

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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THE WRONG DONKEY.

“And he spake to his sons saying, Saddle ME the ass. And they saddled HIM.”—1 KINGS xiii., 27.

GOD AND THE CHOLERA.

How little difference there is between Catholic and Protestant superstition when they are probed to the bottom! Both regard God as a devil. They make him responsible for every affliction, and the more awful it is the more surely they trace his hand. There may be some doubt in the case of measles, but none in case of small-pox; diarrhoea may be a natural disorder but cholera is clearly a visitation from God.

It is with such ideas that the devout Catholics have petitioned the authorities to sanction street processions for the purpose of imploring Deity to stop the dreadful disease which is ravaging the south of France. The authorities only return a civil negative to this foolish request, probably thinking that the situation is too grave for jest or satire. Otherwise they might have emulated the example of Lord Palmerston, who, when he was desired by the Edinburgh Town Council to set aside a day of supplication against the cholera, replied that they had better look after their drain-wash. They believed in prayer, but he believed in white-wash.

French Protestants, in this respect, seem nowise superior to the Catholics. Here, for instance, is Dr. Pressensé, a representative and highly intelligent pastor of the Reformed Church, “heartily agreeing” with the remark of the *Eglise Libre* that “epidemics, wars, famines, etc., are chastisements inflicted on nations by the Great Master of all.” Yet he proceeds to deny our right to draw “any inference of particular guilt,” and urges that our “only wisdom is to bow in silence to the dispensations of an inscrutable Provi-

dence.” Could anything be more irrational? What is the use of “chastisement” if the wrong person suffers it, and if we cannot learn why it is inflicted? Professor Huxley says of Nature that she does not care a straw for our feelings; she boxes our ears first, and leaves us to find out why afterwards. What difference is there between Professor Huxley’s Nature and Dr. Pressensé’s God?

Yet there *is* a difference, for Huxley’s Nature is only a personification, while Pressensé’s God is (supposititiously) a conscious being with intellect and volition. If *he* boxes our ears without telling us why, his conduct calls for more than a witticism. He must be stigmatised as consummately stupid and immoral. Such a God, I say again, is a devil. Fine words will not conceal the fact, nor will the loudest praises drown that roar of execration against such a Deity which is beginning to ascend from all parts of the civilized world.

Can anything be conceived more horribly revolting than a God who deliberately plagues mankind with subtle and ingenious agonies; who racks every organ with its special torture, from the last outposts of the skin to the central citadel of the brain; whose devices of cruelty infinitely transcend in fiendish cunning all the foul imaginations of the Inquisition, all the malice of revenge, and all the phantasies of criminal insanity? Death by fire is mild compared with many forms of natural decease. Read the accounts of those deaths from cholera at Marseilles and Toulon. They are both intensely painful and fearfully disgusting; the dignity of human nature is outraged while it agonises; pain comes as a violator, trampling on decency while perpetrating horror. Man made in the image of God, as they tell us, is degraded worse than any brute in the

shambles. Look at those lank limbs, that fœtid skin, those oozing lips, that lolling tongue, those glazed eyes and that contorted body. Can you imagine that God has thus defaced his own handiwork, or that he can thus torment his own children. Why, the lowest of human parents would yearn to assuage or stay such suffering, and can you believe that the Father of all looks on unmoved? No, a thousand times no! "Blank Atheism" is infinitely better than that. If we must suffer, there is consolation in knowing, or at least believing, that "it is to satiate no being's gall," to pamper no lust of cruelty in an Almighty Fiend.

Atheism, as Bacon said, leaves us to nature. By faithful study of her processes we can gain Knowledge, and Knowledge is power. This devastating cholera in the South of France was hatched in some Asiatic hot-bed of disease, and it slays wholesale in more favored lands because their inhabitants have not fortified themselves and their surroundings against its deadly attack. This plague will teach them a stern lesson, which let us hope they will profit by in the future, organising their defence before the enemy appears at their gates. Our weal and woe depend on material conditions, and everywhere in nature we perceive the adamant chain of cause and effect. The man of Science is our true Savior. He places the means of redemption in our hands, and we have only to use them. One scientist is worth a million priests, one wise act is worth a countless host of prayers, and one hour's study of Nature is worth more than a millenium's worship of God.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIAN ARROGANCE.

CHRISTIANS are fond of telling us that scepticism is the result of moral obliquity, and that Atheism is inseparably connected with vice and dishonesty. They think that they employ modest and convincing arguments when they inform us that it is only the fool who says there is no God, and that we love darkness because our deeds are evil. For these insults—which are usually regarded as excruciatingly-witty rejoinders of a crushingly-conclusive nature—Christians of course have scriptural authority. Having thus demonstrated to their perfect satisfaction their own superiority and our evident wickedness, they proceed as far as they can to punish us for the evil deeds which we ought to commit, but which, to the disgust of the expectant Christian, we continually and disappointingly avoid. We think, but the Christian does not, that there is no need to take time by the forelock in this hasty way. We say, when crime is committed, *then* punish the criminal, even though this rational course of procedure should send the Christian to Holloway Gaol and leave the Atheist free. When, indeed, derisive unbelief in the story of Jonah and the whale causes us to sacrifice our children as reverential belief in God caused Jephthah to murder his daughter; when a rejection of the doctrine of the Incarnation leads to wars as terrible as those that religion has caused—the Crusades, for instance, in which Talmage says that eighty million human beings perished; when disbelief in a supreme being blights the lives of millions in nunneries and makes men hate and persecute each other and crush science and freedom and truth as belief in the Bible has done—then indeed there would be apparent grounds for treating unbelief as hostility to mankind and as a legal offence. But it is religion and not Atheism that has been guilty of these misdeeds, and if the exceeding importance of leaving all opinions free were forgotten, it would be Theists who would be legally deprived of their children and of their civil rights, and not Atheists; it would be Christian Members of Parliament who would be expelled from the House for "flaunting" their detestable belief in the cruel God by whom they swear; it would be believers, who would be prosecuted for blaspheming against the best and noblest human feelings with their atrocious doctrine of hell-fire and their miserable stories of an Omnipotent Being who ordered the slaughter of innocent babes and harmless women. When will the Christian withdraw his arrogant claims to a physical supremacy, and grant a full and fair equality, so that from the peaceful conflict of unfettered opinion truth may be evolved by the survival of the fittest?

