astronomy as false; now she acknowledges its truth and

bends her creed to suit it. Once the Church said Geology was a lie; now she owns its truth and bends her very pliable creed to fit with Geological discovery, and only a few weeks ago I read a remark of one of her votaries to the effect that God did not *make* the world, but merely *remodelled* it out of pre-existing material

Now what is Christianity's disgrace? A knowingly-acted falsehood. A wilful and perverse hypocrisy. A persistent robbing and deluding of the people who are unenquiring, by the retention of a name no longer its own, and a determined preaching of proved falsehood against all intelligent reason and research.

Not only is the Christian creed found insufficient to the altered times; not only is its veracity and efficacy mistrusted by its advocates and adherents, but the temporal law will not allow of its original teachings being followed; the law itself, called Christian, will not allow the most earnest and zealous man to be practically a Christian.

The Christian is taught by his *Divinely*-inspired book that if a brother be sick he is to take others of the brethren and go to the sick man, anoint him with oil and pray, and he shall recover. Let the Christian do so now (if he does less he is not a Christian). Let four or five half-frantic Methodists gather round a dying man; let them fat him all over and pray at him, and trust their rule-of-three god to save his life without the aid of a medical man; what will the law say? The Christian may be allowed to pray if he has no more sense, he may mingle his incantations and charms with the doctor's skill, but he must not get in the doctor's way. No! my pious brother man, your prayers must stand aside for science.

As it would be a disgrace to follow such a brutal leader as Marshall Tulley, so is it a disgrace to adopt a name and follow a system that has filled the world with poverty, ignorance, and crime.

It would be too horrible and ghastly a recital to enumerate many of the frightful and filthy items in the bloody annals of Christianity, but to show my readers the charming society which must disgrace them if they dare to associate with those whose ancestors were so disreputable I am impelled to cull from the *flowers* that have bloomed in "the garden of god."

Martin Luther, who is lauded as a great and good man, and a true servant of God, said,—“Why, if men hang the thief upon the gallows, or if they put the rogue to death, why should not we, with all our strength, attack these popes and cardinals, these dregs of the Roman Sodom? Why not wash our hands in their blood?” Archbishop Usher said, “Any toleration of the papists is a grievous sin,” and eleven other bishops signed their hands to that tyrannical sentence; *they* were good Christians. The holy Knox said, “The people are bound in conscience to put to death the queen, along with all her priests.” The pious Cranmer put six anabaptists to death; he burnt a woman alive, heartless coward of Christ! The Scotch Parliament, filled with religious zeal, decreed death against Catholics and called it “a religious obligation to execute them.” And the English Parliament, fired with love for Christ, said, “Persecution was necessary to advance the glory of god.” The bigoted and fanatical Calvin burned Servetus. Cyril seized Theon's philosophical daughter, and his horde of holy monks stripped her naked in the street, killed her in the church (God's house), cut her body in pieces, scraped her flesh from her bones, and burnt all that remained of her for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake. “*Good Queen Bess*,” who clasped a Bible to her breast in the streets of London, hanged Nicholas Deverox and Edward Barber because they worshipped Christ differently from her. The same God-fearing lady had William Thompson and Richard Lea hanged, disembowelled and cut up for the same satisfactory reason. In Winchester and other places she had those who opposed her in religion whipped in the open market places, burnt through the ear, nay cut their ears off.

What has the Church done for the sake of its Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? It has in all ages waged bloody war, not only against those who dared to employ their reason, but against its own children, frantic adders of its own bosom. It has made wisdom a crime, and has murdered enquiry. In Spain 114,401 persons suffered under one tyrant, and 52,855 under another; 13,784 of these were burnt alive. Christians have stripped each other of all they possessed; they have cut each other with penknives; they have stuck each other full of pins from head to foot; they have torn each other's noses with red-hot pincers;

they have run pins under each other's nails; they have burned gunpowder in each other's ears; they have tied fathers and husbands to bed-posts and ravished their daughters and wives in their presence; they have poured boiling water and molten lead down each other's throats; they have blown each other from cannon mouths; they have hacked and hewn each other into shapeless masses while they prayed for their enemies, prayed for the son and robbed the blind and crippled father, *for the sake of Jesus Christ*.

