

seats in Plymouth Church are put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. Those who can pay the most have the best seats, and doubtless they expect a continuance of the same privilege in heaven. Ward Beecher's church is a Sunday asylum for the rich, and of course he preaches what they require: no hell, except now and then by way of flavor—no dogmas, except in a highly nebulous form—and a heaven extensive enough to hold at least all the people who can afford to sit within the sound of Beecher's voice.

According to his sister, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, his mission is "to present Jesus Christ, personally, as the friend and helper of humanity, Christ as God impersonate, eternally and by necessity of his nature helpful and remedial and restorative, the friend of each individual soul, and thus the friend of all society." Mrs. Stowe's delightfully vague verbiage is quite in keeping with her brother's sermons. It would puzzle the Devil himself, who must have listened to a lot of preachers in his time, to tell what Beecher is really driving at. Whether Christ is actually God in the orthodox sense of the words, whether the Bible is inspired in the only intelligible meaning of the term, whether the miracles of the Old and New Testament ever happened, whether the Mosaic cosmogony is or is not reconcilable with science, whether those who believe will be saved and those who disbelieve be damned, or whether every honest man may find a private road to paradise; all these questions would perplex any man to answer in the light of Beecher's preaching. His policy is to hold with the hare and run with the hounds, to be just as orthodox and just as heterodox as suits the people he discourses to and is compatible with securing £10,000 a year.

The secret of Beecher's success lies partly in the fluent nature of his opinions, and partly in his physical vigor. No doubt he is eloquent, as that quality is understood in religious circles; no doubt he has a good measure of Yankee cuteness; and no doubt he has that kind of undisciplined impulsiveness which is so potent a charm in the pulpit. The latter quality, indeed, appears to run in the family. Mrs. Beecher Stowe's unspeakable "revelations" of Byron, professedly drawn from the lips of Lady Byron, and afterwards judiciously retailed to the public for a price, richly deserved all the torrents of irony and denunciation with which Mr. Swinburne has deluged them. Those also, who remember the pretty scandal in which Beecher's name was involved some years ago, will recollect that, whether he were innocent or guilty on the main issue, the whole moral atmosphere in which he confessedly lived was hectic and prurient. Beecher seems to have been extremely fond of hanging about the lady members of his congregation, especially when they happened to be pretty. His intentions were perfectly honorable, of course; and we do not for a moment insinuate that he tried to win the divine favor by emulating the man after God's own heart; yet at the same time we cannot help thinking that he was too prone to let Mrs. This and Mrs. That play the Mary Magdalene to his Jesus Christ.

Beecher is obviously an adept in advertising, and he must have found a man after his own heart in Joseph Parker. They have managed the business admirably, yet after all it strikes us that they have done it a little blasphemously. Beecher's first appearance was announced in this way—he was to offer a prayer after Parker's sermon; and a crowd rushed to see the American orator address a few words to the Almighty. The performance was so good that they paid their half-a-crown a head to see him—Beecher, not God—occupy the stage alone. According to report, however, the Exeter Hall meeting fell rather flat. Beecher lectured on the Common People, but as the price was high, the common people were not there. On the whole, we judge that Beecher has come here to raise the wind. There is no offence in this, especially when a man has to depend on a paltry income of £10,000 a year; but why need it be veiled and garnished with all sorts of pious pretences?

G. W. FOOTE.

TRANSMIGRATION.

THE doctrine of the transmigration of souls is one which has had a powerful influence upon religion in the past and which has affected Christianity much more profoundly than its professors are usually aware. In its primitive aspect the belief is a simple deduction from savage ideas of the nature of the soul. Soul and life are identified with breath; and when life passes from one person it is supposed to be ready to enter into some other.* Mr. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* has collected many instances. Thus the North American Indians of the Algonquin district, when little children died would bury them by the wayside, that their souls might enter mothers passing by and so be born again. In North West America, among the Tacullia, the medicine man effects direct transfusion of soul by putting his hands on the breast of the dying or dead. Then holding them over the head of a relative he blows through them. The next child born to the recipient of the departed soul is supposed to be animated by it and takes the name and rank of the deceased.

Among the aborigines of Australia it was a common belief that their souls at death entered into the bodies of white men. "Black fellow tumble down, jump up white fellow." Professor Huxley in his papers on the "Evolution of Theology," relates how he and a friend were treated with great consideration by a savage who took his friend for the ghost, or rather, the reincarnation of a relative.

The attempt to account for the phenomena of animal life and the fancied and real resemblance of animals to men, founded, as we now know, on their common descent, led to the application of the savage soul-theory to the animal world. Animals, in fact, seem to have been among man's earliest gods. There can be little doubt that animal worship among the Egyptians and others was connected with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. This doctrine, indeed, seems to have been world-wide. It was held by Egyptians, Assyrians, Hindus, Chinese, Persians and Pythagoreans. The Jews brought it with them from Babylon.

Josephus, speaking of his own sect, the Pharisees, says: "They say that all souls are incorruptible; but that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies—but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment."† The resurrection of the body with them was not the reinstatement of the old, but the birth of a new one. In the apocryphal book, the Wisdom of Solomon (viii., 20), the doctrine is alluded to—"being good, I came into a body undefiled." The Rabbins distinguish two kinds of metempsychosis—viz., "Gilgul Neshamoth," or cycle of souls, which is a series of single transmigrations, each lasting till death; and "Ibbur," which is where one soul occupies several bodies, changing its residence at pleasure, or where several souls occupy one body.‡ The latter kind is illustrated by the examples of demoniacal possession abounding in the gospels. The demons were supposed to be the souls of deceased wicked men. Sometimes they are represented as solitary, and flitting from one victim to another; sometimes they swarm in the same person, as the seven in Miss Mary Magdalene.