The equality claimed must be social as well as legal. Men must be judged by their merits, and not by their belief in the supernatural. The equality must not be of the unreal kind which Talmage has arrogantly and hypocriti-

cally recommended in a recent sermon on the political duties of Christians. He tells Christians to treat men in public life with the same fairness and generosity that they would wish to be shown to their own sons, *but* they must never, under any circumstances, vote for a man who rejects the Bible. If this view had been carried out in the past, the United States would have lost the services of some of her best presidents and members of Congress. In England, Northampton would have rejected Mr. Bradlaugh, and Newcastle John Morley, solely on account of their religious beliefs; and many other boroughs would have acted in a similarly suicidal way if they had only inquired sufficiently into the orthodoxy of their present members. Talmage holds that if Freethinking Liberal candidates would save a nation from a shameful and sanguinary war, or even from national ruin, while Tory Christians would plunge the country into indelible disgrace and irretrievable disaster, Christian electors must sacrifice their country, their families, their homes and their honor on the altar of religious hatred and Christian injustice. Under no circumstances whatever must they secure the services of Freethinkers in the national councils. Politically these unbelievers must be tabooed. And yet Talmage has the impudence to tell his flock that he applies no religious test.

It may be said that Talmage is merely a theological mountebank, and that his opinions have not the slightest influence in England. Unfortunately the latter portion of this supposed rejoinder would not be altogether true. The *Christian Globe*, the *Christian Herald*, and we believe various other religious periodicals besides, publish a weekly series of his sermons including the one to which we have referred; so that he must have numerous readers in England with whom his teachings have some weight, or else the religious press here would not print them as special attractions. It cannot be said that Talmage is not a representative man. When he so charitably and considerably declares from the pulpit that he would not trust an unbeliever with a ten-cent piece he only repeats a commonplace Christian insult. When he asserts that the Bible "is the only foundation of common honesty" he only expresses the commonly held and commonly urged opinion of ordinary Christians with perhaps a little more audacity and precision than usual. But what a specimen of Christian arrogance this view furnishes. Mahometans, Buddhists, Idolators, Deists and Atheists are quietly assumed to be entirely destitute of common honesty—unless indeed honesty can exist without any foundation, in which case a foundation would be needless, and the whole remark meaningless. What a magnificent insult to the five-sixths of his fellow-men who happen to differ from him in theology! What a presumptuous piece of flattery of the superstition which he and his hearers profess! If Mahometans said that the Koran was the only source of honesty, or if the Hindoos said that no one could be just and virtuous unless he based his actions upon belief in the Vedas, we might plead ignorance and mistaken sincerity in excusal of such an arrogant claim. But an educated Christian, with the history of the world before him, with ample accounts on his library-shelf of honesty and yet grander virtues displayed by men of all creeds and of none, can lay claim to no such excuse. In plain English, severe but justifiable and necessary, his statement is only a piece of bombastic lying for the glory of God and the good of his church, and (*subauditur*) the success of his preacher.

After this we are not surprised at being told that the Bible is also the foundation of the Constitution of the United States, and that "Republican institutions are an everlasting impossibility without it." Talmage must know well enough that the ancient republics of Greece and Rome flourished without the Bible, and that the Bible is supremely monarchical in its teachings and bias. But while reckless assertions in praise of God's holy word succeed and pay, how can Talmage be expected to speak the unprofitable words of soberness and truth from the pulpit which he enlivens with his wild flights of intellectual buffoonery and Christian arrogance? W. P. BALL.

WHEN Barnum parades his white elephant out West, we advise him to have a band precede it with the sacred air—"Yes, whiter than snow." This will establish confidence in his sacred character, and call out the full quota of church-goers.

CARLYLE says an Annandale farmer was with his family praying very earnestly for a "dry haytime;" during family devotions it commenced to rain very hard; the farmer rose abruptly from his knees and exclaimed, "O Lord, this is too ridiculous!"

RESUMING WORK.

SINCE my last contribution to the *Freethinker* I have had the experience on the one hand of affliction sadder than death, and on the other of that sympathy and kindness during recovery which are as the very sunshine of life. For the affliction, it was, at least in part, owing to Christian bigotry and superstition; for the happy hours of recovery I have been indebted solely to Freethinkers, whose good offices in my own case are a standing refutation of the discreditable view of human nature taken by orthodox religionists. Indeed, in my experience, for manly friendliness and genuine human sympathy one must go to Freethinkers, whose good deeds are at least without the suspicion of being done with an eye to eternal happiness hereafter. The much boasted "Christian charity" is very often only an investment with the expectation of an extravagant return, and the professedly pious are as much to be avoided as snakes in the grass.

No thinking person can pass through so terrible an illness as mine without reviewing those great problems of life and death upon our ignorance of a complete solution to which the priests in all ages have traded. My return to sub-editorial duties on the *Freethinker* is proof that my convictions are unaltered, and that I deem my best work lies in the old path of endeavoring to eradicate superstition. Without disparaging any who take part in the world's necessary labor it seems to me that there is no nobler task than to aid in mental emancipation. Our worst enemies are always within. Superstition is the fellest of tyrants, blighting and devastating the whole life. Political and social reform are hopeless where the people are slaves to religious terrors. Everywhere freedom and progress have gone hand in hand with emancipation from superstition. At the present time we have a still worse enemy. Superstition is countenanced by hypocrisy. Many who have given up the time-worn dogmas, and who in private entirely repudiate Christian nonsense, are foolishly afraid of avowing their unbelief in public. While these are playing at pretending to believe that they believe, the bigots are allowed to have their own way. The clergy, enraged because they know that we know that they know they don't know, are banded to keep down *infidelity*, which really means information upon things supposed to be sacred. They fight under the protection of a long-established and well-endowed organisation. On their side are the wealth and inherited prejudices of ages—on ours, modern science and criticism, with new hopes and aspirations for the future of man upon this earth. It behoves, then, all who throw in their lot with the new cause to fight its battle earnestly and determinedly. No Freethought soldier can be spared. Recruits ready to speak out on occasion are wanted, and are happily appearing on all sides.