All this they would do to-day but for an unchristian law, a law of science and civilisation. O brother man, can you, for the promise of a lazy heaven in a world of which you know nothing, overlook a world made fair by man in spite of gods and creeds? Can you throw aside all that is pure and good and noble for a hateful system that has borne such fruit? Can you deem yourself honored by joining the brutal army of a barbarous and tyrant God, whose work with man has utterly failed? Nay! seek and improve on the certainties of this life of which you are assured, and if you find no sweeter fruit from religious systems than the past has presented and the present holds forth, then write on your heart come weal, come woe, “As for me and my house, we will fight against gods.”

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Wiltshire Times* is responsible for the following incident of rural Life:—“The children of Urchfont, in company with the other schools in the vicinity, were entertained by Mr. S. W. and Lady Watson Taylor at Erlestoke last week. A correspondent assures us that as the children were going in to tea the Rev. C. Mason singled out seven of the Urchfont little ones, and declined to allow them to partake of the feast, on the ground that their school fees were in arrear. The hungry children were seven miles from home.” The Rev. C. Mason, it should be remembered, is one of those gentlemen who particularly received the injunction to “Feed my lambs.”

A NORTHAMPTON correspondent wants to know if Mark Knowles, the pious barrister, who at present preaches in that town, and divides his sermon equally between Jesus Christ and Fair Trade, has converted the whole of London. If not, why has he left home to convert sinners abroad? Is he only a Tory agent in disguise?

THE Dean of Exeter laments that the cabman's occupation is the cause of so much Sabbath breaking. He forgets to notice that they drive thousands of respectable Christians to and from church. The Dean also thinks that “the Sabbath is a blessed institution to check the spread of infidelity.” As a matter of fact more “infidel” lectures are delivered on Sunday than on all the other days of the week put together.

GUTEAU still insists that God told him to murder President Garfield. He also adds that God means him to be President of the United States, and that he has known this for twenty years. His chief desire just at present is to get “an elegant Christian wife under thirty.” But he is likely to be disappointed. It is not the matrimonial but the hangman's noose that awaits him.

PARSON SUTTON is a nice gentleman. He attended the meeting in the St. Pancras Vestry Hall to consider the case of poor Annie Purchase, and loudly justified the abominably inhuman treatment she had received. The ratepayers in the gallery hooted this queer preacher of the gospel of charity, and showed such a strong desire to lynch him, that he had to escape by a private staircase. This stragetic movement may be called the Rogue's March.

ANOTHER clerical suicide last week! Nothing but faith in Christ enables us to face the troubles of life.

THE Free Church congregation of Crebridge is in a state of anarchy. The burning question which has caused all the trouble is whether they ought to sit or kneel at prayers. The minister seems to favor the first posture, perhaps for the sake of his black trousers. Things have come to such

a pass that one of the protestors threatened, unless a change was made, to throw the body and blood of Christ in the faces of the elders who handed them round at Communion. We hope the police force is pretty strong in this disturbed district. These loving Christians must not be allowed to let daylight into each others skulls in order to show how little brains there is in them.

THE *Christian World* is somewhat caustic in its remarks on Dr. Lightfoot's address to the Church Congress. It says, "On science he cannot claim to speak with authority; but all Christendom, American as well as European, would have been thrilled as by an electric word of happy import, if he had pledged his reputation as a scholar to the statement that, after Strauss and Rénan have done their worst, the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ continues unimpeachable." Dr. Lightfoot is far too canny to pledge himself to an absurdity which every scholar in Christendom would treat with derision. He knows that no "Evidences" can roll away the stone from the sepulchre of Christ.

By way of pacifying its readers the *C. W.* concludes its article thus: "Never did more marvellous, more outrageous, more delirious hallucination possess great bodies of men than that the people could be benefited by the destruction of the religion of self-sacrifice, of kindness, of universal brotherhood." Christianity can, of course, write out a good character for itself, and so can every other creed. But what is the truth? This "self-sacrifice" turns out to be a scramble for salvation, each for himself with the dead certainty that the Devil will take the hindmost. And this "kindness and universal brotherhood" is historically resolved into blazing fires of persecution, the dungeon, the rack, the thumbscrew, rich priests and poor people, fat shepherds and lean sheep.

A PIOUS journal more than hinted that the Secretary of the National Secular Society had just been converted to Christianity. Poor Mr. Forder has been nearly worried to death since by inquiries as to the truth of this statement. His good temper is impaired, and his language is tinged with epithets borrowed from the cursing Psalms and the book of Revelation. We ask him to find comfort in the great truth that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with brimstone and fire;" and as he is of course on intimate terms with the Devil, we advise him to bespeak a special hot corner for the edition of the *Christian Herald*, and to send on a ton of coals in advance.