Transmigration is the doctrine of the Jewish Kabbalah, as of all the ancient mysteries. "All souls," says the Zohar, or Book of Light, "are subject to the trials of transmigration." Before returning to God, they must first develop all the perfection, the germ of which is planted within them. How the passage from one life to another is made, and why there is no remembrance of pre-existing states, are admitted to be difficulties. It was, however, supposed that by holiness one could attain a position wherein he could review all his past lives. Upon attaining Buddhahood, Gautama saw the whole series of his repeated births. Pythagoras recognised the shield which he had worn more than five hundred years before as Euphorbus, at the siege of Troy. Jamblichus says of him: "He reminded many of his familiars, by most clear and evident indications, of the former life which their soul lived before it was bound to the body." In the life of Apollonius of

* See *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 3.

† *Wars of the Jews*, bk. ii., chap. 8. This does not exactly agree with what Paul says of the Jews: "They themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts xxiv., 15).

‡ W. R. Alger, *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, pt. v., chap. 2.

NAPOLÉON once entered a cathedral and saw twelve silver statues. "What are these?" said the Emperor. "The twelve apostles," was the reply. "Well," said he, "take them down, melt them, and coin them into money, and let them go about doing good as their Master did." Whereupon they were converted to the despot's service and went about in the shape of fire and sword doing good as their Master did.

Tyana, by Philostratus, numerous instances are told of his recognition of persons he had known in preceding lives. Similarly, Jesus declares, "Before Abraham was, I am," and speaks of the glory which he had before terrestrial existence began.

The popular Jewish superstition on the subject is illustrated by Herod the Tetrarch, who, when he heard of the fame of Jesus, said: "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him" (Matt. xiv., 2).

There are many intimations of the belief in the New Testament. The disciples of Jesus asked him, "Master who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind," and although Jesus with his usual evasiveness only answers the question in its special aspect and not as a general theory, it is clear the doctrine was familiar to the disciples. Jesus indeed did not rebuke it when he asked them "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" "And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matthew xvi., 14). He blessed Peter for declaring him to be the Messiah. According to the Rabbins the Messiah was the reincarnated David. If the popular belief was wrong, why did not Jesus correct it?

In emphatically declaring that John the Baptist was Elijah (Matthew xi., 14; xvii., 12), Jesus indeed directly countenanced this doctrine, and in his discourse with Nicodemus he teaches "ye must be born again," and naturally expresses surprise that he, a master of Israel, or instructed Rabbi, knew not these things. Indeed the stupid questions ascribed to Rabbi Nicodemus, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" give a sufficient proof that the evangelist did not scruple to put words into the mouths of the characters of his historical romance.

It seems probable that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body is but an offshoot of this belief in reincarnation, having sprung from the difficulty of realizing how soul can manifest itself save in some bodily form. The resurrection was not necessarily that of the old body, but that of a new one determined by the old. Clement of Rome, the earliest Christian Apostolic father, proves the resurrection by the type of the phoenix, which he asserts, after living for five hundred years, dies, but from its putrefying flesh a worm breeds a new phoenix! This was the way in which the Christian evidences presented themselves during the first century.

Among the early Christians, relates Jerome, the doctrine of transmigration was kept as a tradition and an esoteric one, only communicated to a select few. It was the acknowledged belief of all the Gnostics. Valentinians, Basilideans, Cerinthians, Marcionites and Manicheans accepted it. Many of the acknowledged fathers of the Christian church espoused it—notably Origen. It was, however, condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 551, but revived by the pantheistic scholastics like Erigena. In our own country it has been defended by Henry More, Joseph Glanvill and Jacob Ilive, the last of whom was punished for blasphemy. On the Continent it was advocated by Lessing and Herder. In our own day it has been maintained by Serjeant Cox and Professors Knight and Bowen. The latter considers it superior to the doctrine of the sleep of the soul till Judgment Day; an immortality so long deferred being hardly different from annihilation. Hume considered the doctrine the only one worthy the attention of philosophy; and it must be confessed it has the merit of seeking to account for other animals than man, all of whom are simply left out of account by Christianity.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

The military and the police find it almost impossible to keep the Protestant and Catholic mobs at Belfast, from flying at each other's throats. Four men have been killed, a hundred constables have been injured, and many houses have been wrecked. In theory, religion softens animosities; in practice, it embitters them, and often creates them.

A MAN during one of the Belfast riots, was asked by a mob what his religion was. He didn't know whether his interrogators were Catholics or Protestants, but he looked at their weapons, their bludgeons, and their revolvers, surveyed all carefully, and answered—"Gentlemen, I am of the same opinion as that man there with the big axe."

THE *Church Times*, in an article on Reunion (July 16) says:—"Doctrinally, the Roman and the Anglican are much nearer to each other than either is to the Quaker, the Unitarian, the Swedenborgian, or the Salvationist, and thus there is adequate reason for trying to begin reunion with the one rather than with the others." The chief reason it sees against union with Rome is that the Pope requires unconditional surrender. This would never suit the majority of the Anglican body, although there are a few prepared to go over should their present endowments be interfered with by the State.

It is computed that the Church of England supports in round numbers about twenty-one thousand clergymen. The proclivities of these sky-pilots may be roughly classified as follows:—

High Church	{ Normal Type	Ritualists	4,000
Attitudinarians	{ Extreme "	Romanists	1,500
	{ Stagnant "	High and Dry	3,500
Low Church	{ Normal Type	Evangelical	2,500
Platitudinarians	{ Extreme "	Anti-Papists	1,000
	{ Stagnant "	Low and Slow	3,000
Broad Church	{ Normal Type	Reconcilers	2,000
	{ Extreme "	Rationalists	500
	{ Stagnant "	Indifferentists	3,000

Of course these sections often overlap. Many of the Broad Church are also Ritualists. Of the twenty-six bishops who sit in the House of Lords twenty, thanks mainly to Mr. Gladstone, belong to the High Church, including one Romanist, Bishop King; four to the Broad Church, and only two to the Low Church.

POPE LEO XIII is reported to have authoritatively condemned the practice of cremation. Possibly he may have fears for the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, should corpse-burning come into fashion.