The work which the *Freethinker* was established to undertake, and for which Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp suffered so much, is a greatly needed one. It is the work of clearing away from the minds of the masses the cant, bigotry, superstition, and nonsense which the best thought of the age has outgrown, and which remains a putrescent and dangerous obstruction in the path of progress. To one who so sees it, to labor in any capacity in this direction is a self-satisfying pleasure, and the calumny which Freethinkers are sure to meet from those who know them not can be sufficiently met by the charity, peace and integrity of our own lives.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Joseph Wood, for some time a Congregational minister at Leicester, recently accepted a call to a Unitarian church in Birmingham, and in doing so, said the Congregational Union, though retaining him as a member, had known for several years past that he was not a Trinitarian, and was even less orthodox in some other respects than many Unitarians. Dr. Hannay, however, denies this statement, and says the fact that Mr. Wood retained his position as a Congregational minister was regarded as an avowal of belief in the "Facts and Doctrines of the Evangelical Faith" affirmed by the Congregational Union, among which the Incarnation and Atonement of J. C. have place. The fact is patent—the "Union" has been ready to wink at private unbelief as long as its creed is not explicitly challenged.

THE *Rock* commending the Greek Church, in which every parish priest *must* be married, says: "To force men to be

celibates we know from history and experience to be unwise; to induce them to be so by special rewards is almost as bad." How about the Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, who is not only said to have been a celibate himself and to have declared that in heaven there is neither marrying nor given in marriage, but also to have highly commended those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake?

HERE is a specimen verse from a Christian hymn:—

"Eternal racks and heavy chains,
Tormenting plagues and fiery coals,
And darts to inflict immortal pains,
Dipped in the blood of damned souls!"

Elegant, isn't it?

THE Salvationists have been pounced upon so often that they have put the following stanza in their song-book, and sing it lustily when arrested:—

"There'll be no policemen there,
There'll be no policemen there,
In the mansions above,
Where all is love,
There'll be no policemen there."

THE Rushden Silver Band in conjunction with the Temperance Society applied to the Canon for his expected consent to the holding of a pic-nic in some field of his. The Canon replied that he would be pleased to let them have the grounds, but did they remember the "Bradlaugh day?" "Yes," said the spokesman of the band, "but we were engaged and paid for it." The offence of playing into the town a great political reformer who happened also to be an Atheist, was too much for the Canon, so he refused the application.

Is the *Protestant Standard* going in for blasphemy? It very sensibly but very irreverently says: "We believe in Pepper's Ghost and the finding of a pin when you sit upon it." This is about the best short parody on the Christian creeds with their "I believe in the Holy Ghost," etc., that we have seen. It is so refreshingly lively in fact, especially in its latter clause, that we imagine the pious editor must have been speaking feelingly from a recent personal experience, and not merely from the intuitional revelations of faith or the prayerful study of the sacred scriptures.

A CHINAMAN recently stole a Chicago man's wife. It doesn't take long to Christianise the Celestials after all.

NEXT Friday a meeting is to be held at the Guildhall, London, to commemorate the abolition of slavery in the British possessions, which took place just fifty years ago, on August 1, 1834. The Archbishop of Canterbury and other lords spiritual and temporal are to be present. During the long period of agitation against slavery, Wilberforce testified that its greatest upholders were to be found in the ranks of the clergy, and for this they had the authority of their Holy Bible. Choice texts and examples are there for slaveholding and not a word for freedom. The measure of abolition by purchase now commemorated was long withstood by the House of Lords and obstinately opposed by the bench of bishops. Now these gentlemen turn round and seek the credit for themselves and their Christianity.

MR. SPURGEON says that the Church of England has turned religion into witchcraft. The reverse of this statement is true of the whole world. Churches, or priests, whichever you like, have turned witchcraft into religion. The superstition which appears in the story of the Witch of Endor is historically the basis of all our refined modern creeds.

MRS. PHELPS, author of "The Gates Ajar," has put forward a new theory of immortality. There is a race for life eternal and only the fittest survive. This is at least amusing. Fancy God Almighty setting all his children to run races and giving the winners an apple from the tree of life. But there is also a dark side to the picture. His celestial highness lets all those who drop with exhaustion die on the field without the aid of surgery. Still God is love. Of course.

THE Rev. Peter C. Findlay, minister of the Established Church at Carsphairn, in Kirkcudbrightshire, having seduced his servant, sent her away to Dublin to be confined, and on her return threatened to give her in charge. The sheriff, after hearing the evidence against this specimen of clerical immorality, expressed his horror at such conduct, and ordered the pious scoundrel to pay £8 a year for the support of his child. His lordship also made the following noteworthy observations: "My belief in the religion of nature, apart from all Churches and creeds, which teaches us to reverence humanity, to protect and be kind to the weaker sex, committed to the special care and guardianship of men, is above all conventional or ecclesiastical sympathies. The scandal to any conventional organisation, the stigma on any, is a small matter compared with the discovery of truth and the render-

ing of justice between human creatures, which is a higher function even than the highest of presbyter or priest."