THIS same precious journal tells a story of a missionary in Ceylon who taught a Buddhist priest that man has a conscience. It doubtless knows how far it can presume on the ignorance of its readers. But, as a matter of fact, the morality of Buddhism is not only anterior to that of Christ, but is admitted by such reluctant witnesses as Canon Liddon and Professor Blackie to be "wonderful and lofty." And these very Buddhist priests of Ceylon, so wantonly slandered by this pious editor, are described by Professor Childers, who obtained their ungrudging assistance in the compilation of his Pali dictionary, as a most worthy and intelligent body of men. There are some people who love truth so much that they object to make it common. The editor of the *Christian Herald* is one of them.

ONE of Moody's anecdotes—that is manufactured lies—begins thus:—"There was a man told me some time ago how he went to God in prayer. He had been an infidel. He didn't believe in prayer. He was a drunkard, a blasphemer, etc., etc." Being an infidel he was of course a drunkard! And these pious humbugs, who defame the character of Freethinkers nearly every time they open their mouths, cry out against us as profane and blasphemous when we apply a little ridicule to their opinions.

AN American paper, after noticing Beecher's statement that three-fourths of the inhabitants of heaven are women, remarks that his zeal to reach that haven of rest no longer causes surprise.

THE same paper says that a Deadwood minister recently preached three sermons, led the Sunday School, acted as referee at a prize-fight, traded shot-guns, licked a deacon for snoring during the service, and married three couples

all in one day. Yet some ministers who preach two sermons a week claim that they are over-worked!

LOOK out for the new version of the Old Testament. There will be some important changes, to suit the language of to-day. We shall no longer read that Adam was expelled, but that, after eating the apple, he sent in his resignation.

MRS. SARAH B. COOPER, cousin of Colonel Ingersoll, conducts three Kindergarten schools in San Francisco. The Rev. John Hemphill, of that city, has become infected with her liberal views, and his church is trying him for heresy.

CURSING AND SWEARING IN COURT.—At Rowley Police Court, yesterday, John Siddeway, organist at Knowle Chapel, was ordered to contribute 5s. a week towards the support of the illegitimate child of Rebecca Tromans, chorister. The evidence showed that a number of young men had gone to the chapel for the purpose of meeting girls, and committing gross acts of immorality. The revelations were of a shocking character. Upon defendant hearing them, he cursed and swore in court.—*Liverpool Echo*, October 6th, 1881.

IF these proceedings had occurred in a Secular hall, what a rumpus the godly would have made! Lord Randolph Churchill would have delivered a great (in length) speech on the subject; Sir Henry Tyler would have asked a question on it in the House; churches and chapels would have rung with denunciations; Christian Evidence lecturers would have trumpeted the news all over the country; and the *Shield of Faith* would have printed it in red ink.

NOAH'S ARK.

THE following is a comparison between the size of Noah's Ark and the "Great Eastern," both being considered in point of tonnage after the old law for calculating the tonnage. The sacred "cubit," as stated by Sir Isaac Newton, is 20.625 English inches; by Bishop Wilkins at 21.88 in. According to these authorities, the dimensions will be as follows:—

	Sir I. Newton. Eng. ft.	Bishop Wilkins. Eng. ft.	"Great Eastern." Eng. ft.
Length between perpendiculars	515.62	570.0	680.0
Breadth	85.94	91.16	83.0
Depth	51.56	54.70	60.0
Keel, or length for tonnage	464.08	492.31	630.2
Tonnage according to old law	18,231	21,761	23,092
	58.94	50.94	25.94

September 30th, 1881.

R. S. V. Q.

ATHEISTIC SONNETS.

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

VIII.—APOSTLES.

Deceiving priests of god's swine-slaughtering son,
Whose swindling system tricks the world to-day,
Roll with the tide of time your vagaries on,
Through many changes to a sure decay;
Could ye but see, deceived, deceiving fools,—
The crime and bloodshed from your teaching sprung,
You well might mourn that e'er ye were its tools,
And lent his godship's scheme the lying tongue.
Ah! dead apostles of a tyrant creed,
Slow dies the octopus ye left behind,
But men have risen, inspired with freedom's need,
To cut the fetters from the searching mind;
Truth moves apace, and soon the Ghost's weak son
Must go the way the older gods have gone.