"YES," said the spirit medium to our reporter, "the unbelievers and scoffers give us a good deal of trouble, but we manage to get to 'em somehow. The other evening a Warrington man stuck to it that we couldn't materialise the spirit of his deceased wife, but when I dropped a couple of tom-cats through the top of the cabinet on his bald head it converted him too quick."

WE are informed that the Salisbury police are threatening newsgagents who sell the *Freethinker*. The result is that, with one exception, they now only supply it privately. The exception is Mr. W. H. Bast, Giant Street, who will be glad to receive orders.

THE Salisbury police must have a lot of spare time on their hands to be chivvying newsgagents in this way. The Blue Army is paid to keep the peace and to look after the criminal classes. If they fulfilled their duties properly, they would have less leisure than they seem to enjoy at present. We may also observe that they are not remarkable for literary accomplishments, and that it is an impudent absurdity on their part, to attempt to dictate what their employers shall or shall not read. Perhaps, however, the police are only playing the part of cats-paw in this case, the real offenders being the sky-pilots, who are naturally enraged at seeing the *Freethinker* so widely circulated.

THE *Nonconformist* says that many a ratepayer is beguiled into paying Church rates under the delusion that it is still a legal demand, which deception is fostered by the form of notice sent out by churchwardens. At St. Savior's, Southwark, they have had the cheek to request that a payment of a penny in the pound be made to the Church Fund. The *South London Press* remarks that unintelligent ratepayers will be led by the style and form of the circular sent to regard it as a legal demand which they are not at liberty to neglect.

THE blood-accusation against the Jews has revived again in Russia, and led to fresh riots and outrages against the chosen people. A boy was missing, and the cry was raised that the Jews had taken his blood to perform their secret ceremony. The *Jewish Chronicle* says that the local priest confirmed this report.

THE *Times* reports that sixty thousand Russian Jews having made application for an asylum in Spain, the Spanish Ministry have granted the permission. The religious papers are indignant, and denounce this as a national apostasy. The *Christian* finds great significance in the fact that when the Jewish sufferers appealed to General Drenteln for protection, he bade them "Go to Jerusalem"—or was it Jericho?

A CHRISTIAN journal published by the Religious Tract and Book Society, says that our Madras contemporary the *Thinker* was "lately on the point of stopping, when somebody in England furnished the means of carrying it on." The *Thinker* gives an emphatic denial to this. The Madras Secular Society publishes the journal, and has never received a penny from any place out of India and Burmah. It seems to come natural to Christians to employ falsehood when dealing with Freethinkers. What other weapon have they, in fact? Nothing is more fatal to Christianity than simple truth.

At the recent Temperance Conference, both Cardinal Manning and Archdeacon Farrar contrasted the drinking habits of Christian nations with the temperance of heathens. Brahmanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism, alike directly prohibit intoxication, whereas, Christians can always appeal to their Savior who made from twelve to eighteen firkins for guests already well-drunk, and who instituted wine-bibbing as the most solemn observance of his religion.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR went the length of saying that "for every Christian we made in India we had created a hundred drunkards," and in Nazareth, the birth-place of the second God Almighty, "whenever a drunkard was seen, the Mohammedans pointed the finger of scorn, saying 'He is a Christian.'" The Christians in Palestine have evidently not forgotten the marriage at Cana.

BISHOP TEMPLE, in his opening address to the British and Colonial Temperance Conference, illustrated the progress of the temperance movement by the fact that "thirty or forty years ago a bishop would not have been expected to appear on a temperance platform." Just so. The work of social, as of all other, reform is done in the first instance in spite of the Church, which is ready enough to take credit for the results of work done by others.

THE representative of the Good Templars from Cape Colony gave his testimony to the Conference that the Churches in Cape Colony did not countenance the temperance movement; indeed the leading ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church at the recent synod pointedly disapproved it.

It is asserted that M. Rubinstein has selected as the subject of his next opera the life of Christ. Why not? The pagan gods have often been put upon the stage by Christians, and the Christian Gods must expect to take their turn.

"WHOM the gods love die young." Sky-pilots, on the contrary, are remarkable for general longevity.

A CONGREGATION in a church a short distance from Liverpool on a recent Sunday found themselves in a rather novel predicament. The church had been "renovated," and a sermon of extra-parson power had been preached on the occasion. But when the ever-welcome "Finally, brethren," had been successfully got through, they found themselves glued—or rather varnished—to their seats. In vain did the preacher, when he realised the state of affairs, exhort his hearers to patience. The congregation got away at last, but they left behind them relics of the fray in the numerous pieces of broadcloth, tweed, West of England, and ladies' dress materials, which still obstinately adhered to the newly-varnished seats.

LIVERPOOL is threatened with an addition of 200 to its police force. To catch thieves? Oh, dear, no! But just to keep loving Christians from attacking each other. The elections have precipitated the disgraceful scenes which are too common at this season of the year, and recently the windows of a Roman Catholic chapel were broken by an Orange gang of rowdies. This did not occur at night, when the consumption of intoxicants might be assumed to be an important factor, but at five o'clock in the morning, and seems to imply deliberate and calculating outrage.

A FRIGHTFUL case of persecution has occurred at New Brompton, and has provoked "a sympathiser" into writing a letter to the *Chatham News* on the subject. It appears that the Rev. F. A. Adams performs in the New Mission Room, Stopford Road, Gillingham, twice every Sunday, and on each occasion his audience have to pass an Atheistic platform, from which Infidel lecturers carry on "a furious attack upon religion." This is bad enough, but worse remains; the lecturer's voice is sometimes heard in the Mission Room. We very much doubt this, but if it be true, we must congratulate the New Brompton Secularists on having a powerful open-air speaker. Our doubts on this point are strengthened by the fact that "a sympathiser" does not call for "any violent interference," which he certainly would do if there were a ghost of a chance of success, but simply asks true believers in the neighborhood to provide the Rev. F. A. Adams with the funds for erecting his contemplated church, the walls of which, we suppose, like the heads of the congregation, will be thick enough to keep out the sound of Infidel voices.