THE *Christian Herald* says that "faith in God, and believing prayer, is unquestionably the best specific" against cholera. It wants "much supplication offered up" for God to keep the disease entirely out of this country and also to abate its virulence on the Continent. But why not pray it out of France as well as out of this country, if prayer is really as efficacious as is asserted? Let the Bethsham faith-healing staff and the whole Salvation Army start off to Toulon to-morrow, and supplicate the cholera out of existence. We can spare them, and being believers, they have a guarantee of perfect immunity from God who cannot lie. If they succeed in extirpating this modern form of the plague by prayer, we shall at once adopt similar measures for demolishing the still more mischievous and deadly plague known as Christianity.

A NEW book, arguing for the orthodox belief in miracles, has just been issued by Kegan Paul, Trench and Co. The author is Dr. Samuel Cox, editor of the *Expositor*. An idea of his ability to deal with the scientific aspect of the subject may be gained from a statement at the very beginning of the volume, to the effect that the germs of the whole material universe are to be found in light, and that therefore, when the Elohim said "Let there be light," he, or they, in reality evolved the various solar systems.

ANOTHER redoubtable argument of the learned doctor is that myths can have had no play in early Jewish history as there are no accounts of miracles before Moses. But was not the deluge, God's visitation to Babel, the confusion of tongues, the visit to Abraham, the punishment of Abimelech, the wrestling with Jacob, and the divination of Joseph, all miraculous? The truth is, that nearly every verse in Genesis betrays the myth-making faculty of the narrator.

DR. COX argues that the Christian miracles did not appear among a credulous and superstitious people, because "scepticism was prevalent both in Greece and Rome." This is somewhat worse than saying that the Irish cannot be superstitious because Freethought is in the ascendant in France and Germany. Sufficient evidence of the superstition of the Jews can be found in the New Testament itself. The facts that it attributes disease to demons, that Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, and that John was taken for Elias, sufficiently show the credulity of the Jews. Moreover, it must always be remembered that the Christian allegations found no record until the Jews, as a nation, were dispersed.

AN instance of how the peripatetic preachers live transpired at the Northern Court, Glasgow, last week, where a man named Hison Whipple, who was dressed in a clerical garb, and had a Bible in his hand, was charged with obstruction and disturbance. Being asked by Baillie Jackson how he obtained his living, Whipple answered, "By faith." People invited him from the street to their homes, kept and entertained him, paid all his expenses, and would not charge him a single farthing. One man who heard him preach on the Green divided his wages with him. No wonder the preaching profession is so extensively followed in Scotland.

OVERHEARD between two Orangemen.—Knock-kneed Man: "When I was in Spain the Catholics paid the priest fourpence to have a kick at Judas. In fact, I've paid it myself." "Good God," said the other, looking at his legs, "you must have given him a hell of a kicking."

Go to a religious paper if you want to find a bit of rancid gush over royalty. Here is the *Christian World*, for instance, praising the strenuous labors of the Prince of Wales, who can actually find time in the midst of his laborious pleasures to run down and spend an hour at the Bethnal Green Museum with a lot of working men, and so "bridge the gulf between the exalted and the lowly." After narrating a few more instances of superhuman exertion, this pious lickspittle says they may be regarded as a "good week's work for the Heir-Apparent and his illustrious wife." When we reflect that this sublime pair of human beings receive a hundred and fifty thousand a year, we can estimate both their industry and the character of their sycophants.

ROMAN Catholics and Protestants have been agreeing in the genuine Christian fashion on Cleator Moor, Cumberland. One Catholic struck a member of the Orange procession on the head with half a brick, shouting at the time, "That's one for you!" The Orangeman left the ranks and ran his sword into his fleeing assailant's back, exclaiming triumphantly, "That's another for you!" Ultimately volleys of stones and other missiles were showered upon the Protestant procession by the infuriated crowd of Roman Catholics. Swords, pikes, and revolvers were freely used. One man was killed and fifty are seriously injured. The writer of "Stray Notes" in the *Northern Counties Gazette* says it puzzles him considerably

to know what religion has done for Christians if they can fly at one another's throats on the slightest provocation and shortest notice.

E. W. HOLMES, who is apparently a clergyman, writing from Westhorpe, Stowmarket, tries to convert us or influence us in the usual Christian fashion by insult in the shape of David's remark that it is the fool who denies God, by cowardly threats and reminders of the imprisonment to which Christian laws have sentenced us, and will again, he hopes, sentence us, and by vile slanders against the most honored leaders of our party. The lamentable part of this evidently sincere communication is that our correspondent while seeing the mote in our eye with the most dreadful distinctness is utterly unable to perceive the huge beam which distorts his own mental vision. He perceives our "blasphemy"; but he is comfortably blind to his own unconscious bigotry, cowardice, lying and slander. And the conceited saint has the audacity to send us a picture card on which is painted, "Cleave to that which is good"—an admirable but not very novel or instructive motto, which our pious persecuting friend should certainly have kept for his own use. As a last shot he says: "Your opinions may be acceptable in America. Why not emigrate there?" We reply that our opinions are acceptable in England, as is shown by the wonderful success of the *Freethinker*, and that we prefer to remain here among our friends in spite of all the dastardly actions and threats of Christian prigs and hypocrites.

AFTER exploiting England pretty thoroughly, Moody starts for Chicago, without any intention of returning for a long time. Except the love of cash we know of no motive for Moody's ever leaving his native shores. He admits that London is the most religious city in the world, and he knows that Chicago is the most godless. Why does he not devote his energies to the conversion of perishing souls out West? If charity does not begin at home, at least reformation does; and it is time enough for Yankee revivalists to visit us when they have cleared up all the Lord's work in their own part of his vineyard.

MOODY says, "there is such a thing as sanctified wealth." We should prefer to say *sanctimonious* wealth. Shaftesbury and Morley are two very good examples.

LONG discourses, says Moody, are a great mistake. His meetings are never more than an hour long, and they are always broken up with plenty of singing. No doubt. But people will listen to long discourses under certain conditions. It all depends on what they are about and who delivers them. Crowded audiences assemble to hear Freethought lecturers, and they seldom speak for less than an hour.