ANECDOTE OF INGERSOLL.—As illustrating "Pagan Bob's" power over the minds of his listeners, the *Boston Investigator* some time ago told an anecdote of Ingersoll when he was practising law. Pleading eloquently for a client in a suspected case of murder, he touchingly pictured on the one hand the sadness and misery of an adverse verdict, and on the other hand the joy and gladness a verdict of acquittal would have in his client's family, and asked the jury, "Won't you let him go back to his wife and little ones," when one of the juryman, roused to a pitch of emotional excitement exclaimed, "Yes, Bob, we will!"

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE will lecture three times to-day (Sunday, October 16th) in the Nelson Street Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Morning at 11 o'clock, "The History of the Devil;" afternoon at 3, "Great Christ is Dead!" evening at 7, "The Gospel of Secularism: a Reply to the Archbishop of York and the Church Congress."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

October 23rd, Claremont Hall, London; 25th, Walworth; 30th, Edinburgh.

November 4th, Paisley; 6th, Glasgow; 13th, Hall of Science, London; 20th, Sheffield; 27th, Manchester; 28th, Hyde Eclectic Institute.

December 4th, Huddersfield; 11th, Claremont Hall, London; 18th, Rotherham.

January 8th, Bradford; 15th, Rochdale.

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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.

G. L. writes from a Lancashire city: "I am glad to say that I have got a newsagent in a good neighborhood to expose the placard of your paper, and he disposes of twelve and sometimes eighteen copies a week." He also writes: "I am ever pushing your paper among the pious ones, upon which they vent all their venom and wrath, but which, notwithstanding, they cannot resist to read. It stirs them up like a hot iron." We thank our correspondent for his efforts to promote our circulation, and we trust that other readers will emulate his example.

J. H. H.—Thanks for the cutting. The story is old and common.

BRUNO.—We tender you our warmest thanks.

F. W. JACKSON.—Mr. Ramsey can supply you with "The Comic Bible" at sixpence a number.

R. CUEREL.—Thanks. Will you send any cuttings you may think serviceable from the local papers?

G. T.—The affair is indeed scandalous. We are always pleased to hear from you.

SEVERAL correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A STONE has been erected over the grave of Professor Clifford in Highgate Cemetery with the inscription: "William Kingdon Clifford. Born May 4, 1845; died March 3, 1879. 'I was not, and was conceived; I lived, and did a little work; I am not, and grieve not.'"

THE *Newcastle Chronicle* improved the occasion of the Church Congress meeting in that town by taking a religious census. Enumerators counted the number of worshippers at the churches and chapels in Newcastle on the Sunday morning, and the *Chronicle* gave the result. Out of a population of 149,549, 22,534 were worshippers on that Sunday morning. The percentage of worshippers to population has fallen from 21 per cent. in 1851 to 15 per cent. in 1881. The Wesleyan Methodists show the largest increase. The Church of England shows a decrease to the extent of about one-tenth. The *Chronicle* estimates that less than one-third of the adult population able to go to church or chapel attend on Sunday morning.

THE West Hartlepool Freethinkers are determined to have a Hall and Club premises of their own. A building company is being started on a good working basis. The shares will be as low as a pound, payable in weekly instalments. We trust that the scheme will be successfully and speedily carried out. There are over fifty subscribers to this journal in the town, and we hope that every one of them will at once enrol himself as a shareholder in the new company. Union is strength. Freethinkers are growing in numbers very rapidly, and if we stick together, that is if we *organise*, we shall become a definite power in every town of the United Kingdom.

WE are glad to know that the West Hartlepool Freethinkers at the Citizen Club have rendered great assistance

to the Science Classes conducted under the University Extension scheme, both in money and in work. May the Freethinkers of every other town go and do likewise.

THE Brighton Town Council has done a sensible thing at last. After a deal of warm discussion, it has resolved to grant the use of the Town Hall for a political lecture by Mrs. Besant.

THE Sunday Society has held a very successful Conference at Dublin. One of its resolutions expresses joy at "the fact that the results which have followed the Sunday opening of the National Gallery, Botanic Gardens, and Zoological Gardens in Dublin, have been so satisfactory that all opposition to the opening them on Sunday has ceased." When will London be abreast of Dublin in this movement?

MR. GLADSTONE offered the Vicar of St. Mary's, Headingley, the Deanery of Carlisle. Although it would have trebled his income, he refused it on the ground that "he had been accustomed to hard parish work all his life." We take off our hat to this clergyman. He is a rarity in the Church. Freethinkers can honor unselfish dignity, *when they find it*, even in the enemy's camp.