SILVERDALE is a growing little watering-place at the head of Morecambe Bay, and the residents have speculated in a new gospel-shop, which the Bishop of Manchester was brought over to consecrate. We do not know what particular virtue he imparted to the edifice, and we dare say as much could be said by the architect, the contractor, and the insurance agent. But Dr. Moorhouse went through his mummery, and doubtless took his fee. Query, Is the amount of consecration proportioned to the fee, or is the fee proportioned to the consecration? and does a big church require more of the Holy Ghost than a little one?

ANOTHER query: If God is everywhere, and the Holy Ghost is a part of God, was not the Holy Ghost inside that church before the Bishop brought some of him over from Manchester?

AFTER the consecration there was a luncheon, and Dr. Moorhouse replied to the toast of "the bishop and clergy." We are unable to judge from the report in what liquor the toast was drunk, although we feel quite sure it was something very different from fourpenny ale. The Bishop's speech was as ingenuous as might be expected from his profession. He said that the clergy should be neutral in politics, yet at the same time he had "the greatest difficulty in refraining from applause" on hearing of Jemmy Lowther's success in a neighboring county. His lordship wound up by informing his auditors, who probably wanted little proof of the assertion, that "Infidelity was dying out." Supposing Dr. Moorhouse to possess an average amount of veracity—which, by the way, is a liberal concession in the case of a bishop—the remark only shows that he does not read his *Freethinker*. There is a great deal of the ostrich about the sky-pilots. Like the desert bird they stick their heads in the sand, present a stern aspect to their foes, and cheat themselves into fancying that what they do not see is invisible.

"GENERAL" Booth says that Jesus Christ would find himself at home in the Salvation Army. Just our sentiments. No doubt if he met a procession he would recognise his disciples and fall in, fancying he had only taken a nap. Solomon too would find himself at home among the Mormons. David would rejoice to join in with the devil dancers at the Ceylon Exhibition, and Samuel would feel quite at home at a spiritist séance.

HANLEY in the Potteries has been so much "revived" that it has taken to prosecuting milk-sellers under the bigoted old law of Charles II., for selling milk after ten o'clock on Sunday morning.

THE Lord's Day Rest Association have threatened to prosecute the owners of the *Great Eastern* steamship, which they declare is illegally opened on Sundays as a place of amusement for money payment. We hope the bigots will be stoutly resisted. It is high time the entire batch of persecuting Sunday laws were swept from the statute book.

CANON HOLE came out strong at the Wimbledon Camp last Sunday. According to the report, he was not content with maintaining that from a religious standpoint the defence of the country, in which the volunteers are engaged, is a laudable object, but he "showed that war was not only a necessity, but had Divine approbation." There is no doubt of this if God Almighty had anything to do with the Old Testament. It is true Jesus said Resist not evil, and that all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword, but when he said so his followers were in a miserable minority. They soon found that war was lawful when they increased in numbers.

AMONG the "Heroes of History who have been heroes of Christ," Canon Hole places the name of John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough. After this we expect to find Alva, Claverhouse and Buonaparte among the calendar of saints. Randolph Churchill should also have a place beside his glorified ancestor.

THE *English Churchman* is shocked to find that the *Times* in giving the list of persons received at the Prince of Wales's levee places the name of Cardinal Manning before that of Archbishop Benson. This may be an outrage on the English Church, but we suspect the Prince of Wales no more cares who comes first than does the mass of the English people.

DR. BARRY, writing in the *Catholic Dublin Review* on "The Progress of Nihilism," deploras that the new movement throughout Europe is at war with established religion. His conclusion is that education divorced from religion tends to anarchy. By anarchy the Doctor means throwing off the leading strings of Rome.

MR. CHARLES HASTINGS COLLETTE is issuing a paper entitled, "Is Dr. Manning, who claims to be a Cardinal and Archbishop of Westminster, a Loyal Englishman?" Mr. Hastings has no difficulty in showing from the oaths taken by Cardinal Manning, that he is bound to be a Papist rather than a patriot. Indeed, at the last autumn elections he enjoined the faithful to be Catholics first and Englishmen afterwards. This year the same policy prevailed. The Catholic vote was, at Manning's bidding, shifted to the other side in order to serve the interests, not of Mr. Parnell, but of Rome.

AMONG the requests for prayer in the *Christian* we notice a sister asks that the Lord will appear unto her and make her way—not her face—plain. Another request is "For a backslider, whose rejection of scriptural truth causes much sorrow to his Christian relatives and friends." The last on the list is "For restoration to soundness of mind of a Christian under medical restraint."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 25, at 11, Battersea Park Gates, near Albert Palace.

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. 3, Ball's Pond; 10, Birmingham; 24, Manchester.

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.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—H. Hiscock.

J. TERRY.—There are nineteen different denominations of Methodists, of whom the Wesleyan Methodists are by far the most numerous and important.

T. ROBERTS.—Back numbers of *Progress* can be obtained from Mr. Ramsey.

R. PERRY.—You will find an account of Buddha and Buddhism in *Footsteps of the Past*.

AGE 82.—The passage "neither did his brethren believe in him" occurs John vii., 5.

PHILOMATH writes: "I am exceedingly pleased to see that *Progress* will henceforth be conducted for the benefit of the Freethought party, and I hope it will meet with the success it deserves. I for one will do my utmost to facilitate its 'Progress.'"

L. L. (Reading) will communicate with Shorthand, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, he can obtain the Christmas Number that he requires.

R. W. H.—We do not undertake to answer all sorts of questions, but simply such as are relevant to the object of this journal. Incomes below £150 are not liable. Certainly the rent of your own house would form a part of your income. There is a little book by Du Caine which would supply you with information about prisons.

SIMPLE SIMON.—Your last cutting is hardly in our way. Glad to hear from you again.