DR. PARKER's church floor has had to be laid down afresh. The old one had a bad attack of dry rot. A good many churches have that disease in other parts than the floor. There is a great deal of very dry rot in the pulpit.

MIRACLES are as plentiful as ever, but the religious world in general regards them with contemptuous indifference and declines even to investigate them. According to the *Christian Herald*, since Mr. Wood the faith-healer came to Adelaide, in Australia, over 1,100 persons have declared themselves cured by the laying on of his hands. The *Port Adelaide News* gives a list of nearly a hundred persons thus healed. If these Protestant faith-healing miracles and the modern Roman Catholic miracles at Lourdes, Knock and elsewhere had occurred two thousand years ago and were beyond investigation, it would probably be crime to doubt their genuineness, and haters of falsehood who ridiculed such stories would be cast into prison under suitable Blasphemy Laws.

A WELSH correspondent of the *Western Mail* has been visiting Claremont Hall to hear Mr. Foote lecture on "An Hour with the Devil." "And a remarkably hot hour it was, too!" he writes. "I have heard, here and there, a good deal of rank irreligious talk on platforms by speakers of different degrees of ability, but for flippant blasphemy I never listened to the equal of Mr. G. W. Foote." This Welsh correspondent's powers of accurate description may be judged from the following account of Mr. Foote: "He is a man of apparently thirty-five years of age, with a somewhat low type of face, and, if there is anything in phrenology, decidedly lacking in even moderate intellectual faculties." The *Western Mail* is the Tory organ of South Wales. This fact explains the anger of its correspondent at Mr. Foote's questioning "the personality of the Devil."

REVIEW.

The System of Nature. By BARON D'HOLBACH, with Memoir by Charles Bradlaugh. London: E. Truelove.—This famous work has been too long in the world to require fresh criticism. Mr. Truelove's new edition is handsome and compact, and will probably occupy the field for many years.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 27, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, London, N., at 7.30, "Messrs. Moses and Aaron."

Aug. 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Claremont Hall, London; 24, Milton Hall, London; 31, Milton Hall. Sept. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London; 21, Glasgow; 28, Edinburgh. Oct. 5, Liverpool; 19, Manchester. Nov. 16, Nottingham.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 28 Stonecutter Street, London.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—J. King, J. Atkinson, and J. A. Bradley.

W. FROUDE.—Glad to hear such high praise of our Summer Number. As you say, it is warm, but so is the weather, and we like to be reasonable.

J. BRUNNEY.—The Church of England is not directly salaried by the State, but all its revenues are national property, and an Act of Parliament could divert them to other purposes. This was partially done when the Irish Church was disestablished.

MARTINIAN.—This is as near as we can decipher your signature. We do not see that the matter would much interest our readers, and if your brother's corpse has gone to the grave without "decent Christian burial," pray how much has he lost?

W. WILDE.—No doubt "ghostly counsel and advice" is all those sky-pilots can give; they are generally the greatest ninnyes in all the practical affairs of life.

J. SANDERS.—Scarcely in our way. Cuttings are always useful.

A. W. F.—From what we see of the *Family Herald* we should think its help to our cause can only be in pushing along those who lag very far behind.

J. SANDERS.—The Bishop of Bedford is so mealy-mouthed and vague in his statements that we can well understand any Atheist saying he could not argue against his sermons.

JOCOSERIA, H. KELLY, AND T. A. WILLIAMS.—Cuttings received with thanks.

C. BREWER.—The verses appeared in the *Freethinker* two years ago, and are now reprinted as *Freethinker* Tract, No. 16.

A. BOWERS.—The long letter by a Dewsbury man you sent us is very interesting, but we have dealt with the Sunday question several times lately, and we cannot well return to it at present.

W. CAMPBELL, Hackney.—Mr. McAllister's "blasphemy" about Beelzebub's bosom appeared originally in this paper in a slightly different form.

W. THOMPSON, Glasgow.—It would scarcely be fair to give the name of the stationer referred to, but his shop is well known, occupying a prominent corner at the west-end.

H. MILLER.—Tracts sent. We are glad you are doing such good work.

J. D.—The first English Bible professed to be translated from the Greek, but doubtless with reference to the Vulgate Latin version.

W. F. POPE.—You say you were "never a reader of this paper till the prosecution," and in that respect you resemble thousands more. Cuttings are always welcome. The subject of parental duty is of course transcendently important, and we hope to deal with it before long.

A. HILLERY.—The extract you send us appeared in the *Freethinker* more than two years ago.

A. POMEROY.—Thanks for the cutting from the *Western Mail*, which has reached us from more than one quarter. The writer does not irritate—he only amuses us. Twelve months' imprisonment makes one too callous to feel abuse. It is absolutely untrue that any person left the hall during the lecture. That is an exceedingly rare phenomenon in Secular halls. The lecture is not published, but as it incenses the bigots so greatly we shall probably issue it at an early date.

EDITORIAL.

A MISCONCEPTION having arisen in the minds of some subscribers, it is necessary to state that the Summer Number of the *Freethinker* does not supersede the ordinary number, but is a separate and distinct publication. Those who did not obtain last week's number should procure it at once to complete their set.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a very large audience at Milton Hall last Sunday evening, despite the hot weather, to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Bible Blasphemy." Previous to the lecture Miss Summer charmed the audience with a skilfully-executed selection on the piano. This evening, July 27, Mr. Foote will again speak at Milton Hall on the subject of "Messrs. Moses and Aaron," which he will then treat for the first time in London or elsewhere.

