

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



CHRISTIAN HARMONY.

“Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”—MATT. v. 39.

BOYCOTTING FREETHOUGHT.

BOYCOTTING is thought to be a purely Irish offence, yet there never was a greater mistake. Under a different name the thing has been practised from time immemorial. Cæsar noticed the ban among the Gauls, and in his forthright way described its operation. Those who displeased the Druids, a priestly caste, ruling the people with the terrors of mystery and superstition, were interdicted from society, and cut off from all its benefits. Their neighbors were forbidden to eat or drink with them, sit or sleep under the same roof, succor them in the direst distress, or give them funeral rites if they died. When Christianity came into power, the clergy found it very convenient to borrow this useful weapon of priestcraft. In the primitive times, when Christianity was only one sect among many in the Roman empire, it maintained a kind of spiritual discipline, and heretics and obstinate persons were cast out of the community; but this proceeding was by no means fatal, and sometimes not even painful, for the world was wide outside the Church, and the most bigoted fanatics could indulge in nothing worse than cursing. When, however, the Church was co-extensive with the State, excommunication became a terrible power in the hands of her popes and cardinals. It was simply boycotting on a gigantic scale, and by-and-bye the monks of the Inquisition played the part of Moonlighters. Very often it was used, as in Ireland, against one person or class to influence another; knocking down Peter, as it were, to persuade Paul. When the Pope quarrelled with our King John, he

deliberately put all England under interdict, and no one was christened, married or buried, until the monarch yielded. Anything more unscrupulously brutal it is impossible to conceive, yet the priests of the gospel of charity acted in this way for centuries, and they would do so again if they had the power; for priests are natural and inveterate despots, and their benevolent smiles in the day of their weakness are no more to be trusted than a beggar's cringes or a sharper's flattery.

Nor, on the other hand, is boycotting confined, even in temporal matters, to tenant farmers. It has been almost universally practised by the landlords. Their method of clearing their estates of objectionable persons has been exactly that of the Land League, minus the midnight visit and the shot in the legs. Decorum has generally been observed, but the boycott has been none the less remorseless and thorough. Owing, or rather holding, the soil, the landlords are absolute masters of the situation, unless they are restrained by law, and everybody on their estates lives there by sufferance. Lord Salisbury will not let the Jews get a footing on his Haymarket estate, or the Wesleyans have a site for a chapel at Hatfield. Down at Cardiff, everything is subject to the Marquis of Bute; what he tolerates is tolerated, and what he excommunicates is excommunicated. Many other towns are in the same ignominious plight. So great is the nuisance that nothing but the mulish patience of the average Briton can account for its continued existence in this age. We boast of our freedom and our House of Commons, but the fact is we are hereditary slaves, and we

shall remain so until the People's Chamber breaks the yoke of Feudalism around our necks in pieces, and inaugurates a sensible Republic of liberty and equality. England carousing over her "liberties" and celebrating her popular triumphs is very much like Jacob, who fancied he possessed Rachael, but found out after all that he only had Leah.

Huddersfield affords one of the worst cases of landlord tyranny. Every man in that busy town, which prides itself on its Radicalism, is a serf. Sir John Ramsden owns the whole of the ground it stands on, with an insignificant exception, and in the long run nothing can be done in the borough without his august consent. He requires to know what every yard of earth is to be used for before he grants a lease. Being a pious landlord, he imagines he has a mission to guard the inhabitants from the taint of heresy and infidelity, and his agent is particularly watchful not to let the Secularists plant themselves in Huddersfield. When the factotum refused them a building site in 1872, Sir John Ramsden wrote in the lordly third person as follows: "Sir John approves his agent's refusal of the application. That application he understands to have been for a site for a Secularist lecture hall and school; that is to say, for a building to be devoted to disseminating doctrines hostile to the Christian religion. Sir John Ramsden does not consider he would have acted rightly in giving facilities for such a purpose."