E. A. VERITY, an ex-churchwarden, writes: "I have just got you a new subscriber for *Progress*. I am very glad to see your remarks on the magazine in last week's *Freethinker*. Make it a good monthly for the Freethought party, and it will be our duty to bring it to the notice of the 'liberal-minded public' outside the party." Our correspondent adds that he shall take an extra copy of the August number to hand round to his friends.

ANGUS THOMAS points out that the verses we printed last week over the name of W. Tucker were written by the famous Peter Pindar—the pseudonym of John Wolcot, 1738—1819. We are very much obliged to Mr. Thomas. It is many years since we read Peter Pindar, and we have too little leisure for reading now to spend any time over such a minor poet, much less to wade through his voluminous verses. As for W. Tucker, who sent us the poem without any reference to its authorship, he deserves a midnight visit from Peter Pindar's ghost; and if the old fellow's sprite still wields the club with which he thrashed Gifford, W. Tucker will have cause to rue.

A. R. M.—There is already provision for the sale of literature at most of the open-air stations.

C. D.—Any book pretending to give the dates of the various occurrences in the New Testament would be as purely conjectural as *Zadkiel's Almanack*. What you say of Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* is certainly a huge joke. To give two different days for the Nativity, and each of them as some years before Christ, is worthy of the typical Irishman who manufactures bulls.

P. H. PINDER.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

ARABIA.—Mr. Ramsey will furnish you with an estimate for printing on application. There are, however, plenty of tracts in the field. We say this without wishing to damp your ardor.

H. ROTHERA.—Batch of jokes received with thanks.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Always pleased to hear from you.

A. W. EXALL asks us to state that the next rendezvous of the Pioneer Sunday Cricket Club is at Bishopsgate Street Station (G. E. R.), at 10 a.m., to-day (July 25). Old members and friends will be welcomed.

J. BRITCHER (Hastings) orders *Progress* "henceforth and for evermore, as it is to be devoted entirely to the Freethought party." Our correspondent adds "Mr. Foote has done his duty, and we should now do ours."

We thank the unknown correspondent who has taken the trouble to write out for us notes of a paper on religion, read by Mr. P. A. Taylor many years ago. Our correspondent evidently does not know that the notes were published by Thomas Scott under another title.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Anti-Sweater—Beacon Light—Cornish and Devon Post—Liberty—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Liberal—Penny Illustrated Paper—Northampton Daily Reporter—South Australian Register—Merthyr Express—Adelaide Express and Telegraph—Chatham News—Lucifer.

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

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS morning (July 25) Mr. Foote delivers another open-air lecture at Battersea Park gates. A big crowd is expected.

LAST Sunday afternoon the Battersea Branch began fresh operations on Clapham Common, and met with rather a warm reception. As an attack is expected this afternoon (July 25) it is hoped that the Freethinkers of the district will rally round the platform. Two or three dozen determined men will easily be able to keep the bigots in order.

If any open-air station is persistently made a scene of disturbance, and it is thought necessary to make an appeal to us, we will organise a demonstration there and attend ourselves.

ALL the journals, Christian and otherwise, have been so busy over the elections that they have omitted to rail at our Summer Number; yet, as soon as they recover wind, we shall hear another howl at our fresh "budget of blasphemy." Let them rave. What can be expected but a grunt from a pig or a curse from a bigot? We feel perfectly serene, for why should we be troubled at what they say when we have suffered the worst they can do? Besides, leaving the priests and scribes alone, to say nothing of the pharisees, we have earned the gratitude of all honest and sensible people, although many of them will never pay it because they are prevented by ignorance and prejudice from enjoying the delectable repast we have prepared for them. Those who do enjoy it are all those who happen to buy it. The sourest saint would find something in it to chuckle over, the demurest Sunday-school teacher something to giggle at. Superstition is shot with arrows of laughter, warranted to penetrate the thickest hide. We defy the Archbishop of Canterbury himself to read our Summer Number without a grin.

LAUGH and grow fat says the proverb. We back our readers to force down the scale against half as many again of the opposite sort. Pious people are always thin; a fat saint is simply inconceivable. Laughter is also good for the mind. Several persons have committed suicide during the last few weeks who would have been alive now if they had met with a copy of our Summer Number. Poor souls! they perished without knowing that the remedy for all their troubles could be had for threepence. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

IN reply to many queries from readers who do not remember the announcements we have already made, we may repeat that the *Crimes of Christianity* is being completed by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler. The whole manuscript of the last volume has been in preparation since the second volume was published, but the labor has been so immense, the fields covered have been so wide and comparatively unfamiliar, and the range of reference so extensive, that no greater speed could have been achieved except at a cost of injury to the work. It is hoped that Number XIX. will be published on the first Thursday in September, and that the manuscript will be sufficiently forward to allow of the subsequent numbers being issued weekly. The last two numbers will deal with Christianity and Slavery and Christianity and Woman. The intermediate numbers will deal with the persecutions, iniquities and butcheries of Christianity in France, Italy, England, Scotland and Ireland. When the work is completed and bound, as it will be before Christmas, we venture to think it will take its place as a standard impeachment of "the bloody faith." The profit, even on the most sanguine estimate of success, cannot be commensurate with the pains bestowed on the writing and research. The task has been rather a labor of—not love, but hate; one of the editors, at least, intending his share in the compilation as an instalment of his long debt of the reverse of gratitude to the infamous creed which robbed him of a year of his life. In a certain sense, the *Crimes of Christianity* owes its origin to Judge North, and perhaps it could be dedicated to no worthier name.

THE new series of tales on "Schools and Scholars," in the *Weekly Dispatch* commences by dealing with the religious difficulty. We recommend these tales to our readers as a great treat. The converted prize-fighter and the parson are capably sketched, and the manner in which the schoolmaster stops their attempted interference with his work is admirable in its thoroughness and outspokenness. The schoolmaster, however, raises a hornet's nest about his ears, and the history of his struggles and of his ultimate fate have yet to be depicted. Mr. James Runciman, the author, is a very practical and thoughtful man. He evidently speaks from experience and conviction, and his writing will furnish the philosopher and the educationalist, as well as the multitude, with excellent instruction.