THE August number of *Progress* is now ready, and we

believe it will be acknowledged as one of the brightest since the magazine commenced. Mr. Foote continues the history of his prosecution, besides contributing a political article with the stirring title of "Down with the Lords!" Dr. Aveling reviews the poetry of Phillip Bourke Marston. Mr. John Robertson writes an admirable paper, "Carlyle on Diderot," which comes very appropriately at the time of the Diderot centenary in Paris. There is a further instalment of Mrs. Edgren's powerful story, "The Doctor's Wife," and another of "'98 in Wexford." "Do we still need Religion?" is concluded, and there is an economical article on "The Earnings for the Earner," by a new contributor. Lastly, the verse, which is above the average quality, includes an original satirical poem by the late James Thomson (B.V.), entitled "Bill Jones on Prayer."

CHRISTIAN impudence is coming down a peg. A pious contemporary condescends to suspect that the Hindu "is not altogether bad," and to doubt his "utter depravity." As there is about ten times more crime in England than in India, it is difficult to exaggerate this writer's modesty.

THE Rev. Edward White has had a little quarrel with some of his brother sky-pilots. This is how he describes some of them whom he most abhors: "There is no anonymous misrepresentation in the Press of which they are incapable. There is no cruel, contemptuous provocation in Society from which they shrink." Bravo! That's the style. Fire away at each other, you loving Christians. Let each side call the other bad names. We'll believe you both.

DR. ABBOTT, according to a Christian contemporary, has published a translation of Rushbrooke's *Synopticon*—a work which deals with "the curious phenomena of the first three Gospels." Is this a blunder or a joke? If the latter, it is excellent; for there are many curious phenomena in the first three Gospels, and we were sent to gaol for describing some of them in a graphic manner.

THE *World* says that whoever preaches before the Queen at Crathie makes his discourse as short as is compatible with Scotch notions of propriety. The Guelphs have some sense after all.

WE are afraid that many of our readers have been disappointed in not obtaining our Summer Number as early as they expected. There was some delay in printing, owing to the unusual character of the publication, but we are happy to state that the Summer Number is now quite ready, and has for several days been selling rapidly. If there is any difficulty in procuring it, the fault will lie with the wholesale agents, and we shall be glad if any such cases are reported to us immediately.

THE annual children's outing from the Hall of Science was blessed last Sunday with the usual fine weather. Three hundred young Freethinkers were taken to Epping Forest, and after being feasted and entertained all day, were brought safely home without a single mishap or hitch. A large number of vehicles filled with friends and relatives accompanied the excursion.

WE are glad to find that the *Madras Philosophic Inquirer* continues its good work in a part of the world which greatly needs the enfranchisement of minds from the great debasing superstitions of the past. Not the least interesting of its contents to ourselves personally is a column and a half of "Gleanings from the *Freethinker*."

WE must abolish the Lords—and the Lord too, who is the primary type of these out-of-date monstrosities. This is the only reform that will be satisfactory and final. The sooner these great hindrances to progress are swept away the better it will be. The one anachronism thinks it can defy a nation's will; the other leads people away after a will-o'-the-wisp, and makes them neglect and despise the real improvement and happiness that would be secured by an earnest devotion to the social as well as individual interests of this present life. In all the grand procession on Monday—as genuine and encouraging a manifestation of the people's will as was ever seen—there was not a single banner of any religious body. Like Spurgeon, who says "It is a part of my religion to desire justice and freedom for all," they find it convenient to have other engagements when the time comes for translating this desire for justice into some genuine action. We are glad that the religious organisations do keep aloof from politics when politics means the practical work of obtaining "justice and freedom for all," and we wish they would remain as neutral when the political persecution of Freethinkers in and out of Parliament is concerned.

THE *Hindu Patriot* explains to its readers that the English letters D.D., which the Archbishop of Canterbury has just conferred upon the Rev. Imamuddin, mean, when in capitals, Doctor of Divinity. "But lower-case types," it observes,

"considerably alter the meaning; by d—d is meant damned," a thoroughly theological and highly Christian expression, which all natives who come into contact with Englishmen are sure to be familiar with.

It is so seldom that a Christian paper advocates a policy of justice towards opponents of Christianity, that we feel that the *Church Reformer* deserves special thanks and commendation for the support it gives to the movement for the repeal of the iniquitous Blasphemy Laws. It prints extracts from a number of letters sent by clergymen who regard these laws as unjust and mischievous, and it invites further signatures of Church clergymen to add to the forty-two who have already signed a declaration of regret at the existence of such laws.

IN another column it gracefully acknowledges the "unvarying kindness and courtesy shown by our Secularist friends to Christian lecturers who are not afraid to give on their platforms a reason for the Faith which is in them."

ONE of its correspondents points out that the Rev. E. Hollond died worth £334,000 in "personal" estate alone, while there are poor parsons in the Church whose livings only bring them in £40, £45, £46, and £47 respectively per annum. He refers the rich pluralists to the parable of Dives and Lazarus.

THE *Christian Herald* says that Mr. Bradlaugh has "again and again offered to take the oath 'in the true faith of a Christian.'" This is simply a falsehood, for the oath no longer contains such words. The *C. H.* is the A 1 champion liar of the religious press.

THERE has been another prosecution under the Lord's Day Act. At the Selby Petty Sessions a coach painter named Thomas Moore was fined 2s. 6d. and 13s. 6d. costs for "lining" a carriage wheel on the Sabbath Day, and his employer, Robert Hague, whom the officer who visited his premises found "looking on at the time," was fined 5s. and 8s. 6d. costs.

THE anti-clericals of Paris have given a Juvenile Freethinkers' Fête in Belleville, with the view of encouraging the young Atheists of Paris in the principles and practice of Secularism. The hall and gardens were decorated with red flags and ribbons, and with busts representing Liberty and the Republic. One of the amusements indulged in by the little "citoyens and citoyennes" was called "thrashing the priest." A dummy in clerical attire was suspended between two trees, and the youthful Freethinkers did their level best at knocking down this new version of our English "Aunt Sally" with sticks.