Since Sir John Ramsden wrote this haughty epistle the Huddersfield Secularists have been confined to the use of an incommensurable and out-of-the-way schoolroom, where they have carried on a Sunday School, and maintained such organisation as was possible. Occasionally they have been able to obtain a better hall for special lectures, but of late this privilege has been denied them. Still they were undaunted, and they have recently started a Building Company, which was admirably supported, for the purpose of erecting premises of their own. Sir John Ramsden's agent, on being approached, promised them a site at so much per square yard. Soon afterwards, however, he found there was a mistake; the price should have been treble the amount named. Finally he refused to let it at any price, and informed them that Sir John Ramsden adhered to his old resolution not to let the Secularists oppose Christianity on any part of his estate.

Freethought is thus boycotted in Huddersfield by one man, who holds the mental life of the town in the hollow of his hand; and there is too much reason to fear that he is tacitly supported in this instance by the general sentiment of the Christian population, who always fail to recognise persecution unless it is directed against themselves. Not only in Huddersfield, but to some extent everywhere, the boycott is systematically applied to Freethought. Our party has to fight a terrible battle against great odds, storming steadily uphill to the crowded citadel of superstition. The victory is still distant, but it is sure. All honor to the heroes who share in this stern combat, without plaudits, laurels, or rewards, sustained only by their indomitable manhood and fervent love of truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGION AND DRINK.

"I THINK," said a teetotal friend, the other day, "you might employ your time better than in exposing the crimes of Christianity or the credulity of Christians." That, I remarked, is a matter of opinion. But tell me, why do you employ any portion of your time and talents in denouncing the evils of the drink traffic? You point to the records of the police-courts, the gaols and the work-houses as a demonstration of the pernicious effects of alcohol. I point to the strife, fanaticism and bigotry displayed in history as a proof of the ill effects of religion. I no more contend that all religious people exhibit these effects than you pretend that all drinkers are wife-beaters. Most drinkers, fortunately, are moderate in their use of alcohol, and its ill effects are mitigated when it is taken with food. So most religious people are wise enough to take their religion in moderation, and to mix it well with the solid food of Secularism.

In exhibiting such facts of Christian history as the great monastic movement, the destruction of pagan literature, the crusades and wars of religion, the Inquisition, the per-

secution of witches, the opposition to science, and the many revivals of fanaticism, religion is shown in its normal strength, and but partially restrained by those checks necessitated by secular welfare. Alcohol, you say, is essentially deleterious to man. The same may be said of religion, by which I intend every system basing human conduct on other considerations than that of human welfare in this life. The enthusiasts who, believing the world was speedily coming to an end, lived a life of celibacy and self-mortification, the fanatics who spent their lives in warring upon infidels, the bigots who obeyed the command "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and the inquisitors who tortured and burnt on earth the heretics who they feared might lead many souls to eternal torment in hell, were genuine believers. To-day we have, thanks greatly to the total abstinents, a race of temperate Christian believers, who at the most only slightly indulge in spiritual intoxication on Sundays, as others take an extra glass on Saturday night, and do not let it interfere with the ordinary business of life.

Like the temperance advocates, we point to the worst effects of being filled with the spirit, because this most dangerous form of drunkenness is only acquired by degrees. The poor lunatic who is tormented by the dreadful fear that she is delivered over to Satan and doomed to eternal torment; the maniac who is ready, like Abraham, to offer his only son at the bidding of the voice of God—were once Sunday scholars. Their minds have been deranged by the pernicious religious teaching which leads them to regard life as only a means of securing a cosy corner in some other world by belief in the Bible and salvation through blood. Beware, then, we say, of the first draught of error. Keep your children from religious instruction as you would keep them from the public-house. Even the grog-shop may be a safer place than the Sunday-school or the Salvation Army barracks. Once reason is surrendered to the seduction of religious stimulants, mental health is surely affected. Religious dram-drinkers soon come to prefer their theology undiluted. The Holy Spirit in their hearts has much the same effect as alcohol in their heads. They fancy themselves exalted above the things of this world. In reality they are soon found to grovel in the mire of superstition.