IN the *Nineteenth Century* this month Dr. G. Vance Smith has a tardy but notable paper on "The Revision of the Bible." Dr. Smith remarks that the word given as "virgin" in the famous prophecy, Isaiah vii., 14, denoted "probably a young woman whose state was known to the prophet, and who was therefore, it may be inferred, the prophet's own wife." As we remarked in the notes to our *Jewish Life of Christ*, the prophet in this matter left nothing to the labors of his successors.

DR. VANCE SMITH also mentions that "the servant of God" in the so-called Messianic prophecy, Isaiah liii., is "no other than the collective Israel." That is to say criticisms on the most prominent Christian evidences, for which in the past Freethinkers have been abused and scouted, are now admitted as the correct thing in our best magazines. The world does move.

DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES pertinently asks whether Darwin's theory of the origin of man from the ascidian is more degrading than the theologian's comparison of man to a worm?

Truth says: "Sunday evening parties are becoming quite fashionable. The Marquis of Tweeddale had one on Sunday last, at which Mr. Charles Collette gave his drawing-room entertainment, which was highly successful, his burlesque lectures and songs being most thoroughly appreciated."

M. RENAN has been re-elected administrateur of the College de France for a further term of three years. This is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a literary man.

A RE-ISSUE is announced of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, as first published in 1584. Scot was the first man in England to throw doubt upon the Bible-taught superstition of witchcraft, and he was, in consequence, denounced by the sanctimonious King James I. as an upstart infidel. Wesley and his lieutenant, Adam Clarke, were about the last two persons who defended the sacred superstition.

LAST SUNDAY the Central London Branch took over two hundred children for the annual outing to Epping Forest. Saturday's rain had laid the dust, and the brilliant sunshine overhead was therefore enjoyable. The youngsters spent their time merrily, and returned late in the evening thoroughly satisfied, and thoroughly done up. Mr. Ramsey and the committee deserve credit for their successful arrangements. The excursion was accompanied by several brakes, one from the Camberwell Branch having a row of *Freethinker* illustrations along each side.

THE "People's Church," at the Midland Railway Arches, was enlivened last Sunday by Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. Foote, both of whom discoursed on the Bible. There was a large crowd, and a collection made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund produced fifteen shillings in coppers.

ON Mr. Foote's right hand Mr. Dexter, of the C. E. S., was using his utmost dexterity to twist the injunction "Take no thought for to-morrow," into "Break not your hearts about a dubious future." He had but an insignificant audience, to whom *Freethinker* tracts were well distributed.

A NORTH LONDON correspondent asks: "Will Mr. Zechariah Benjamin Woffendale, after witnessing the immense crowd, and listening to the applause which greeted Mr. Foote last Sunday, continue to boast of having put infidelity down in Somers Town? I have been acquainted with the district since the old Brill Days, when Z. B. W. worked, or rather wormed his way into the Presbyterian Church by discussing with infidels, and can attest that Freethought is as aggressive as ever. We have regular lectures all the summer, and they are better attended than those of the C. E. S. During the present season political feeling has run high, and larger crowds than usual have assembled round the energetic political disputants, yet our lecturers have always had as large audiences as their voices could conveniently reach." Our correspondent adds some remarks on Z. B. W. which we omit, as they are certainly not of the nature of a "Sugar Plum."

CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA.

THE *Christian Commonwealth*, in its Australian Notes by "J. A. P.," has the following paragraph:

"Even in this advanced country 'Freethinkers' can go too far. Last Sunday one of this persuasion commenced to denounce the teachings of the Bible while lecturing in the park at Parramatta, New South Wales, when a noted local Blue Ribbonite present jumped on to the platform to debate the subject with the lecturer. This latter was not inclined for, but instead tried to push his opponent off his standing. Seeing this, a cry was raised in the crowd, 'to the river with him,' and quick as the word the leader of 'Freethought' found himself being roughly handled by a crowd of at least 1,500 persons. Tracks were made for the river, but the police came to the rescue, and locked him up, not before he had been very much knocked about and bruised, though. To-day he was fined 45s. and costs or attempting to push the 'blue ribbon' advocate off the platform, and has still to be tried for using indecent language."

The *O. O.* is not ashamed to print this confession—or rather boast—of ruffianly bigotry. Taking the bigots' own account, a cowardly, brutal and utterly unjustifiable act of violence was committed by these Christian rowdies, and the pious correspondent rejoices in the fact. When a Freethinker "commenced" preaching Freethought a mus-

cular Christian forcibly took possession of his stand and a crowd of 1,500 friends of God "roughly handled" the lecturer, and were only prevented from throwing him into the river by the timely interference of the police. "Very much knocked about and bruised," he was saved from further violence by being locked up. Next day he was fined for "attempting to push" the Christian intruder off the stand, and is still threatened with further prosecution for using indecent language. Christian cowards who can be guilty of such ruffianism and openly glory in it, will probably find no difficulty in adding a little pious perjury to their other accomplishments. This shameful case of Christian rowdyism, followed by a gross abuse of the forms of justice, is typical of what would happen if Christianity regained its ancient power.

The description of Christian outrage is followed by another paragraph glorying in Christian slander and tyranny. It runs thus:

"Strict orders have been given at the General Post Office, Melbourne, for the immediate destroyal of all copies of the *Liberator* (the Secularists' organ) which may be posted. The law in regard to newspapers also provides for a £50 fine for circulating indecent literature through the post office, and it is highly probable that this law will be in future enforced in regard to the *Liberator*. 'Advance Australia!'"

The official suppression of the Secularists' organ without trial on the faith of the false accusation of dastardly bigots is advocated as a splendid example of Christian progress. Anything more contemptible than this Christian idea of justice and fair play is seldom to be met with. It is acknowledged that "Secularism has gained deep hold of the masses" and that the "growth of this evil" is "alarming," and the great remedy that suggests itself to this devoted friend of Christianity is the employment of physical force, backed by scurrilous falsehood. Lynch law or Government persecution appear equally welcome.

