

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VI.—No. 27.]

JULY 4, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 158.



COME TO JESUS.

This invitation is addressed to unbelievers, heretics, the godless and the worldly. Come to Jesus! Are you in trouble? Are you wearied of the vanities of this miserable world? Are you tired of the flowery paths of pleasure? Are you disillusioned of love and friendship? Are you filled with a yearning for something you cannot obtain? Are you plagued with rheumatics, gout, dyspepsia, or any other pain? Or are you simply sick of doing the same old things day after day in the same old fashion? Whatever is amiss, you have only to come to Jesus, and you will find the balm of consolation. Ah, beloved, how sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ears! Yes, and the longer they are the sweeter the sound.

Many years ago—oh, so long! it seems a century—we went to Jesus, or he came to us, we don't exactly know which, for it was in the excitement of a prayer-meeting. The next morning we fought a schoolfellow to settle a long outstanding account. It was a sad backsliding, but soon after we found Jesus again. At another prayer-meeting a pretty young sister of Christ laid her hand affectionately on our juvenile shoulder and asked, "Have you found Jesus?" Of course we had. We were in doubt about it till then, but when we felt the pressure of her warm hand, listened to her sweet voice, and looked into her lovely eyes, we could have sworn that we had found twenty Jesuses. Many eventful years have rolled by since then, and although we are still susceptible to the charm of shapely hands, sweet voices and lovely eyes, we are a long way off finding Jesus, as he is a long way off finding us. The last message he sent us was conveyed by a policeman. When we come

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across his master we shall be happy to ease our mind on the subject. It was a frightful mistake. The pretty young lady of the prayer-meeting was a better evangelist than the bearded gentleman in blue.

The only person in the New Testament who literally went to Jesus was Simon Peter. He "walked on the water to go to Jesus." The result was he was nearly drowned, and perhaps he would have been so altogether had he not been born for another fate. Those who go to Jesus now should take care to make their journey on *terra firma*. One thing, however, is certain—they will never go there on the *terra firma* of reason.

Peter gained nothing but a ducking by going to Jesus. What shall we gain? It is well to know before we take the first step. What has Jesus to offer us? Salvation. Salvation from what? The wrath of God. But what is God in a passion about? That old apple-luncheon in Eden. Does he cherish hate so long? Yes, his memory for such things is interminable, like his legs that reach from heaven his throne to earth his footstool. But, after all, is this protracted passion about such a trifling thing a reality? Oh yes, it is as true as gospel. No truer? Then we venture to disbelieve the whole story; and if ever we meet our heavenly father, and he bullies us because Adam and Eve robbed his orchard, we shall quote his own book against him. "Come now, let us reason together," will be our cry; and if that doesn't calm the old gentleman down there's something rotten in the state of Denmark. When once he begins to reason the game is up. We are used to the business, and judging from the Bible he is a perfect novice.

Oh but Jesus will save you from Hell! Will he? 'Tis very kind of him, but we'll do without his assistance until we are frightened. No doubt

Hell was very hot at one time, but according to the most recent information it has cooled down, and the climate is now salubrious. We are not afraid of any hell after death; all we dread is the hell of human misery on this side the grave. From that neither Jesus, nor any other hero of ancient fiction, can save us. Hard thought and hard work are much better saviors than Jesus Christ. For eighteen centuries he has been in "the saving line," and his success is so infinitesimal that he had better retire from the business as quickly as possible. The firm of which he is the head, or at least the acting manager, simply trades on a traditional reputation acquired by the most unblushing mendacity. People swallow his salvation pills in a spirit of faith, and if they find no relief here they are promised plenty hereafter.

"Safe in the arms of Jesus" may sound tempting to General Booth's hallelujah lasses who sing it with special fervor. But to the male sex, at least, it has no allurements. Personally we object to being cuddled by a he-Jew. Our Christian friends are less particular. They can even look forward with equanimity, if not with pleasure, to the prospect of eternal lodgings inside Abraham's shirt-front. For our part, we should prefer a villa in Hades; for, if the place is hotter, it is also cleaner. There is no reason for supposing that Father Abraham ever takes a bath, and soap is probably an unheard-of luxury in heaven. We are quite aware that a river of life flows there, but it is very unlikely that the saints will be allowed to perform their ablutions in it. On the whole we decline the invitation to Come to Jesus. Not to-day, baker. When we learn that Jesus Christ has, beyond all doubt, done somebody a bit of good, we may give him a turn. Till then we shall do our own "saving."

G. W. FOOTE.



P I O U S   J A C O B .

THE Christian Evidence Society has issued a series of tracts on "Difficulties of Old Testament Characters." Number 10 of this series deals with "The Deceit of Jacob." The attempted defence or partial excusal of the pious cheat is a most barren one. Our notice is first called to the case of men of repute who suddenly have their characters blasted under cross-examination, and we are told that "very similarly has the deceitful act of Jacob with regard to his father been treated by Secularists. They have ignored the righteous tenor of his life." But the "tenor" of his life was thoroughly base. Deception and meanness were certainly not "exceptional" features, as the Christian Evidence Society would have us believe. He achieved success in gaining sacred privileges, in securing to himself family rights and honors, and in worldly matters generally, by lying and fraud, by taking advantage of a brother's hunger, by impersonating that brother and swindling a blind old father out of the blessing intended for Esau, by cheating an uncle out of his flocks and herds by offering God a percentage on all his gains provided God would help him, and by a general policy of cunning and duplicity natural to a physically timid man whose strong points were acquisitiveness and unscrupulousness. The alleged "righteous tenor" of Jacob's life and character was such that society would be ruined by its general adoption as a standard of conduct. Jacob, it is perfectly true, is not alleged to have committed deeds of violence, for he lacked the necessary courage and strength, though his forefathers engaged in "marauding warfare," and his own ill-trained sons treacherously slew unoffending neighbors. And it is almost necessarily true that Jacob had some good qualities. The worst villain must have some positive or negative good qualities, or his indiscriminate atrocities and universal treacheries would speedily bring him to a murderer's grave amidst the general execrations of outraged humanity. There must be honor among thieves, but that honor is no defence against the charge of dishonesty. There must be worldly prudence and some amount of natural feeling and of moral restraint even among saints if they wish to prosper in a career of judicious fraud and hypocrisy. But spoiling one's children till they become unable to restrain their criminal instincts, and loving one's rival wives and concubines, as Jacob may have done, will not secure acquittal on grave moral charges of a totally distinct character. Jacob's virtues (if they were such) as a weak father, a much-married husband and a prudent shepherd, are no justification whatever for his disgraceful failings as a son, as a brother, and as a man.