Teetotalers complain of the vested interest of the publicans, ever ready to set themselves against any measure of progress that may injuriously affect their calling. But what is this compared to the vested interest of the purveyors of spiritual intoxicants, who in the past, whether in christening, marrying, or burying, have had their fingers in every man's pie, and who are endowed with enormous funds at the expense of the entire nation, many of whom prefer totally different liquors, while some, like ourselves, are total abstinents? Have they not opposed science, education, and free inquiry? Do they not still do their best to thwart free education, to put down Freethought, and to keep the Sunday reserved entirely to the interests of their trade? Are they not almost to a man against all that makes for the progressive secular amelioration of the people?

The publicans only live by their customers; the parsons live on the nation. Over twenty thousand clergy, drawing some six or seven millions annually, and with almost an equal number of dissenting sky-pilots, produce nothing towards the nation's wealth. You point to the money wasted in intoxicating beverages; look also at the amount absorbed by these caterpillars of the commonwealth. What sums are lavished on church and chapel building, useless on any point of view for six days out of the week! What money has not been wasted on foreign missions which might have brought comfort to thousands of the poor! You delight in showing how many suits of clothes a man could buy if he denied himself his daily pint of beer. Just consider this, that if religion were disendowed every child in the land might receive absolutely free education.

J. M. WHEELER.

You should close your windows these wet nights, for the same reason that the cherubim shut the Garden of Eden in primeval times to keep the damp air out.

"Did you ever see anything like this?" said a young lady to her escort at a church fair where raffling was in progress. "Only once." "When was that?" "When I was out West one time on a train when it was robbed."—*Truthseeker*.

ACID DROPS.

A PUBLICAN at Watford, Herts, was waited on by some lady visitors who asked him to give up his business, after which the poor man's only resource would have been the hallelujah trade. He politely called them in, and asked them to pray; after which he offered up a prayer himself, reminding the Lord of all the passages in Scripture where the use of wine is commended. The ladies did not reckon on this, and they quickly decamped.

WE observe that Dr. Sexton has returned from America and is lecturing on "Americans at Home." He recently delivered this lecture at Eastbourne, with a sky-pilot, of course, in the chair, for this "converted infidel" is cute enough to make friends of the white-choked gentry wherever he goes, and he is not at all particular as to their denomination. In explaining why he went to America, he says that he had held twenty-five debates with leading sceptics in England, and he found that his health was giving way, although he does not intimate that such a misfortune occurred to any of the sceptics he debated with. We judge that championing the wrong side is devilish hard work, or else that the champions of Christianity have very rickety constitutions. Perhaps if Dr. Sexton told the truth, we should find that his health had suffered from other causes than debating.

DR. SEXTON'S "late dear friend, Lord Shaftesbury," being no longer able to assist him, he thinks of settling down permanently in America, where we dare say he will soon find, if he has not already found, another pious benefactor of intellectual renegades.

THE stout-stomached doctor says there is far less consumption of liquor in America than in England. We are delighted to hear it, and we hope there will be no change for the worse when Dr. Sexton becomes a citizen of the States.

HENRY JAMES CLARKE, baker, of High Street, Ventnor, during his wife's absence from home seduced the servant girl, and afterwards eloped with her to London; but as the damsel is under sixteen the gay Lothario finds himself in the clutches of the law. While at Chelsea with her seducer, the girl wrote home to her father, without giving any address; and in one of these epistles, dated Sunday, July 21, she said "This evening we go to hear Spurgeon preach at the Tabernacle." Of course the Christian papers keep quiet about this, thinking no doubt that the less said the better. But what a rumpus they would have made, how they would have crowed and chuckled, and what eloquence they would have spent on the debasing effects of infidelity, if the girl had written "This evening we go to hear Bradlaugh at the Hall of Science."