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH, in the *Nineteenth Century*, says it is time for the rulers of Christian churches to consider whether "the sacred books of the Hebrews ought any longer to be presented, as they are now, to Christian people as pictures of the Divine character and of the Divine dealings with mankind?"

CREMATION is beginning to find favor in Germany. The furnace at Gotha has now been used fifty-seven times since its erection in December, 1878, and twenty-three of these cases occurred this year.

WHAT does the Bishop of Lincoln think of this? He has publicly declared himself against cremation on the ground that it would weaken "the popular belief in the resurrection of the body." Not the *clerical* belief, mark. The parsons know better themselves, but they think this unscientific rubbish good enough for the people. Ignorance is the mother of devotion.

PRAYING NO USE.

DR. BLISS is reported to have said, in speaking of President Garfield just before his death—"Why cannot this man live? Possessed of an enormous vitality, he went into this fight cheerfully, prepared to do battle with any ordinary evils. He met each complication with a surprising strength, and overcame it single-handed. Was there mercy above or here on earth? Not a bit. Hardly had he overcome one complication, which would have killed an ordinary man, before another enemy grappled with him in his weakened condition and dragged him down. He has only supplicated for a chance. Why has it not been given to him? He prayed that he might be allowed one single chance on which to stand. He has not asked it in a selfish spirit. He has not thought of himself. His whole supplication has been that he might be allowed to finish his work; that he might fulfil his mission. Yet, as important as his life is, and valuable to the country, it is slowly wasting away. We have done all that science or medical skill can do to aid him in his fight, and there he is dying. Is it not a comment on our modern Christianity unanswerable?"

A DEEP ESTATE.—At Hopeton House, the seat of the Earl of Hopeton, I was much pleased with its beauty and elegance; its delightful situation commanding an extensive view of the Forth, which once bounded the Roman empire, and protected the Saxons from the invasions of the Scots, etc. The charter to this extensive estate is, I understand, a small slip of parchment, not bigger than one's fingers, granting a right, as it is expressed, not only to the grounds, specifying their extent, but also to all the fowls, etc., on it, or that fly over it, as high as heaven; and everything on it or below the surface, as low as hell.—Rev. James Wall's "Travels in Scotland," 1807, Vol. i., pp. 2, 3.

AN old lady sleeping during divine service in church, let fall her Bible with clasps to it, and the noise partially awaking her, she exclaimed aloud, "What, you've broken another jug, have you?"

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

A CANDID examination will show that the Christian civilisations have been as inferior to the Pagan ones in civic and intellectual virtues, as they have been superior to them in the virtues of humanity and charity.—*W. E. H. Lecky*, "History of European Morals," vol. ii., p. 148.

EARLY CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.—Lactantius, referring to the heretical doctrine of the globular form of the earth, remarks: "Is it possible that men can be so absurd as to believe that the crops and the trees on the other side of the earth hang downwards, and that men have their feet higher than their heads?" On the question of the Antipodes, St. Augustine asserts that "it is impossible that there should be inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, since no such race is recorded by Scripture among the descendants of Adam." Perhaps, however, the most unanswerable argument against the sphericity of the earth was this, that "in the day of judgment, men on the other side of a globe would not see the Lord descending through the air." I may quote from *Cosmos Indicopleustes* the views that were entertained in the sixth century. He wrote a work entitled "Christian Topography," the chief intent of which was to confute the heretical opinion of the globular form of the earth, and the pagan assertion that there is a temperate zone on the southern side of the torrid. He affirms that according to the true orthodox system of geography, the earth is a quadrangular plane, extending four hundred days' journey east and west, and exactly half as much north and south; that it is enclosed by mountains, on which the sky rests; that one on the north side, higher than the others, by intercepting the rays of the sun, produces night; and that the plane of the earth is not set exactly horizontally, but with a little inclination from the north: hence the Euphrates, Tigris, and other rivers, running southward, are rapid; but the Nile, having to run uphill, has necessarily a very slow current.—*Professor Draper*, "Conflict between Religion and Science," pp. 64-5.

WE regard the religion which lies at the bottom of modern civilisation as containing elements almost unknown both to ancient Judaism and to primitive Christianity. The scientific impulse is foreign to both, and not less the artistic; and these have come to us from quite other sources.—"Macmillan's Magazine," April, 1877, p. 424.