The next attempted defence is one of palliation from the low state of civilisation and morality in Jacob's time. We are told that "hospitality was esteemed the first of virtues, lying and deceit but a small offence, if an offence at all." This does not greatly improve matters, for Jacob was guilty in both directions. If hospitality was then the first of virtues, why was not Jacob hospitable to his famished brother, instead of wringing from his hunger the excessive price of his birthright for a mess of pottage? It simply appears that he trampled under foot the first of virtues of his own day as well as the important virtues of a later date. This kind of explanation, too, assumes that we are to judge the saints of the Bible and the especial friends and favorites of the Almighty as if they were precisely on the same footing as ordinary men. If there is no difference between saints and sinners, except that the former have their offences sanctified or forgiven, what moral use or credit is there in a piety which lifts men to no higher standard of conduct, but only deepens their degradation by disguising or condoning their wickedness?

One part of the defence of Jacob is of course the condemnation of Esau, who is charged with having declared "with reckless exaggeration" that he was ready to die, and who as an "utterly carnal man" "did eat and drink, and rose up and went his way." How does the C. E. S. know that Esau, on returning "faint" and famished from the chase, spoke with "reckless exaggeration"? He probably only spoke what he felt, and we do not usually regard so natural an exclamation as particularly reckless, even if we think it exaggerated. The writer of the Christian Evidence tract declares, however, that the bargain was creditable to neither side; and he has to confess that

Jacob carried out a "plot to deceive Isaac," that he "went to his aged father with a lie in his right hand," and that in attaining his object "he did not hesitate as to the means." It seems rather a curious defence of this unfilial scoundrel to tell us that his brother Esau was not the man to receive the covenant blessing because he was a "reckless hunter, who scorned the commonplace settled occupations of the patriarchal life" and "equally scorned any spiritual promise," who grieved his parents by marrying a foreign wife, who *would have* slain the brother that *had* defrauded him of his property and power, and who finally, as the culmination of his offences, "forgave his brother with the good nature and generosity belonging to his disposition." Esau, it is true, was deficient in Jacob's kind of "faith," but to tell us that he knew "nothing of principle" is an unwarranted accusation, a mere pious transference of the proven charge against the base and unscrupulous Jacob whom God loved, to the broad shoulders of the generous Esau whom God hated, and hated before he was born. Of course thorough believers may condemn him offhand to order. But even in the hostile columns of the Bible a careful examination will show that Esau is far from being guilty of the moral baseness so absurdly attributed to him. If Esau were alive and were allowed to defend himself fully and freely, he could probably make short work of the verdict so summarily and so groundlessly pronounced against him by the voice of authority.

The concluding part of the defence of Jacob refers to the troubles and trials of his later life as if they excused the sins of which they were partly the consequence and the punishment; and it alleges that Jacob "would then have given all his large possession to be quit of his old wrong-doing." This is pure assumption, and the statement that "Probably the whole range of history does not contain the record of a retribution so striking for committed wrong," is simply ridiculous. The statement that "God certainly did not endorse and approve his conduct," is substantially untrue and thoroughly misleading. God and the Bible never condemn Jacob's frauds, and God must have helped Jacob in his miraculous method of cheating his uncle. God often praises and blesses Jacob, and he makes him the father of his chosen people, but he never blames or corrects him for his wicked and treacherous actions. He delights to call himself the God of Jacob. What are we to think of the God who selected such a man as his friend and favorite, and what shall we say of the moral standard of men who defend such a God and such a saint? Can these modern saints really think that they have cleared the character of Jacob and his patron deity by basely traducing the brave, honest and generous brother whom the ancient saint so treacherously victimised? Is religion so powerful in them and conscience and intellect so weak that they have not yet risen above the frightfully low standard of the Bible morality of three thousand years ago?

W. P. BALL.

FAITH INDEED.—Senator Jones, of Nevada, has the reputation in Washington of having more faith in Providence than all the rest of the Senate put together, and this is the account he gives of its origin:—"I've always believed in Providence since one day, years ago, when I was sheriff in Shasta county. It was a roaster of a day and I was returning on horseback from a hunt for some sluice robbers. I was slowing a faint mountain trail and the sun was just baking me, and the horse was in a lather. I came under the shade of a big rock and thought it would be pleasant to get off and have a smoke. I sat down on a cool boulder, cut a pipeful from my plug, filled my pipe, and felt for a match. Well, Joe, there wasn't a match anywhere in my pockets. I searched and searched, but there was no match. I tell you, Joe, I felt worse over that disappointment than I've done since when the market has gone back on me and hit me for a hundred thousand at a clip. But while I sat there on that boulder wrapped in gloom, what d'ye suppose my eye fell suddenly on? A match, by heaven, lying on the trail not six feet away from me! I used it—though I was a little afraid to touch it at first—and had my smoke. So you needn't worry about how this political fight is going to come out. A man for whom Providence will go to the trouble of providing a match for a smoke in the wilds of the Sierra Nevadas, where man's foot scarcely ever treads, isn't likely to get left when it comes to a commonplace thing like being elected to the United States Senate. Ever since that time," concluded the Senator, "I've never refused a dollar to a person, and have generally done my best, in a quiet, unobtrusive way, to make myself solid with the people who have the pull on Providence."



## ACID DROPS.

THE *Christian Leader*, or *Misleader*, of Glasgow, for May 6 is sent to us with a marked passage, stating on the authority of Mr. Whitmore that "The young man who carried on the *Freethinker* when Mr. Foote was imprisoned, is to-day at work in the Salvation Army." Will Mr. Whitmore give his authority for the falsehood or do his best to correct it? That the statement is an unmitigated lie will not in the slightest diminish its use by Christians, whose creed has from the first been buttressed by such pious frauds.

"I, IF I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me, said the Savior; and this will ever be true." So says the Rev. J. S. Maber in the *Rock*. But Christ was lifted up (on the cross), and he most certainly has not drawn all men unto him. Yet the reverend evangeliser assures us that the statement will ever be true. Is there anything that these bible-bangers will not say? The most obvious untruth is to them a grand verity in some recondite sense or other that suits their purpose.

MOODY is raising £40,000 for a school for training evangelists, of which, and of the money too we presume, he will take the principal charge.

THE Hindoo convert to Christianity does not improve in his morals by the change of creed. Sir Lepel Griffin tells us that "Europeans do not care to employ him, from a belief, founded on extended experience, that his new creed has removed his ancient prejudice against the brandy-bottle." The following is an advertisement from an Indian paper illustrating the degeneracy of character in Hindoo converts: "Wanted.—A Madras butler willing to serve in Belgaum. Particulars given on application to Lieutenant Shaw, 6th Regiment M. I., Belgaum. No Christians need apply." That is the practical effect of Christianity. Christians prefer to employ heathens as being more sober and trustworthy.

THE very Rev. John W. Burgon, the pugnacious Dean of Chichester, has put forward a reply to a theory broached by the Rev. Dr. Pritchard, Savilian Professor of Astronomy, to the effect that the first chapter of Genesis represents a dream. About this we have only to say that we consider the Dean's orthodox view hardly more absurd from a scientific standpoint than the Savilian professor's from a literary and historical one. We are well content to see the two divines fight it out. In a postscript, however, Dean Burgon takes occasion to admonish Professor Huxley whose "arrogance," he declares, "knows no bounds," in a fashion especially rich. Huxley says the assured results of modern Biblical criticism are fatal to the "Mosaic" authorship of the Pentateuch. Burgon replies, "Is he aware that the Incarnate Word meets him with a clear counter statement, Moses wrote of me" (John v., 46, 47.) Let him learn to "walk humbly" with his maker. He is also reminded that it was "the fool" who "said in his heart there is no God."