HENRY ANTON, a Salvationist, has been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labor for indecently assaulting a girl of four years of age.

ARCHBISHOP CROKE has sent five pounds for "the brave Tyrone girl" who "cried out for O'Brien and Home Rule in the midst of an exultant gang of Orangemen." The same journal from which we cull this delicious illustration of the text "Let brotherly love continue" contains an article on "Political Parsons, by One of Them," in which the ministers of the Prince of Peace are described as "patterns of gentleness and forbearance," whose presence in politics would tend to "elevate and purify public life." Comment is useless.

THE ministers of the Prince of Peace seem to elevate and purify private as well as public life. The Rev. R. H. Moffat has just been sentenced at the Old Bailey to eighteen months' hard labor for obscenely assaulting a boy. The crime of the cities of the Plain seems to be a peculiarly clerical one in the present age.

ANOTHER elevator and purifier is the Rev. A. R. Finlayson. In the *Freethinker* of January 31 we introduced this sky-pilot to our readers as the relater of a story about the daughter of a certain nobleman, who converted her father by the conundrum, "What is whiter than snow?" the answer being "A soul washed in the blood of Jesus." Mr. Finlayson has, of course, performed his ablutions in that sanguinary bath, and perhaps this accounts for his appearance in the Manchester divorce case, the chief feature of which is the racy fact that the respondent made appointments with him by means of advertisements, printed backwards, in the *Christian World*.

THE jury have found that Mr. Finlayson has committed adultery, and have assessed the damages at £1,000. The reverend sky-pilot was organising secretary to the Colonial and Continental Church Society. He swore in the box that he was innocent, and thus added perjury to his offences. But he acknowledged that he had broken his solemn promise never to see Mrs. Cookson again. In the advertisements by which this sanctified Christian communicated with the respondent he addressed her as "my pet," "my darling" and "my beloved," but he explained that these were only used in "an allegorical sense." Somehow the jury did not believe that this clergyman met a married lady by

appointment in a forest solely, as he alleged, to "sympathise with her and comfort her."

THE *Birmingham Daily Mail*, commenting upon the case, says: "Licentious hypocrites flourish within the limits of every creed. The vulgar Mawworm of the village conventicle and the unctuous Achilli of the Catholic Monastery are widely divergent types of the same mixture of holy profession and vicious life. Mr. Finlayson is another type, not so wholesale in his favors or promiscuous in his profligacy, but, nevertheless, an interesting example of the extent to which the animal can dominate the spiritual, and tear all moral restraints to pieces, under the comfortable cloak of the religious calling."

THE Rev. Father William J. Sherman, of Brooklyn, has broken his priestly vows by running away with a woman. His friends claim that he is married to her. If such can be proved, the Church will excommunicate him, but if he has merely seduced her, there may still be hope for him.

"THE Immaculate Conception Academy" is the queer name of a Catholic seminary for young ladies at Davonport, Iowa. But religion sanctifies the grossest improprieties of nomenclature, and the most disgusting words and ideas, as is seen in the Bible itself.

THE *Christian at Work* has an article on "How to Select a Boy." If that journal would give its readers something on "How to Select a Girl" it would come nearer fulfilling the high office of a religious paper.

THE Rev. G. H. Gotley pleads for the use of the Romish wafer in communion on the ground that the ordinary bread is so often trampled and trodden under foot. He thinks that now the clergy look so sharp to keep the chalice clean and to prevent communicants wiping their lips with the pall, "we should show the same reverence for the Body as for the Blood of our Blessed Savior." Fancy crumbling and treading under foot the Savior's Body and smearing the communion cloth with his Blood!