The Sydney *Bulletin*, a witty and outspoken sixpenny illustrated, defends Mr. Symes from the charge of indecency, and protests strongly against the attempt to extinguish "the Secularists' organ" by foul libel and an official inquisition. It says:

"The age for blasphemy prosecutions is past—is as dead as the dodo or the Tichborne claimant's chances; and why, we ask, should a Government that has invoked against Symes all the machinery of the law courts and been soundly thrashed, be allowed to effect its purposes in secret by a mean side-wind? The most blasphemous publication extant is the *War Cry*, which does as much injury to Christianity in a week as Joseph Symes could do in ten lifetimes. If the Victorians are wise, they will block all attempts at establishing a censorship of the Press, even if such a censorship be proposed in the interests of a heaven which should be able to look after itself. The censorship will be entrusted to some prejudiced fool with a fat salary, who will merely carry out, with the passive aid of that large section of ignorants who see no further than their own noses, the behests of a compact and well-organised band of bigots. . . . No obscene word ever appears in the *Liberator*, and this we say after having read almost every number of it."

The Australian correspondent of the *C. C.* tells us that the Bishop of Adelaide and the Dean of Melbourne have refused to appoint a special day of prayer for rain, on the ground that the drought is a divine scourge, which will not be removed by God till it has taught its lesson.

"J. A. P." also shows us how certain prominent Australian Christians speak of each other. An influential Churchman, writing under a *nom de plume*, called attention in the daily press to the "ecclesiastical peculiarities," or ritualism, of the new Bishop of Brisbane. The irritated Bishop, speaking in the Protestant Hall, spoke of this unknown assailant in the daily paper as "some loathsome creature, skulking under an anonymous veil, dragging his slime across its pages, polluting its columns with disgusting insinuations." With the assumption of authority that so well becomes a meek and mild follower of gentle Jesus, his lordship adds: "I may as well put my foot down at once." The journal in which the letter appeared reminds the Bishop that "this is not the country in which anyone is accustomed to talk of putting his foot down." The correspondent adds that since the Bishop has learned that the "loathsome creature" was one of his leading supporters and a popular member of Parliament, he finds that instead of putting his foot down, he has put his foot into it.

Nice people these Christians must be. They appear to distribute their venom among friends and enemies alike. Seeing that they can describe each other, truly or falsely,

as loathsome creatures, we need not wonder that they maltreat and slander their Freethinking opponents and punish them for Christian outrages committed on them by a mob of cowardly saints.

W. P. BALL.

SAMSON AND THE JAWBONE.

THOUGH Samson's wife proved unpardonably treacherous to him, the strong man was disposed to be generous towards her, for we find that, even though her father had given her to one of her husband's companions, Samson visited her "with a kid" and sought access to her. This the lady's father upon reasonable grounds refused, and, being an "uncircumcised Philistine," displayed towards Samson a fairness and generosity of spirit that would have been perfectly astounding to any but an unappreciative "child of God" like his son-in-law. In point of truth, Samson's father-in-law virtually said: "My daughter has treated you shamefully; she has actually been unwomanly enough to reveal the answer to your conundrum. How can you ever love her more? Nay, I can understand you feeling a strong hatred towards her; for was she not the cause of your having to part with thirty sheets and thirty changes of garment? Therefore, thinking that you would loathe her, I have taken the liberty of giving her to your companion; but, in order to show that there is no ill-feeling between us, I ask you to accept her younger sister instead, who, in my humble opinion, is one of the fairest and sweetest little creatures in the world."

To Samson this reasoning appears to have been inconclusive—he may not have shared his wife's father's opinion concerning her beauty, etc.—and in a little burst of passion, he went forth to have swift and just revenge upon the Philistines. First, he caught three hundred foxes. When I say he caught them, I mean the Bible says so. A certain lady once sagaciously remarked that if you would cook a hare, you must first catch it. Samson did not exactly mean to cook three hundred foxes. No, he would not be so cruel. He only intended to send them stark, staring mad, with firebrands attached to their tails, rushing furiously through the corn-fields belonging to the poor, unfortunate Philistines, and destroy their corn, their vineyards and olives.

Samson caught his foxes—three hundred of them. Whether he caught them separately, one after the other, or in groups, or all together, are questions which, in face of the Bible declaration that he "caught them," only impudent and impious Freethinkers would dare to ask. Nor would anybody but a brazen-faced sceptic suggest that there could be any difficulty in putting three hundred foxes back to back and tying their tails together, and placing firebrands between them. To a strong-armed, long-haired man of God like Samson such small difficulties were "trifles light as air."

These tail-tied foxes started on their mad errand, and played rare havoc with the Philistines' corn; but what ultimately became of them none but the Lord knoweth, and he, as an Irishman would say, inspired the Judges to say nothing about it. Perhaps they pulled away furiously until all their tails came out, and the Judges thought that that part of the tale might be left out of their narrative. Or perhaps they capered on in their mad career amid the burning fields of corn, until they were suffocated in a volume of smoke, and the Judges thought that was the best volume for the last of them to appear in—or, correctly speaking, to disappear in.