SERMONS AND MORALS.—From the great house in the city of London to the village grocer the commercial life of England has been saturated with fraud. So deeply has it gone that a strictly honest tradesman can hardly hold his ground against competition. You can no longer trust that any article you buy is the thing which it pretends to be. We have false weights, false measures, cheating and shoddy everywhere. And yet the clergy have seen all this grow up in absolute indifference. Many hundreds of sermons have I heard in England, many a dissertation on the mysteries of the faith, on the divine mission of the clergy, on bishops, and justification, and the theory of good works, and verbal inspiration, and the efficacy of the sacrament, but, during all these thirty wonderful years, never one, that I can recollect, on common honesty.—*J. A. Froude*.

POSITIVISM AND CHRISTIANITY.—Christendom is not Christian, nor becoming Christian. How should it convey to others that which it does not believe in and live by itself? How should it convert Heathendom? We are limited by no such condition. We cannot restrict our admission. The very idea of Humanity forbids any such exclusion. In one way or other she admits all human beings within her pale. Nay, she goes further and recognises the services of the animal races that promote her welfare. Nor is this the limit of her power. She may borrow Shelley's words and say—

"I am the eye with which the universe
Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
All harmony of instrument and verse,
All prophecy, all medicine are mine,
All light of art or nature—to my song
Victory and praise in their own right belong."

—*Richard Congreve*, "Essays Political, Social and Religious," p. 288.

THE ENIGMA OF MERCY.

BY FRANK FELT.

"His mercy endureth for ever."—*Bible*.

"The same I will rise and explain."—*Truthful Jas.*

"Take such a place as some call hell.
Where sin and your big devil dwell,
If from it truth and God had fled,
The institution would be dead."—*Jno. Craig*.

Amen! Hallelujah! For ever
The Lord in his righteousness reigns.
The chosen are saved, and the many
Are lost as his goodness ordains.
The Almighty boss won the battle;
Old Satan's put under his feet;
And smoke-clouds of anguish arising
Fill heaven with aroma sweet.

There stands a big bellows in heaven,
Right back of Jehovah's throne,
With air-pipes strung from its nozzle
Way down to the fiery zone.
And sometimes an angel gets lazy
And rusts for the want of use,
His bright wings flopping and twisted,
His harp-strings twanging and loose.
Then Michael says, "Here you loafer!
Just pump these 'ere bellows a spell.
And warm up your poor old mother,
A-shivering down in hell."

There are those in this heavenly kingdom
With friends in the torment below,
But the cords that had bound them when mortal
Are broke, and the burden of woe
That sympathy bears for another
Rests never upon them again,
For conscience is freed from the kindness
That made them do good unto men.

A sweet little angel cherub,
All rosy and smiling and bright,
With joy written over his forehead
In the glow of eternity's light,
Comes up from the beautiful river,
With ecstasy sweet and unshammed,
To send down a blast on a sister
Who went to a dance and was damned.

A father and mother together
Come up in ineffable joy,
To force down a whiff of pure justice
For the flames round a dear little boy,
Who laughed by mistake when the deacon
Broke down with a cough in his prayer,
And died with the crime unforgiven,
To go down to hell and despair.

"All washed in the blood and made whiter
Than snow," and with purity crowned,
A murderer swung from the gallows
Comes joyfully walking around.
And creak goes the mighty engine,
And downward the rich stream is driven,
To blow up the coals that are roasting
The wife that he killed—unforgiven.

A fine old angelical deacon,
Who once distilled whisky on earth,
And sold it around to his neighbors
For thrice what it really was worth,
Takes hold of the handle and turns it
On one who from godliness fell
By drinking his orthodox whisky,
To burn in an orthodox hell.

O beautiful rest for the weary!
O joy that shall be to all men!
O beautiful scheme of salvation!
That saves about one out of ten.
Sweet message of love from the ages!
Sweet story that ever is new!
"Believe or be damned to perdition."
I believe! I'll be damned if I do!

MOODY AND THE YOUNG MAN.—During the course of a sermon which Moody preached in San Francisco he referred to his "late lamented" grandmother, and remarked that although she was what the world would regard as a "good soul," yet she had never received the grace of God in her heart, and sad and fearful to contemplate as the confession was, he was afraid she had gone to hell. This was too much for one young man present, and he made for the door, when Moody, spotting him, exclaimed, "There goes a young man who will not listen to the truth as it is in Jesus; he will go to hell!" The young man stopped, turned round and asked, "Have you any message I can take to your grandmother, Mr Moody?"

DOLET

THE FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

V.