OUR sub, who will have his joke, protests that Huxley is wrong in saying modern criticism is fatal to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. He contends that the Pentateuch is thoroughly mosaic in its nature, being made up of patches from many sources.

AN American Assembly of Presbyterians has received a report from its Committee on Evolution, declaring that Adam and Eve were created body and soul by the immediate acts of the Almighty Power; that Adam's body was directly fashioned by Almighty God without any natural animal parentage of any kind, out of matter previously created from nothing; and that any doctrine at variance therewith is a dangerous error involving the denial of doctrines fundamental to the faith. They say nothing of Eve and the rib story; we suppose not deeming it necessary to point out its utter irreconcilability with the theory of evolution. We agree with the Presbyterians—Genesis and evolution will no more mix than oil and water, but so much the worse for Genesis.

A PREACHER named Ezekiel Rogers, who has been expounding the gospel at Eastington Chapel, Stroud, has no arms. When in the pulpit he turns over the leaves of the Bible with his tongue. We hope God will forgive him the insult, especially as it is God's own fault for depriving the grateful cripple of hands and arms wherewith he might treat the Holy Book in a more reverent fashion than by constantly licking it.

AGE is so opposed to reform that Dr. Binney once suggested that every Congregational minister should be shot at 45. A better plan would be to put them through a little course of science and Freethought early in life. They will then be lively and progressive—and probably too much so—for the rest of their lives.

THE Bible is an excellent guide into the regions of eternal squabbling over little matters as well as bitter feuds and wars where any piece of nonsense looked upon as vital is concerned. The *Christian Commonwealth* has a perennial discussion on Infant Baptism. All the disputants rely on the Bible and conclusively prove from it opposing doctrines, to their own thorough satisfaction. If science and education had not been at work

superseding religion, these warriors of the faith would have been burning each other alive or baptising each other in scalding cauldrons instead of launching mere letters at each other with the help of such inventions of the devil as cheap paper and the printing press. An aged Nonconformist minister is quoted by one clergyman as sarcastically writing: "Baptists only immerse believers! Then how come two Baptist deacons to be expelled from one Baptist church, one for embezzling club money, the other for repeated perjury before his examining creditors on a charge of secreting several cartloads of his stock, and only spoke the truth when promised he should not be prosecuted?"

TWO men in Russia have been sentenced to hard labor for speaking against the worship of images. How kind these Christians are to each other. They cannot even learn the simple lesson of mutual tolerance till the growth of the Secular spirit forces it upon them.

THIS is how Talmage describes the creation:—"God stood over the original Anarchy of Elements and said: 'Atlantic Ocean, you go right away and lie down there! Pacific Ocean, you sleep there! Caucasian range of mountains, you stand there! Mount Washington, you be sentinel there! Mont Blanc, you put on your coronet of crystal there! Mississippi, you march there, and Missouri you marry it there!' And he gathered in his Almighty hands the sand and mud and rock, and rolled and heaved, and moulded, and dented, and compressed them into shape, and then dropped them in four places; and the one was Asia, and another was Europe, and another Africa, and another America, North and South." We think of asking Talmage to contribute to our next Summer Number.

TALMAGE says there is "something awfully atwist" in this world, and the only wonder with him is "that God don't smash this world and start another in place of it." Considering what his own priests are and the readily believed infamies they attribute to him, a respectable God would certainly convert people to a better opinion of him, or, if that was impossible, he would start afresh. He would reform himself in the first place, and construct a universe without sin and suffering in the second.

AT the Congress of American Churches, one of the principal papers was by the Rev. Dr. Curry, on "The Present Necessity for a Restatement of Christian Beliefs." Dr. Jeffery did not think it possible to secure a creed in which all could agree. The Rev. B. B. Tyler, according to the report, "made a most eloquent plea for the abandonment of all creeds," and his sentiments were greeted with the most deafening and enthusiastic applause heard at any time during the Congress. Of course these iconoclastic Christians are for Bible texts pure and simple as chosen and expounded by themselves. Thus Secularism progresses and Christianity modifies itself. Creeds fall first and the insidiously discredited Bible on which they are based falls later on. The Church changes, Christianity becomes less ecclesiastic and more human, till finally Church and Christianity and God will all alike have disappeared by slow degrees, leaving men to wonder at the insanity of their forefathers who credited the absurd and awful stories put forth in the name of a strange and unaccountable delusion called religion.

THE Rev. S. D. Headlam's *Church Reformer* is livelier than usual this month. In the editorial notes Mrs. Besant is naturally praised for embracing Socialism, and we heartily endorse all that is said about "her pluck and self-sacrifice." But we fancy Mrs. Besant will differ from Mr. Headlam as much as we do as to the truth of his statement that, in becoming a Socialist, she has "taken a long step homewards towards the Faith."

MR. HEADLAM falls foul of Mr. Ball, and says that his answer to Mrs. Besant is "digraceful." But as Mr. Ball's "anti-Christian articles" in the *Freethinker* are "completely disgraceful," our readers will know exactly what value is to be attached to Mr. Headlam's opinion.

MR. FOOTE comes in for his share of criticism. Mr. Headlam is sarcastic on the editor of the *Freethinker* for saying at the Fabian Conference that it was bad policy to sneer at people with whom you disagree. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Foote said nothing of the kind. What he did say was that it was bad policy to sneer at people you were trying to convert. This is quite consistent with our calling certain clergymen "sky-pilots and pulpit-bangers." We do not try to convert these gentry for many reasons, the chief being that the attempt would be useless. They have too many inducements to stay where they are and preach "the old, old story."

MR. HEADLAM does not believe in sneering. Yet he calls appealing from the editor of the *Freethinker* to the Mr. Foote of the South Place Conference appealing from Philip drunk to Philip sober. Evidently Mr. Headlam does not want to convert us. Still, he gives us this counsel: "If Mr. Foote would but take his own advice—drop his perpetual sneering at the Christian Church, Christian men, Christian books and creeds—and devote his splendid abilities to the advocacy of land nationalisation, the world would be all the better and Mr. Foote none the worse."



No doubt that is Mr. Headlam's honest opinion, but it is not ours. Freeing the world from superstition is a far more important work than agitating for any single political reform. We devote ourselves first of all to Freethought, as Mr. Headlam does to Christianity. Whatever time we have left we give to political and social reform, and after all it is not so little as Mr. Headlam imagines.

LET us close this matter with a sweet taste in the mouth. We thank Mr. Headlam for his vigorous censure of the attitude of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association towards Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill, and especially for nailing down again "the oft-exposed falsehood" that the *Freethinker* was prosecuted for indecency.

EARL SPENCER and Mr. Sexton both say that the Irish Catholics detest the very idea of persecution. Over in America, however, the Papists are not so particular. John Daley, who recently abjured Catholicism, tried to preach at Wilkesbarre, but he was attacked by a mob of three thousand of his old co-religionists, and the police had great difficulty in rescuing him.