Discovering that it was Samson who had caused such disaster among them, the Philistines, with a stupidity and cruelty which were only equalled by the Israelites, went immediately to the house of Samson's father-in-law and razed it to the ground by fire, burning the Timnite and his daughter to death. Again Samson swore at any cost that he would be revenged. A short time elapsed, and in the interim the Philistines came and located themselves in Judah. The men of Judah soon after paid a visit to Samson, and having bound him with two new cords, brought him into the presence of the Philistines that they might administer to him condign punishment. "Ha, ha, ye fools, I laugh at ye," we can imagine Samson saying as he breaks away the cords "as flax that was burnt with fire." Finding a jawbone of an ass near at hand—a new one too—he clutched hold of it and wielded it with such giant force and marvellous skill, that in a few moments he had

dispatched no less than a thousand men withal. Imagine him, dear reader, doing it! Unless he had been trained to the business of horse-slaughterer, or some kindred occupation, it is difficult to understand how he would have known the exact spot where at one blow he could in each case have caused death. But he has demolished one hundred, and now there are only nine hundred left for the gentle treatment of the invincible jawbone. Ah see! here they come one after the other, pointing out the spot and saying "just there, Mr. Samson, if you please." Thwack. "Many thanks, Mr. Samson; it saves no end of pain." When Samson had finished killing the Philistines he delivered a short speech and said that he had "with the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jawbone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." He then named the place Ramath-lehi, in commemoration of his more than herculean task.

All this is true—true as gospel; or rather it was true when I was a boy and received my instructions from the agents of the Hell-Fire Insurance Company. But things are now changed—the Bible especially. The Bible revisers assure us that the story of Samson's broad-sword—I mean broad jawbone—combat, must now be regarded as poetry. Think of it! Is it not monstrous that a thousand men should be slain by the poetical jawbone of an ass? O ye writers of verse, ye stringers together of execrable doggerel, beware of the ashes of these thousand men! And ye howlers from a thousand pulpits, remember in the highest flights of your theological imagination you but resemble the poetical ass whose jawbone is warranted to slay more than a thousand of your credulous disciples.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

REVIEWS.

Mary Jones, or the Infidel School-teacher. By ELMINA D. SLENKER. W. S. Bailey's Liberal Press, Nashville, Tennessee.—Mrs Slenker's name is well known on the other side of the herring-pond as that of a lady who is indefatigable in her promotion of Freethought among the younger members of the community. Like her former tales, *John's Way, The Darwins* and *The Clergyman's Victim*, *Mary Jones* embodies some sound sense and Freethought teaching in a popular guise.

Force and Matter. By PROFESSOR LUDWIG BUCHNER. Newly translated from the fifteenth German edition. London: Asher and Co.—This is the fourth English edition of Buchner's great work, and it supersedes all others. Freethinkers should be proud to possess such a handsome volume. It is well printed in bold type on good paper, it is beautifully bound, and it contains an admirable engraved portrait, which is a speaking likeness of the German materialist. There is also a biographical introduction that will be new and interesting to most readers. Buchner, we now learn, comes of a gifted family. His sister Louise, besides writing novels and poems, was deeply engaged in the education and elevation of her sex. His elder brother is a member of the German Parliament, and his younger brother a professor of German at the University of Caen. The present edition of his chief work may be taken as final. Buchner tells us in his Preface that he has reinstated various expressions contained in the first edition, which were afterwards expunged "under the pressure of general and passionate opposition." Perhaps the most novel feature of the volume, and certainly not the least important, is a chapter on Morality, opening with a striking motto from Kant. We should give an extract if the whole chapter were not too closely wrought. Suffice it to say that morality is explained on the principles of evolution, and religion is asserted to be a hindrance instead of an assistance to its development. *Force and Matter* has been so long before the public that a detailed criticism is now unnecessary. The book is one to be prized and read again and again. As a comprehensive account of Materialism, from the standpoint of Evolution, it has no equal; and for the sake of the public as well as the publishers we hope this final edition will command a large sale in England.

OBITUARY.—I record with pain and sorrow the death of J. C. Paul, aged 56, for many years an active and hard-working member of the Finsbury Branch N.S.S. Our late friend was well-known at our open-air station on Clerkenwell Green. His fearless advocacy of Secular principles, his upright life and his kindness to those in distress, remain an example to all who knew him. He died as he had lived for the last thirty-five years, a thorough Freethinker. His funeral took place on July 18, and was attended by nearly every member of the Finsbury Branch. Mr. R. Forder read the Secular Burial Service in a most impressive manner.—H. HISCOCK.

SIR ISAAC NEWTON, although one of the greatest of intellectual giants, was weak enough to believe in alchemy and even the Bible!

PROFANE JOKES.

"Do you buy the music by the roll?" said a gentleman to the deacon's daughter. "No, sir," she sweetly replied; "I always wait until Sunday, when I get it by the choir."

A CHURCH in a country village recently circulated a paper among the congregation asking for contributions "for the purpose of paying the organist and a boy to blow the same."

A LITTLE girl, sitting on her grandfather's knee, having pulled a hair from his head and looked at it intently for some time, he asked her what she was looking for. She replied: "Grandpa, they say all the hairs of our head are numbered, and I am looking to find the number of this one."

A BOARD-SCHOOL master desired a boy to write on his slate an account of the Good Samaritan, whereupon he wrote as follows: "A certing man went down from jerooslam to jorriker; and he felled among thawns; and the thawns sprang up and choaked him; ware-upon he gave tuppins to the hoast and said tak care on him and put him on his hone hass; and he past by on the hother side."

A MAN and his wife agreed recently to learn a verse of scripture every evening and repeat it to each other for mutual improvement. The first night, however, her quotation happened to be, "Am I not thy ruler?" and his was to the effect that he'd be hanged if she was; and the only result of the plan so far has been that he has taken to drink and exhibits a willingness to sleep in the wood-shed at night.

LITTLE BOY (to reverend gentleman): "I want to have a nice loud voice like yours when I grow up, Mr. Sermonizer." "Ah, you wish to be an orator, doubtless. I have no doubt you can become one if you try, my son, and let me hope it is your desire to devote yourself to the services of the Lord in the pulpit." "Oh, no, indeed! I don't want to be a preacher. I'm going to be a milkman."

FOR SALE, Numbers of the Freethinker from the commencement, also National Reformer from 1881; cheap—R. Garbutt, 102 New Delavel Colliery, Northumberland.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S., 61 New Church Road, London, S.E.—MR. CHARLES WATTS lectures Sunday, July 25, 7.30 p.m., on "The Glory of Unbelief." Last time in above hall before returning to America.

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