DOLET soon had the first volume of his Commentaries ready for the press. In transcribing and correcting it he was assisted by Jean Bonaventure Desperiers, whom Mr. Christie justly calls "one of the greatest names in the French literature of the sixteenth century." His "Cymbalum Mundi," published in 1537-8, gave great offence to the Sorbonne. Its witty dialogues ostensibly satirised the Pagan deities, but it was easily to be seen that the myths of the Christian religion were also glanced at. The Sorbonne condemned the book as blasphemous, and the Parliament imprisoned Jean Morin, the printer, and burned all the copies that could be found. The *auto-da-fe* was so successful that only one copy is known to have survived. It is now in the Public Library of Versailles. The "Cymbalum Mundi" is included in the admirable edition of Desperiers, which we owe to the indefatigable bibliophile Jacob.

On the 21st of March, 1536, Dolet obtained permission to publish his "Commentaries." The first volume was issued in May. "It is," says Mr. Christie, "certainly one of the most important contributions to Latin scholarship which the sixteenth century produced." The second volume followed two years and a half later. In the dissertations Dolet "seems to show that he had a presentiment and foreshadowing of his terrible fate. In one place he prays that his life may never depend on the sentence of a judge; in another he confesses that he has no desire to die before his time, yet that he accompanies his devotion to letters with a constant meditation on and recollection of death."

While Dolet was laboring at these and other literary tasks, he appears to have spent his leisure not unjoyously. Mr. Christie writes:—

"He was by no means an anchorite or an ascetic. No man more thoroughly enjoyed the society of literary men, nor was he averse in moderation to the pleasures of the table. He was poor, not because he saw any merit in poverty, but because he loved learning better than wealth. He despised all the ascetic virtues even while to a certain extent he followed some of them. Poverty, chastity, humility, obedience, indolent solitude, self-inflicted pain, were in themselves no virtues to him, any more than they were to Aristotle, Plato, or Cicero, any more than they were to Luther or Erasmus, to Bembo or Rabelais. But there was one thing he more especially enjoyed, and which shows him to us in an unexpected light. He was devotedly fond of music. 'Music and harmony,' he tells us, 'are my sole enjoyments. What is there more suited either for exciting or soothing the mind, what more fitted for allaying or extinguishing, or even rousing indignation? What is there more efficacious for refreshing the jaded spirits of men of letters? I care nothing for the pleasures of the table, of wine, of gaming, of love—at least I use them all in great moderation. But not so as regards music, which alone of all pleasures takes me captive, retains me, and dissolves me in ecstasy.'"

He was also very fond of swimming in the river. Altogether his tastes were healthy, and bespoke a sound and even fine nature.

On the last day of December, 1536, a painter named Campaign tried to assassinate Dolet, who in defending himself killed his adversary. As he had already made himself obnoxious to some persons in authority, he dreaded being tried there, and by the assistance of his friends he escaped before daylight from the city. He fled to Paris, where, before his arrival, his friends had procured for him the royal pardon. But when he returned to Lyons the authorities disregarded it and threw him into prison. He remained there until the 21st of April, when he was provisionally set at liberty on giving security to appear for judgment when called upon.

Early in 1538 Dolet married, and we see by his works that the union was one of affection and a source of great happiness. His wife's name has not come down to us, but Mr. Christie supposes her to have been related to Nicole Paris, a printer of Troyes. One son, Claude, was the fruit of this marriage. What became of him and the widow after Dolet's martyrdom is uncertain. M. Boulmier concludes that "his mother perhaps sought an asylum far from the city which gave him birth, where they could live together in retirement, unknown, and sheltered from the persecutions of the devotees and too zealous defenders of the Catholic religion." But Mr. Christie thinks he has traced the unfortunate Claude back to Troyes, the supposed native town

of his mother, where he became a flourishing citizen, and was elected as sheriff at the age of forty-seven.

Soon after his marriage Dolet, very wisely resolving not to trust to the slender and precarious income of a man of letters, decided to engage in business as a printer; and on the 6th of March, 1538, he obtained a privilege or license from the king. Before the end of the year his press was set up, and at least one book printed at it. Printers then could not be louts; they were obliged to be scholars, and their profession was held in high esteem. Even booksellers had to know something of the insides of the articles they sold, unlike the present tribe who often, as George Elliot remarks, trade in books just as a provision dealer may trade in tinned stuffs without knowing or caring whether they contain rottenness or nutriment.

Dolet printed for Marot, Rabelais, and other writers, as well as works from his own pen. Yet he seems to have quarreled with both these great men. The quarrels of authors, however, are proverbial, and we need not at this remote period concern ourselves to allot their respective shares of blame. Dolet's editions of Marot and Rabelais are much sought after; they have for many years fetched enormous prices, and they will perhaps hereafter be still more highly valued.