NOTWITHSTANDING the enormous success of the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale as an infidel-slayer, his church is badly off for funds, and in a begging circular to the congregation and their friends he is "compelled to put the matter plainly."

At the Derby County Police Court, William Tomlinson of the 139 Corps of the Salvation Army was fined for assaulting a bailiff whom he threatened to cleave to the ground by the aid of the Holy Ghost and a thick stick. Perhaps William had received a private telephone from the Lord to act like Peter who smote off the ear of Malchus.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL maintains that in his address from end to end, there is not a sentence, a line, or a word which is not Gospel truth. We have no wish to quarrel with the comparison made by the noble Lord. There is in our opinion about as much truth in the marvellous address with which the Paddington electors are favored as in the Gospels, and as much in the Gospels as in the address.

RELIGIOUS tragedies seem pretty frequent in the United States. Margaret Donovan, of Lincoln County, W. Va., furnishes the latest example. She cut the throats of her three daughters and then killed herself. In a written statement she says she had been called on by the Lord to make the sacrifice to satisfy divine wrath.

At the execution of Lee Barnes, at Dover, Arkansas, week before last, a religious meeting of remarkable fervor was held. The Rev. Mr. Jolly was upon the scaffold, and, together with some thirty more spectators, sang, "What a friend we have in Jesus," Barnes joining fervently in the singing. Afterwards Barnes made a speech confessing his crime, and saying he could now meet his God in peace. Then "Jesus paid it all" was sung, and Barnes went around to each one on the scaffold and embraced them, saying, "Meet me in heaven." Mr. Jolly then prayed, breaking down in the middle of it, and, clapping his hands together, shouted, "Hallelujah! bless the Lord!" Barnes responded with a loud "Amen!" He was then hanged. His crime was the most atrocious murder ever committed in the county.—*Truth-seeker*.

BISHOP TURNER, one of the negro Methodists of the United States, says that the white man's clever inventions for using electricity carry the "subjection of God's agent" too far. "This," the inspired bishop continues, "has already changed the meteorology of our country. Look at the floods, hurricanes, cyclones, and other atmospheric disturbances taking place in the heavens and upon the earth. I predict that the unbalancing of the air currents, which electric lights are causing, will in a few years, if they increase in numbers as fast as in the past five years, cause whole cities to be blown away at a time, and floods unlike any save Noah's."

AMONG the worshippers at Pennington Church, Lancashire, a furious contest has arisen between those who desire to sing "Amen" at the close of all the hymns, and others who have conscientious objections to that addition. The pro-amenites persist in singing the "Amens," while the anti-amen party promptly sit down as soon as the last word of the hymn has been sung.

"'Tis strange there should such difference be  
Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee."

Christians have often ridiculed the Pagan factions of the Prasini and Veneti, founded upon the light-blue and sea-green liveries of the race chariot-drivers. Yet the worst feuds of these factions arose when Christianity had triumphed and religious zeal became mixed with the spirit of party. Nothing like the conflicts between the Homocouians and the Homocousians was known before the triumph of Christianity.

SOME fanatic is throwing away his money in long advertisements in the *Standard* addressed to Protestants, asking them if they will allow God's England to be trampled in the dust, and to Roman

Catholics, imploring them to read sundry portions of the Bible. An address to all Christians follows, in which they are exhorted to "pray earnestly night and day for your Queen and country, and that God may be with us in this our trial. Only constant, earnest and united prayer can save us from revolution and civil war. Read Jonah iii., Dan. ix., Jer. xvii., Heb. ii., xii."

A WRITER in the *Christian World* declares there are far too many ministers; we presume in the Congregational body. He declares that the proportion of supply to demand cannot be less than five to two, and suggests that at least three of the colleges should be permanently discontinued, under the guise of amalgamation, and for several years no applicants should be admitted to the remainder except after a very stringent literary test, which would reduce their present numbers by half. We would suggest in addition that the unemployed sky-pilots should take off their white chokers and buckle to some honest secular employment.

AN English Church Conference has been held at Paris, under the presidency of Bishop Titcombe. The general tone of the conference was to the effect that Protestants and Catholics must cease to quarrel, and unite against the common foe—infidelity. Perhaps the same lesson may be learnt here, when, as in France, it comes too late.

THE *Church Times* is very wrath with those who celebrate the Lord's Supper at supper-time. It says they will not deny themselves a single half-hour of Sunday sloth, but devote to the Master just the fag-end of his day. Communion should always be taken in the morning before breakfast, otherwise the most expert physiologist will be unable to detect any difference between the body and blood of the Lord and the other contents of the stomach.

SPURGEON was so lame last Sunday that he was scarcely able to walk down the steps to the platform. His old complaint had returned, and it effectually prevented him preaching in the evening. Spurgeon evidently lacks faith and doesn't pray enough. Surely the Lord can cure the gout?

THE *Christian Herald* gives its 270,000 readers a calendar of the alleged prophecies of Daniel that are to be fulfilled before the close of the present century. In 1895-6 there is to be the "Advent of Christ 'in the air' to raise deceased Christians and translate alive 144,000 watchful living Christians to meet him in the air." In 1897-8 Napoleon, as "emperor of the ten kings of the ten kingdoms," will carry out "his massacre of millions of Christians for refusing to worship him." In 1900-1 there will be the "descent of Christ on earth to destroy Antichrist, bind Satan, and reign personally for 1,000 years over the converted remnant of mankind, who will increase and multiply throughout the earth in great prosperity for 1,000 years." The Rev. M. Baxter, who as editor of the *Christian Herald* is always harping on these prophecies, might surely find something more practical to dilate upon in the nineteenth century. Perhaps in his eyes, however, nothing is more practical than exploiting the almost inexhaustible mine of human folly and credulity.

FATHER ANDERDON, a Jesuit priest, has been lecturing in Manchester on some "Points of History." He has the hardihood to deal with the Inquisition, which he defends by comparing it with atrocities committed by Protestants. Thus he contends that most of the victims of the Inquisitions were only burned in effigy, whereas in some Protestant districts thousands were burned alive for witchcraft. Again, he says that the Inquisitors were only allowed to torture once, whereas "Father Southwell was ten times stretched upon the rack." Father Anderdon does not mention that the persecution of witches was incited by Papal bulls before Protestantism was known (see *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 214), or that while the Inquisitors had an hypocritical rule of only applying torture once, the usual practice was to suspend and resume the one application, which might thus extend over many days, or even weeks.