PUBLIC debates between Christians and Freethinkers are now very rare, although at one time they were very common, the black gentry having found out that discretion is in this case the better part of valor. We are glad to hear, however, that a debate is to take place at Tunbridge Wells on Tuesday, July 29, in the Friendly Societies' Hall, between Mr. H. Seymour, of the Science Library, and Mr. A. Allard, a Baptist minister for forty years. The proceeds will be given to the local Infirmary.

BLASPHEMY IN AUSTRALIA.

THE Sydney *Tribune*, a journal which appears to be great at sport, betting and kindred matters, is exceedingly wroth with the Secular Association at Melbourne for having exhibited in their shop window in Swauston Street "various copies of the *Freethinker*, a London Atheistic periodical, containing gross caricatures of the life of our Savior." It rejoices, however, to know that the police are on the track of these shameless blasphemers, and that a prosecution is likely to be initiated, and fervidly hopes that they will be sent to gaol, where they will doubtless be "brought to their senses." We should have thought that the failure of past prosecutions for blasphemy was enough to deter the bigots from fresh attempts to crush what they cannot answer, and that the flagrant failure of our own prosecution and imprisonment would teach a new lesson if the old ones were forgotten. But bigotry is like the Bourbons; it can neither learn wisdom nor forget its malice. The *Tribune* goes on to insult the Melbourne Freethinkers by saying that their "Sunday Social Services" were "really low-class music-hall entertainments, with interludes of profanity and blasphemy." It cites in support of this calumny "the official reports of the police," a set of men who notoriously produce any kind of report to order. They are sworn retainers of the powers that be, and they will, of course, blacken any unpopular movement obnoxious to their patrons. Let it not, however, be supposed that the pious

and sporting *Tribune* is a friend of intolerance. Oh dear no! It only objects to "disgusting exhibitions," and has no desire to interfere with "Freethought lectures decorously conducted." All which, in our opinion, simply means that Freethought meetings are to be tolerated if they are carried on so that no one hears of them, and so like Christian services that nobody can discern the difference; but forcibly suppressed if they attract public attention, and make our opposition to Christianity conspicuous. In other words, Freethinkers may enjoy the common rights of citizenship only so long as they keep in back streets, make no noise, and refrain from competing with Christians. We regret to learn from the *Tribune* that the Chief Secretary has already intimated his intention of closing the Secular meeting-place—the Hall of Science—on Sundays. Christianity on the other side of the world is precisely what it always was here—a big bully, who whines and whimpers about "charity," when he is the weaker, but hectors and storms when he is the stronger. We advise the Melbourne Freethinkers to stand up for their rights. If they quail, the bully will strike them; if they cringe, he will kick them; but if they boldly confront him, he will soon cry off, and protest that he was misunderstood.

EMANCIPATION!

[A Reply to a Christian Friend.]

You ask me, friend, what 'listed me
Into the ranks where thought is free,
The ranks where no enslaving chain
Insults the vigor of the brain,
Where no smug parson's fiery threats
Scourge heart and soul with vain regrets:
Read on, my friend, and you will see
What worked this mighty change in me!

I knew a man of noble parts,
A man whose gen'rous, kindly ways
Won many a thankful brother's praise,
And homage from a hundred hearts.

He called the hungry to his door,
And sent them forth refreshed again:
He soothed the sick man's weary pain,
And shared his portion with the poor;

And all his good deeds hundred-fold
Around his gentle life were shed,
And seemed to grace his hoary head
With crown more noble than of gold!

But, though in love his days were spent,
No thought of God was in his plan;
He loved and blessed his fellow-man,
And lived in tranquil peace alone.

* * * * *

One Sabbath morn I spoke his worth
Unto a priest, whom then I knew:
I told how he was good and true,
But had no thought beyond the earth;

And asked him, "When this kind man dies,
This man who sinless lives and well,
Must he endure the ceaseless Hell,
And not the peerless Paradise?"

Not, surely, his the frightful fate
Of murd'rer foul and wretch unclean,
Of those whose sinful lives have been
One dreadful day of lust and hate!

Observe his ways! No vice or crime
Pollutes him with a dark'ning stain:
Must his pure soul in piteous pain
Drag out Eternity and Time?"

And thus the priest replied to me:
"If he believe not God's great name
His cursed soul in fearful flame
Shall writhe to all eternity!"

Though he be gentle as a dove,
Unless our creed he will believe,
No mercy shall his soul receive:
So saith the glorious God of Love!"

* * * * *

No more said I; but all that day
My mind was wracked with struggling thought:
A higher, nobler creed I sought,
And cast religion's gyves away!

F. W. B.

ALTHOUGH we are unaccustomed to going round with the hat, we have here made a collection of religionists, which, after exhibiting, we intend to deposit on the rubbish heap of futurity. Here may be observed His Holiness the Vicegerent of God on earth, the Vicar, Curate, Tub-thumper, and Salvation brother and sister.

Enlarged and expressive portraits of the various characters of this collection, from the Infallible One to the Tea-meeting Curate, Revivalist, and Salvation Captain, will be



found under the title of "Clerical Types" among the numerous pictures in the Summer Number of the *Freethinker*.

The strangest feature in this pious little menagerie is—not the pug-nose of the three-hatted Papa, as some might suppose—but the absence of quarrelling and strife. The representatives of Christian sects are in close contact, without tearing each other's throats! The Salvation Sergeant is too busy with making up to the Hallelujah Lass, and the parsons are also much occupied

PROFANE JOKES.

WHAT proof have we there was sewing in the time of David? We read he was *hemmed* in on every side.

A PORTLAND man who claims to be able to work miracles, gave an exposition of his ability to "walk the water by faith" the other day. The reports show that his greatest faith was in life preservers, of which he had a double allowance.

An old agricultural laborer tried a singular method of evangelizing his family. Being remonstrated with by the pastor for not "bringing up" his boys as he should, he replied, "I ain't 'ow 'tis, sir; I order 'em down to pray every nigh an' mornin', an' when they don't go down, I knock 'em down—and yet they ain't good."