We are now approaching the bitter end of Dolet's career. In our next article we shall conclude this biographical sketch, and give a brief account of Dolet's opinions on those great subjects which have always fascinated the human mind.

G. W. FOOTE.

BLASTS FROM THE NORTH.

"And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind."
—1 Kings xix., 11.

CERTAIN of the pious people of Bishop Auckland have betrayed the gentleness and mildness of their Christian character by paying and hounding on the more drunken and ruffianly of their friends when Mrs. Besant lectured in that town on behalf of justice. The *Durham Chronicle* stamps a professional gentleman with the ignominy of this Christian bullyism, which endangered the lives of men more honest. I feel for the profession disgraced by this fellow and his drunken friends, while I admire the spirit of the audience which threw them down stairs.

I LIVED some time in Bishop Auckland once, and made many friends in that town. None of my friends, however, were professional, none of them were drunken, and, better still, none of them were pious. I might be a little that way myself at that time, but I came out of it unscathed. I never sunk to that depth of piety that teaches men to throw furniture at the heads of harmless and less frantic people.

THE Methodists of Shiney Row, near Fence Houses, derive all their knowledge from a man named Sexton, who sometimes lectures on *infidelity*. They had him in the Town Hall, Houghton-le-Spring, some time ago, and a member of their church told me how he pocketed all the money taken in the four nights and prayerfully took his departure, leaving them £5 in debt. I gleaned from another of the same body, to whom wisdom comes through experience and Sexton, that his hotel bill was a serious item. Mrs. Law didn't treat the heretics like that when she visited the same hall, neither did Mr. Joseph Symes.

THE Young Men's Christian Association of Newcastle-on-Tyne have invited Moody and Sankey to commence their starring engagements at that place. Mr. Sankey is in London waiting the arrival of his partner before commencing operations. Of course, the trick of that is plain; they await the highest bidder, and if a better bone be thrown them Newcastle must stand aside. Strange it seems that the God should favor Republican America with his choicest leeches. Probably this lively pair will explain the mystery of the ruined crops.

A NONCONFORMIST meeting has been held in Newcastle to pass a resolution welcoming the Church Congress. The reporters were politely informed they were not wanted. The meeting was divided, and no satisfactory result arrived at. It is a grave sign when they dare not admit the light.

THE NORTH WIND.

A BRIGHT WITNESS.—A minister in Aberdeenshire sacrificed so often and so freely to the jolly god that the Presbytery could no longer overlook his proceedings, and summoned him before them to answer for his conduct. One of his elders, and constant companion in his social hours, was cited as a witness against him. "Well, John, did you ever see the Reverend Mr. C—— the worse of drink?" "Well, a wat no; I've many a time seen him the better o't, but I ne'er saw him the waur o't." "But did you never see him drunk?" "That's what I'll ne'er see; for before he be half slockened, I'm aye blind fu'."

PROFANE JOKES.

DOCTOR PITCAIRN, who practised about 100 years ago, being called to a bricklayer, on whom a chimney which he had just erected had fallen, finding the man dead, gravely turned round and repeated the following apposite quotation: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

THE THIRD TIME.—The facetious Dr. B. of W—r, having, inadvertently preached one of his early sermons for the third time, one of his parishioners having observed it, said to him after service—"Doctor, the sermon you gave us this morning, having had three several readings, I move that it now be passed."

A CURIOUS book of conundrums, entitled "The Calvary Catechism," asks: "What are you made in baptism?" Made disagreeably wet, we opine.

A DIVINITY student having in his examination to give an illustration of design in nature, instanced the fact of cork trees growing in wine producing countries. He passed.

OLD Mrs. Partington was wiser than she knew, when, in answer to Ike's enquiry as to which place of worship he should attend, she replied, "Go any wheres you like, my son, where the gospel is dispensed with."

"Just think, my dear Rose," exclaimed a pious old lady, "just think, only five missionaries to twenty thousand cannibals;" and the kind-hearted niece ejaculated, "Goodness gracious, aunty; O, my gracious, the poor cannibals will starve to death at that rate!"

At Chautauqua the other day a little girl was asked if she was a Methodist. "Oh, no!" she replied. "I am a Brethren, and my mother is a brethren too." These were the United Brethren. At Montreal one of the Plymouth brethren was asked why they never spoke of the Plymouth sisters. "Oh!" was the answer, "the Brethren embrace the sisters."

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