THE *Rock* reprints a passage showing that light furnishes "a most remarkable illustration of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity." The three primary colors composing ordinary (white) light are given as red, yellow and blue, which view is exploded, green being ascertained to be the primary color, while yellow consists of red light plus green light. "This unity of light," says the *Rock*, "is divided into the trinity of colors. Although one and the same, neither can exist without the other: the three are one, the one is three. Thus we have a unity in trinity, and a trinity in unity, exemplified in light itself; and 'God is light.'" This is as childishly ridiculous as the scientific views put forth are antiquated and fallacious. Each kind of light is as perfectly capable of independent existence as are the brandy and the water and the sugar of a clergyman's "night-cap." If red light cannot exist by itself it could never be visible unless it were mixed with the other colors—that is unless it was white. Similarly the other colors could never be seen alone, and white would be the only color. Which, as Euclid sarcastically observes, is absurd—as absurd in fact as the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, which it so capitally illustrates. Yet the *Rock* thinks that this rubbish "ought to confirm the faithful, convince the doubtful, and overthrow the sophistry of the unbeliever."



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 4, Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, Rochdale: at 11 "An Hour in Heaven;" at 3, "Who made God?" at 6.30, "An Hour in Hell."

July 11, Milton Hall, London.

AUGUST 8, West Hartlepool; 15, Milton Hall; 17, Walworth; 22, and 29, Hall of Science, London.

SEPT. 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

OCT. 10, Birmingham.

## CORRESPONDENTS

- LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.
- W. CABELL.—As a dogmatic system, Christianity depends upon Judaism. If Jesus was not the prophesied Messiah, his claims to be the Christ are baseless. If there was no Fall there was no need of an atoning Savior. Robert Taylor looked on Christianity as an allegorical system independent of Judaism. There is evidence from the Talmud that the Jews of the age of Jesus believed in the transmigration of souls, nor does the answer of Jesus to his disciples in respect to the man born blind discountenance the belief. It only says that in this special case the man was born blind that the works of God should be made manifest in him. On the other hand the declaration of Jesus that John the Baptist was Elias (Matt. xi, 14) favors the belief.
- L. HILL.—A little out of our way, and we don't want to stir up any unnecessary ill-feeling.
- A. SWINNEY thanks Mr. Foote on behalf of the Committee of the Ball's Pond Branch of the N. S. S., for his lecture on Kingsland Green last Sunday morning, which is expected to be productive of much good.
- J. WIDDICOMBE notices that all the political parties in the present crisis talk as though God Almighty were on their side, and asks whether those who are beaten will acknowledge that the Lord is with their opponents. Our correspondent adds: "As Jesus Christ is contributing articles to the *Freethinker*, he may be able to inform your readers—before the election—which side his dad is on."
- T. JARVIS desires to draw our readers' attention to two lectures by Mr. Robert Forder on Tunbridge Wells Common to-day (July 4). Any London friends taking a trip down will be heartily welcomed.
- J. LIVINGSTONE writes: "Coal-making is one of the best articles that ever appeared in the *Freethinker*. Keep up this style." Easier said than done. The Devil is taking his turn at the weather, and ninety degrees in a city office is a bad tonic for the brain. If the Lord sent us big cheques as he does Spurgeon, we might scuttle off to the sea-side, or even to Mentone. And really we don't see why the heavenly monarch should not do so. We ask few favors of him and we are by no means his worst enemy. We only say that if he exists he cannot be so much R. and F. as his "friends" represent.
- F. H. HART.—There is a complete edition of Herrick in Grosart's Collection of Poets. It is in two volumes and we think the price is 12s. Works on the other subject you mention are very rare and very dear. You would require to spend many pounds for a modicum of information.
- H. BRAYCESON states that Mr. Spicer, the Liberal candidate for South Islington, promises to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.
- L. J. WARREN wishes to know what has become of the Sunday Cricket Club.
- T. A. WILLIAMS.—We note with pleasure your useful letters in the *Bristol Mercury* in defence of Secularism. Mr. R. A. Proctor, the editor of *Knowledge*, is not a professor.
- F. FISHER wishes to correct a misstatement in our last number. Mr. Jeff, who opposed Mr. Foote on Clerkenwell Green, does not belong to the Christian Evidence Society. F. Fisher denies that Mr. Barnard said what we attributed to him; on the other hand our informant adheres to his statement.
- T. H. PINDER.—Thanks for the cuttings. Talmage is a religious mountebank, and the fact that so many thousands read his vaporings with avidity says much for Carlyle's summary estimate of most people.
- DORFOX.—The pamphlet has been out of print for years.
- SIMPLE SIMON.—The vagaries of the late King of Bavaria are matters for political paragraphs. On the whole mad kings are perhaps as useful as sane ones. If the people were less mad they would do without kings altogether.
- H. P. BOWDEN informs us that he heckled Mr. Baggallay, the Conservative candidate for Brixton, on the Blasphemy Laws, and asked him whether he would vote for their repeal or else put them in force against every book, pamphlet, or paper that clashes with the Bible. Mr. Baggallay took care not to read out the sarcastic question which was submitted to him in writing; he simply declared that he would maintain the Blasphemy Laws.
- A. S.—Cuttings are always welcome.
- A. BLOOMFIELD.—The first mention of the passage in Josephus was made by Eusebius in the fourth century. No M.S.S. are known of earlier date than the time of Eusebius, but Origen in the third century says of Josephus, "This writer did not believe in Christ," proving that the passage was not in existence in his time. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian, omit all reference to it, although they quote Josephus. In the second passage (Antiq.

xx, 9, 1.) there is no reference to the crucifixion under Pilate. The words "who was called Christ" are probably interpolated—Josephus nowhere else uses the word Christ. We shall deal with the matter at length shortly, as we observe that the Christian Evidence lecturers still rely on a passage which De Quincey says "has long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatic." Meantime you can look up *Crimes of Christianity* p.p. 75, 76.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sheffield Weekly Echo—Leamington Advertiser—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Club and Institute Journal—North Cheshire Herald—Present Day—Christian Leader—Tyldesley Weekly Journal—Liberator—Boston Investigator—Church Reformer—Kentish Express.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MRS. BESANT'S rejoinder to Mr. Foote's review of her *Modern Socialism* appears in the July number of *Progress*, with a full reply from the editor's pen. We strongly advise every Freethinker to read the controversy. *Progress* also contains a graphic descriptive report of the recent Fabian Conference in London, at which the Socialists turned up in full force. Ample justice is done to the tussle between Mr. Bradlaugh and his old enemies, who promised him the first rope when the Social Revolution happens. Mr. Wheeler continues his Historical Sketches of Freethought in England, which are of the intensest interest to our party. Dr. Aveling writes on Tennyson's *Becket*.

THERE was a very large audience on Kingsland Green last Sunday morning to hear Mr. Foote's open-air lecture. A great many appeared to be Freethinkers or sympathisers with Freethought, but there was a good sprinkling of Christians. At the rear of the crowd was a cabstand, and the cabbies seemed to take an intelligent interest in the proceedings. On the left of the big Secular meeting was a Christian one, where five minutes' talking and five minutes' singing followed each other in constant succession. On the right was another little Christian meeting, where the speakers seemed to be doing nothing else than advertising the *Freethinker*. Our readers will, therefore, not be surprised to learn that there was a first-rate sale of Secular literature.