Y.M.C.A.—"You are a nice member of the Young Men's Christian Association," said an irate collector to an exasperating debtor, "to make me call a dozen times for this little bill." "Young Men's Christian?" said the impecunious one; "I ain't any Young Men's Christian." "Wot do you hev 'Y.M.C.A.' stuck up there for, then?" said the collector, pointing to the heading of a circular posted up on the desk. "Oh, haven't you seen that before?" replied the debtor. "I got tired of disappearing so many of you fellers. Most of 'em know when they see the sign that it means, 'You May Call Again;'" and he filled up the last unoccupied corner of the blotting-pad with his signature as the collector slammed the door.

LUDICROUS SCENE IN A PULPIT.—In a Bavarian town of the most profound Catholic orthodoxy, the priest preached against the old Catholics, and related such horrible things about them that his pious hearers were literally horror-stricken at old Catholic impieties. At last the preacher cried out, "The old Catholics are so vile that they will all be cast into the pit, and if what I tell you is not true, may the Devil take me now on the spot!" His excitement was terrible, and he so struck the cushion that the book fell from it. Not far from the pulpit there sat an American, who had a negro servant with him, to whom he beckoned to take the book up to the priest, who perhaps had not seen one of these sons of Ham in his life. The negro at once obeyed, and as he mounted the lowest of the pulpit steps the clergyman repeated his wish that the Devil might come and take him if what he had said against the old Catholics was not true. Although the negro went softly, the preacher heard his footsteps, and turning round saw a black object solemnly, steadily, and surely approaching him. He looked at him with terror, and, believing that he would be the next instant collared by his Satanic Majesty, he cried out with trembling voice, "It is, after all, possible that there may be good people among the old Catholics." Turning then round to see if the object had disappeared, he saw it steadily approaching. The perspiration burst out on his brow, and full of despair he called out, "There are even many good people among the old Catholics!" Thinking that this would suffice, he turned round, but what was his horror to find that the object was close at hand. Imagining himself in the very grasp of Beelzebub, turning partly to the negro and partly to the congregation, he cried out, "May the old Devil come and take me if all the old Catholics are not better than we are." The terrified priest fainted from the fright, and it was only after some time that he recovered.

A CORRESPONDENT asks us to send him the God that Christians swear by. Unfortunately we never were able to find him, and none of the booksellers keep him in stock. Nevertheless Mr. Ramsey will send "God in a Box" post-free for three-halfpence. Of course, on reflection, we see that our correspondent means Mr. Foote's pamphlet on "The God that Christians swear by," only he omitted the inverted commas, and so gave us the opportunity for a little joke.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

RELIGION AND SENSUALISM.—The ecstatic trances of such saintly women as Catherine de Sienne and St. Theresa, in which they believed themselves to be visited by their Savior and to be received as veritable spouses into his bosom, were, though they knew it not, little else than vicarious sexual orgasm; a condition of things which the intense contemplation of the naked male figure, carved or sculptured in all its proportions on a cross, is more fitted to produce in young women of susceptible nervous temperament than people are apt to consider.—*Dr. H. Maudsley, "Pathology of Mind,"* p. 144; 1879.

THE FALL AND THE REDEMPTION.—Salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ is based on the geology of a world created in six days, and the fable of a heaven lost in one. An aberration from the course of natural development and from scientific knowledge previously extant has been accepted as a supernatural revelation, and this impossible faith constitutes the greatest obstacle visible on the surface of the whole earth to any possible unification of the human race.—*J. Massey, "Natural Genesis,"* vol. ii., p. 489; 1883.

A LITTLE girl came from her Sunday-school in a high state of indignation because her Sunday-school teacher had told her that Jesus was a Jew. "Was he a Jew, mother?" "Why, yes, my dear," said the mother, a little doubtfully, as if unwilling to concede the objectionable fact, but unable to deny it; "I suppose he was a Jew." "But I thought he was the son of God." "So he is, my dear." "I don't see how, then, he could be a Jew," responded the young sectarian, "for God is a Presbyterian."

AN ECCENTRIC MINISTER.—A minister named Craig purchased a whistle, and when his hearers went to sleep he emitted from it a very shrill sound. All were awake, and stood up to hear him. "Well," he said, "you are smart specimens of humanity," as he slowly gazed at his wondering people. "When I preach the Gospel you go to sleep. When I play the fool you are awake."

A FAMOUS Silsbridge Lane hero has been converted from his sins into the Salvation Army. He was known by his comrades as "Bandy Legs," from the fact that his legs were bowed and otherwise of a strange and ugly construction. "Wilt thou have a drink?" asked a companion of his sinful days. "Nay, lad," was the response; "I doan't drink any more." "No? Ha's that?" the other asked. "Well, I've joined the Salvationists." "Thou hes, bes ta?" "Ah, lad and I am very happy. I've been born agaan." "What!" shouted his friend, "and gotten them legs a second time!"

BEFORE the Maori King leaves England he will get so shrewd an idea of the worth of our missionary enterprise and our Christian morality that he will probably learn to call one *bigbry* and the other *pocket*. I remember a colonial baronet telling me of a certain old Maori servant of his who had ridden behind him for twenty years, and professed all that time to be a devout Christian. One day his master engaged him in confidential talk, and begged him to say what he recommended as the best means of converting the Maories to Christianity. The worthy baronet was rather taken aback at the rejoinder of the old Maori, whom he trusted implicitly, and whose fidelity had hitherto borne every test. "Master," said he, with an odd twinkle, "you ask me, you no ask me. Me tell what believe; me believe your Christian religion—all dam nonsense!" I fear the Maori King will be of the same opinion at no very distant date. Christians who preach one thing and practise another must expect these little snubs from, well—"the noble savage."—*Liverpool Evening Express.*

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