MR. FOOTE'S opponents were two: Mr. Offen, who is known to many North London Freethinkers, and a Mr. Kemp, who flourished his arms very energetically in the meeting, but had remarkably little to say when he mounted the rostrum. A vote of thanks to the lecturer was cordially seconded by Mr. Offen, and the crowd quietly dispersed. The meeting, which lasted over an hour and a half, was more than orderly—it was good tempered.

DESPITE the exceedingly fine weather, Mr. Foote had a good audience at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall in the evening. The lecture was heartily relished, and the cheering at the end was most enthusiastic. Before leaving the platform Mr. Foote had the pleasure of presenting a testimonial to Mr. Colville on behalf of the Branch. It consisted of a handsomely bound copy of Buckle's *Civilisation* and an illuminated address. Mr. Colville is a very modest hard worker for the Freethought cause, and we hope he will live long to promote its success.

THE Rev. C. E. Escreet, M.A., Vicar of St. Andrew, Stockwell is a bold man, and has sent in the following notice of motion at the forthcoming Diocesan Conference: "That inasmuch as the present penalties for Blasphemy (i.) cannot protect God's honor, (ii.) fall on the most ignorant and less guilty, (iii.) afford a barrier to spiritual influence (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal): Therefore this Conference heartily supports Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill, etc." We shall watch the result with interest but do not expect Mr. Escreet will find much support among his fellow-clergymen.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY will deliver two open-air lectures on the beach at Hastings to-day (July 4). Morning, at 11, near the fish-market; subject, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise"; evening, at 7, opposite Caroline Place, "The Kingdom of Heaven."

MR. A. B. MOSS asked Sir William Gordon, the Liberal candidate for Rotherhithe, whether he would vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. He answered as follows:—"I have not read the Blasphemy Laws, and therefore do not know exactly what they are, but I know that they are in opposition to the free expression of one set of opinions, and as I think there should be no such restriction I am in favor of their repeal." Every candidate should be asked the same question. In many cases a similar answer to Sir William Gordon's will be returned.

OUR American contemporary the *Truthseeker* continues to reproduce our old Comic Bible Sketches. Its latest "borrow" is the picture of Samson carrying Temple Bar.

"WHAT a pity it isn't next door," said some pious folk in the crowd on Clerkenwell Green last Saturday evening, as they watched the fire in the upper stories of the house on the left of our "blasphemy factory." Aye, what a pity! We suppose the Lord sent an angel to commit arson at 14 Clerkenwell Green, and the heavenly messenger went to 14A in mistake.



## THE ABOLITION OF CHRISTIANITY.

UNDER the above heading, Dr. Littledale, the editor of the *Church Times*, treats his readers to a leading article based upon Swift's curious work, entitled *An Argument to prove that the Abolition of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be Attended with some Inconvenience, and perhaps not Produce those Many Good Effects proposed thereby*. The full sarcasm of some of the witty Dean's remarks seems to have escaped the notice of Dr. Littledale, or he would hardly have thought it a good card to play against "the Liberationist plea for Church robbery." Satire is a two-edged sword, and the pamphlet in question is a proof that the vivid mind of the author of the *Tale of a Tub* often corruscated in a fashion as dangerous to friends as to foes. The essay against abolishing Christianity was written in 1708, and, like most of Swift's pamphlets, had relation to the politics of the time. Its immediate occasion was the proposal to abolish the Sacramental Test Act. The boasted Toleration Act of 1693 only exempted certain of the dissenting bodies from subscribing to certain of the Thirty-Nine Articles. Freethinkers and Romanists remained un-tolerated. In the reign of Queen Anne even this little liberty was sought to be nullified by the Occasional Conformity Bill, against which Defoe published his celebrated squib, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. All the Non-conformists desired the repeal of the Act passed in the thirteenth year of Charles II., which prescribed that every schoolmaster should conform to the Church of England. The High Church party raised the cry of "The Church in Danger," and Swift had the hardihood to hint that the proposal was equivalent to the abolition of Christianity. One can but admire his audacity, considering the recent passing of the Blasphemy Act of 1698, which condemned not only Atheists and Deists, but even Unitarians, to the severest penalties for the expression of their opinions.

With exquisite humor, Swift pretends that he is humbly leading a forlorn hope in arguing against the abolition of Christianity at a juncture when all parties seem so unanimously determined on the point.

"I hope (he says) no reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used in primitive times (if we may believe the authors of those ages) to have an influence upon men's beliefs and actions. To offer at the restoring of that, would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy at one blow all the wit and half the learning of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences with the professors of them; in short to turn our courts, exchanges and shops into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, when he advises the Romans all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of a cure for the corruption of their manners."

Some will think the Dean was writing here not in sarcasm, but in sober truth. A large portion of the satire falls on the head of the nominal Christians, for whom Swift pretends to be arguing. Thus he contends it is very convenient that persons should be allowed a God to revile or renounce, otherwise they may speak evil of dignitaries, abuse the Government, and reflect upon the Ministry. How different were the revenues of the Church in that day may be judged from his argument that although to disendow the Church might suffice to maintain two hundred young gentlemen of wit, pleasure, and freethinking, who might be an ornament to the court and town, this is counterbalanced by the virtues arising from the poverty of the parsons.

"Now here are ten thousand persons reduced, by the wise Regulations of Henry VIII., to the necessity of a low diet, and moderate exercise, who are the only great restorers of our breed, without which the nation would in an age or two become one great hospital."

The notion of the parsons being restorers of our breed is irony with a vengeance. Little, Swift contends, will be gained by the abolition of Sunday, for—

"Is not that the chief day for traders to sum up the accounts of the week, and for lawyers to prepare their briefs? But I would fain know how it can be pretended that the churches are misapplied? Where are more appointments and rendezvous of gallantry? Where more care to appear in the foremost box, with greater advantage of dress? Where more meetings for business? Where more bargains driven of all sorts? And where more conveniences or incitements to sleep?"

It is evident Swift's satire cuts both ways. Two obvious

suggestions arise in the mind of the modern reader of his essay. First, how ready the clergy, from Swift to Littledale, have been to treat any interference with their State endowed privileges as equivalent to the destruction of all religion. Next, that the complete abolition of Christianity would after all not make much difference except to the persons whose "craft" it is to teach it. It is true some might feel a sentimental grievance at losing such consoling doctrines as those of original sin and eternal torment; but, like children when they learn there are no fairies or goblins, they would soon get over their disappointment, learning that the facts of life were exactly the same as before. On the other hand, the advantage would be palpable; for the thought, devotion and riches that have been wasted on sky politics and unrealities would be turned in the direction of secular improvement. J. M. WHEELER.

## LETTERS FROM CHRIST.

## JESUS ON HIS LAST "STARRING" TOUR.

ONE experience of my travels with mother I can't help relating I think it may be of interest to your readers, helping to dis-abuse some peoples' minds of that egotistical notion that their twenty donkey-power earth is the only planet needing salvation. It will show them what hard work mother has to perform—of course in conjunction with yours truly—especially if they'll only look up of a clear night and see the countless worlds, some colossal, whilst others, that the telescope cannot reach, are infinitesimally smaller than the earth you live in. We had accepted an engagement to visit some planets and go through the same old game, having finished our performance to the entire satisfaction of the inhabitants. We thought we would utilise our home-going by taking some of the one-horse planets on our return; so, cocking our weather eyes obliquely, we noticed a star that seemed suitable, and, with great labor, made for it. It was about the size of your Ceres or Pallas. We arrived, landed at what we took to be the polar regions, determining to travel westward, hoping to pass into the tropical or temperate zone. So, I keeping in the rear, mother went on first to make preparations, interview the inhabitants, get on good terms with the priesthood and find another Joe. When we had nearly traversed this small world, we found it a planet that had had its day, and, having got out of its true orbit from its central sun, had become refrigerated. And very beautiful it was; everything in order, but in a state of congelation. The trees were exceedingly graceful, with their leaves intact, but all crystallised; the very animals delicately preserved, some in the act of springing on their prey; the cultivated portions of the planet's surface showing the ploughmen standing with their ploughs, as they had perhaps stood for thousands of years, their faithful dogs looking into their silent faces with the sad ghost of a greeting that had not passed away with the silent years of the bye-gone centuries. The first city we entered was a city of strange surprises, so silent and yet so awful in its silence, the inhabitants having been suddenly arrested in the full bustle of their daily avocations—the beggars still sitting on the cathedral steps, with their false diseases still exhibited to excite the pity that had been dead for so long, and the people appearing to gaze with a stony stare of abhorrence and with arrested footsteps as they seemed to be about entering the portals. The only thing that took off some of the freshness of these quiet, stationary, but perfectly natural figures, was the accumulated meteoric dust that had collected around and on them. We went into the church and saw the poor mummers of priests exactly in the same attitude as you earthmen see your priests to-day—candles on the altar that had long ago gone out, incense in the act of being waved that had long ago lost its sweet smell, the poor dupes of human cattle still on their knees, in the act of what they considered devotion to their deity. My thoughts naturally went back to the curious idea of candles on the altar, as if the favor of any God could be won by a certain quantity of "long sixes" or "middling eights." If they thought their deity's pleasure consisted in burning tallow, why not have frequent conflagrations of tallow-chandlers' shops? The human liking for roast sucking-pig was found out by accidental fires (*vide* Charles Lamb); it's therefore a wonder no god has yet caused tallow-chandlers' fires to break out, if he has such a *penchant* for burning fat. If it's light he likes, he would no doubt have caused the priests to fit up a dynamo, with the latest electric appliances.

This silent and dead city caused mother to be very sad, until I cheered her up by showing her a refrigerated tub-thumper with his knee-boots on, his hands on a dear sister whom he had partially immersed, both being frozen in the act, he looking so silly in this senseless observance, with the whites of his eyes turned up like a consumptive "nigger," and with such a ludicrously solemn look that only a preacher can ape. I felt his cheek to see if he had his tongue in it. There was in the streets a frozen religious procession, with brazen instruments, tambourines and large drums, the performers with distended cheeks and extended arms, having the appearance of a mad Salvation Army going to a congress at some hall or meeting-house, no doubt to stir up the flagging emotionalism of the elect: "filthy lucre," I suppose, not coming into the General's coffers quickly enough, or in



sufficient abundance to provide for the growing wants of his numerous offspring quite so comfortably as they had been provided for in the past. I learnt this by letters of complaint found in the refrigerated leader's pocket. What a consolation to think and know they were so quiet, so inanimate, and rendered so harmless; the very horses in the streets, although arrested so suddenly, seeming to wear a self-satisfied look, no doubt instinct telling them that this religion of noise and turmoil would no more trouble them and would no more cause peace-loving bipeds to wish for the power to make these mad religionists keep severely to their own gospel-shops, where they could indulge to the top of their bent their insane howlings and unfeminine masquerading. The saddest sight was a highly-paid Church official in balloon sleeves of fine white lawn, holding a small speck of humanity over a basin, with evident signs of dislike on the sweet young face, whilst he was about to perform some mummery over it, to the evident satisfaction of a rather numerous christening party. This official was no doubt well paid for his tomfoolery, by his sleek and asinine looks and his air of superiority. Still, it was very sad to see this silent tribute to superstition in a city that had evident signs of culture and whose books in the public library showed that a race of men had arisen who were far advanced in philosophic and scientific learning; but I found their thoughts, having been published in high-priced volumes, had not completely reached the seething undergrowth of this city's civilisation. Before leaving this frozen planet, we paid a visit to a cemetery, where two sets of performers had been arrested in the act of burying man and wife, of different religious denominations, being divided from each other by a wire fence, and the looks of fury with which each party was eyeing the other had not died out with the lapse of years. There had been two consecrations of the same ground, by two opposition bishops, and some of the bystanders were looking with pity over the railings at the others, no doubt having thought what a sad thing it was that a few inches of ground should condemn the dear departed to an eternity of such excessively tropical weather. With sad steps we prepared to leave this planet, thinking of the pettiness of human nature, when sentient beings could so waste their time, when alive, over such insane forms and ceremonies, evidently made by an interested priesthood to gull their sheep-like followers.

## REVIEWS.

*The Socialist*. No. I. July. Published at 185 Fleet Street.—There are about enough Socialists to form one half of a fair Society. Yet they are divided into several, each with its true faith and its infallible organ. Society on society arises, and the cry is, Still they come. The latest is the Socialist Union, and the *Socialist* is its mouthpiece. We cannot speak highly of the contents.

*Election Lyrics*. By GERALD MASSEY. Burns, London.—Mr. Massey is a thorough-going Home Ruler and he has written some occasional verses for the present political crisis. The first is a glorification of the Grand Old Man and the last a satire on the Primrose Dame. The lyrics are vigorously written but of course Mr. Massey takes all a poet's license to ignore the practical difficulties of the Irish problem. The Ministerialists could not do better than circulate Mr. Massey's songs wholesale.

*The Present Day*. July 1886.—In new hands this twopenny monthly presents an improved appearance. There is a new cover and fresh writers. In the number before us, Mrs. Ashton Dilke contributes an able paper on Women's Work and the Labor Market. Mr. Robertson makes a thoughtful "Radical's protest" in regard to Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule, which we hope will be perused by the usual readers of Mr. Robertson's writings. Mrs. C. M. Wilson writes on the Principles and Aims of Anarchists, and the editor deals with Liberty, Persecution and Social Purity Societies.

*Our Corner*. July. Freethought Publishing Company.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with a forcible paper on the political crisis; marred, however, by a vain attempt to eliminate Mr. Chamberlain as a factor, and an overstrained eulogy of Mr. Gladstone as "a giant amongst the political lilliputians arrayed against him." We were not aware that John Bright, Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Trevelyan, the Marquis of Hartington, and Mr. Goschen are lilliputians; nor is the Marquis of Salisbury a little man though a Tory. May we also suggest that, while it might do for an election speech, it is *saugrenu* to assert in a magazine that the Radicals who voted against the second reading of Mr. Gladstone's bill should join the Tories for good. A writer signing himself R. B. H. contributes a learned and useful article on the Right to Use the Land, and Mr. John Robertson begins a careful and searching essay on Rent. Mrs. Besant, who has apparently been doing the round of the London Music Halls, gives a vivid account of her experiences; not without the regulation Socialist tirade against the poor Middle Classes, whose art, like their morals, "is a whited sepulchre filled with all uncleanness." The only other article calling for notice is Laurence Small's on "Other Worlds," which is scientific and also bright.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### WAS PAUL INSANE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—“Lucianus” is perfectly correct in stating a little attention will prove there is much to be said in favor of his theory that Paul was insane, but a proper amount of attention would prove there is much more to be said against the theory. If “Lucianus” had read the Greek text of 2 Cor. v., 13, he would have seen that a more accurate translation of this passage would have been “For whether we be elated it is to God, or whether we be sober it is for your cause.” The context shows that Paul was not exulting in his infirmity, but in the hope of immortal glory.

“Lucianus” seems to have no clear idea of the different forms of mental disease, but mixes up insanity, lunacy and dementia; however, on the whole, he seems to mean that Paul was lunatic. Now lunacy arises after birth. At what period then did Paul become lunatic? While he was yet a persecutor of Christians, or at his conversion or after? If at his conversion, the sunstroke produced three things: a change of religion, arguments in favor of that change, and lunacy. No similar case is on record, but the credulity of unbelief appears to be unbounded. The remark that Levi, being still potentially in the loins of Abraham, may in a certain sense be said to have paid tithes to Melchisedek, does not seem to us half crazy. And the description of Melchisedek as being without father or mother, etc., is simply an adoption of the brief account given of him in the Old Testament, by which in a sense, though not in fact, he was, as far as we are concerned, without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.

BOMBASTES.

### A FUNERAL POEM.

THE *Boston Sunday Herald* says that at a Baltimore man's funeral, lately, the sole service consisted of the reading of this poem, written by himself about a fortnight before his death:

“When o'er my cold and lifeless clay  
The parting words of love are said  
And friends and kindred meet to pay  
Their last fond tribute to the dead,  
Let no stern priest, with solemn drone,  
A funeral liturgy intone,  
Whose creed is foreign to my own.

Let not a word be whispered there  
In pity for my unbelief,  
Of sorrow that I could not share  
The views that give their souls relief.  
My faith to me is no less dear—  
No less convincing and sincere  
Than theirs, so rigid and austere.

Let not stale words of church-born song  
Float out upon the silent air,  
To prove by implication wrong  
The soul of him then lying there.  
Why should such words be glibly sung  
O'er one whose honest living tongue  
Such empty phrases never rung?

But rather, let the faithful few  
Whose hearts are knit so close to mine,  
That they with time the dearer grew,  
Assemble at the day's decline;  
And while the golden sunbeams fall  
In floods of light upon my pall,  
Let them in softened tones recall

Some tender memory of the dead—  
Some virtuous act, some words of power,  
Which I, perchance, have done or said,  
By loved ones treasured to that hour;  
Recount the deeds which I admired,  
The motive which my soul inspired,  
The hope by which my heart was fired.

OBITUARY.—On the 28th June, 1886, at 15 Grape Street, Hunslet, Leeds, William Smith, for many years agent for the sale of Freethought literature in Leeds, breathed his last. Mr. Smith was well-known for his fearless advocacy of Secularist principles. The uprightness and purity of his life did not protect him from suffering for his conscientious convictions. As far back as fifty years ago, Mr. Smith embraced temperance principles and maintained these views by his practice until his death. Some few years after his first adhesion to teetotalism he relinquished the Christian superstition, and during a long and painful illness he gave proof that religious belief is not necessary either for a moral life or a courageous death. His Secular burial at Woodhouse Hill Cemetery, on Sunday 27th, was made the occasion of a few remarks illustrative of the position of unbelievers with regard to the great problems of life and death.—J. GREEVES FISHER, Hon. Sec.



**PROFANE JOKES.**

It is said that Talmage can carry the imagination of his hearers up into the seventh heaven, but it is noticed that he never takes his eye off the collection plate.

First small boy: "Say, Johnnie, where are you in Sunday-school?" Second small boy: "Oh, we're in the middle of original sin." First small boy: "That ain't much; we're past redemption."

SISTER ANNE: "Now Ethel, be sure and pray God to make you a good girl." Ethel (praying): "Dear Dod, pleaths twy and make me a dood little dirl, and if at firth you don't thuthheed, why twy, twy, twy again."

VERIFYING THE TRUTH.—"You say that man is a vapor?" "Yes; so the Bible says." "Well, I'm downright glad to hear it: I am so." "Why do you say that?" "Because it backs up a remark I made to Parson Tibbs, just the other day." "What was that?" "I told him he was all gas."

"JOHN," said the grocer to his assistant, as they opened the store early Sunday morning; "the parson says it's wicked to do any unnecessary work on Sunday." "Yes sir." "Well, you needn't wet that sugar until tomorrow. It can lay over just as well; besides, it weighs a great deal more just after you wet it. I don't believe in breaking the Sabbath unnecessarily."

"You attend Sunday-school, do you?" inquired the Rev. Mr. Smith of Nellie; "then you must know a great deal about the Bible. Now, tell us something nice that's in the Bible here, can you?" "Yeth, thir. Sis hath thome dried leaves in it, a pieth of Aunt Jane's weddin' dreth, a pieth of my dreth, when I was a baby, thome hair, and Sis's fellow's picture."

Price Sixpence.

**PROGRESS**

A Monthly Magazine,

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE

The JULY NUMBER contains—

- Home Rule Prospects. By the Editor.
- The Lover's Return (A Poem) By B.V.
- "The Latest Apostle of Socialism." (A Rejoinder) By Annie Besant.
- Reply to Mrs Besant's Re oinder. By G. W. Foote
- Historical Sketches of Freethought in England. by J. M. Wheeler.
- Epictetus. By James Thomson (B.V.)
- Tennyson's "Becket." By Edward Aveling.
- The Fabian Conference. By W. Greethead.
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*Its Follies, Fallacies, and Impossibilities.*  
By W. P. BALL.

"A fair and well-written criticism of some of the 'fads' of 'Collectivism.'"—*Weekly Times*.  
"A vigorous and timely pamphlet."—*Weekly Dispatch*.

"Concise, lucid, and cleverly augmentative.... with a chivalrous bow to the lady till his plume touches the mane of his destrel."—*Secular Review*.

"A little book that should be in the hands of all who show any leaning towards the false Socialism which is rampant in England and in most other countries. The author has been at much pains to examine into and refute the chief fallacies of the Socialist League and its off-shoots and his concluding words convey a warning that it would be as well for the members of such organisations to take to heart. 'Society,' he says, 'will treat her (Mrs. Besant's) wild crusade against capital and liberty as a criminal madness whenever it ceases to be a foolish oke or a poetical dream.'"—*Literary World*.

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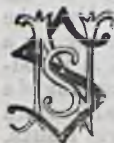
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