THE fighting between the Catholic and Protestant mobs in Belfast seems to be a perennial feature of the Christianity of that pious town. The police and military, though stationed in large bodies throughout the place are utterly unable to restrain the furious rioting and wrecking. More troops have been sent from Dublin, but on Saturday, Sunday and Monday the Christian mobs continued to make desperate attacks upon each other and upon the police. Many of the crowd were armed with revolvers. Stones, bricks, and bars of iron were freely hurled. Fifty persons were treated for wounds at the hospital, and many more cases were taken to private surgeries. Eleven people are known to have been killed, and it is said that many more are either dead or dying. William Devlin, a Roman Catholic, was shot through the heart by a Protestant mob and died in a few minutes. Christianity infuriates its victims against each other while professing to teach non-resistance to evil, and a loving brotherhood. The fact and the theory are utterly at variance. Christ spoke only too truly when he said he came not to bring peace but a sword. Christianity, instead of softening and humanising political strife, intensifies it by adding the bitter ferocity of religious bigotry. The riots in Belfast and Sligo are but a modern illustration on a small scale of a lamentable truth written throughout history in pages of blood.

H. P. WHIPPLE, well known in Glasgow as the Yankee preacher, is apprehended on the charge of attempting to bury his own child alive. For the sake of our common humanity we hope there is some mistake, but we are hardly surprised at anything on the part of the Revivalists of our age, who are the most hideous compound of brazen impudence and love of lucre, to say nothing of vices which are constantly being exposed in the public papers.

MARY ANN BRITLAND, who poisoned her husband and a woman named Dixon, was singing hymns during the night preceding her execution. On the scaffold the prayers of the chaplain were drowned by her screams. "O Lord, have mercy! O Lord, forgive me!" she piteously cried. Some Christians may fear that her faith was hardly sufficient to carry her to heaven, yet she had faith, and Christ promises that whoever cometh to him he will in no wise cast out. So we may rest assured that the poor shrieking believer was "jerked to Jesus," and has landed in safety on "that beautiful shore."

THE *Chicago Tribune* gives a long account of the execution of James Dacey. He raved terribly before being led to the scaffold, and the three priests in attendance could not find a lucid interval in which to administer the last sacrament, so it is very doubtful whether the wretched murderer has not missed his chance of heaven.

ACCORDING to the latest statistics Italy and Spain, the two most religious countries in Europe, are also the most homicidal. The proportion of individuals condemned for murder and manslaughter is in Spain 78 for every million of population, in Italy 81, in Great Britain 6, in France 15, in Germany 11.

Of all the disciples of the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, who said "blessed be ye poor," the most earnest and sincere are undoubtedly the bishops. We are therefore delighted to hear that there will soon be a new bishopric of Wakefield. £50,000 is already raised for its endowment, and £20,000 more is promised; besides which, the ladies of the diocese have undertaken to raise £10,000, of which £8,000 is already in hand, to provide a residence for their future father in God. Evidently it takes the best part of a hundred thousand pounds to fix up a bishop, and some people think he isn't worth a hundred-thousandth part of the money; but when they reflect that rich men cannot enter heaven, and that the more wealthy bishops there are the better chance other people have of going to glory, they will no doubt see reason to alter their opinion.

TEN thousand pounds to provide a residence for a bishop! Yet the Son of Man had not where to lay his head, and thousands of Englishmen, quite as honest as he was, and far more industrious, scarcely know where to get their next meal, and look desperately on the starved faces of wife and child. Oh what a hollow, cursed mockery this Christianity is! Bishops batten in palaces, while better men perish of hunger in garrets and gutters. Aye, and when the poor homeless wretches fall asleep under the canopy of heaven, ministers of the Son of Man on justices' benches send them to prison as rogues and vagabonds.

STILL, we would not tamper with the bishops. Oh dear no. Let them live, let them flourish. They are mighty arguments against "the Infamous," and, rightly considered, every bishop is a powerful advocate of Freethought. Unconsciously to himself, perhaps, he is incessantly teaching, by his pride and luxury, that Christianity is an organised hypocrisy for the deception and exploitation of the people.

THE Church Defence Institution reports a large increase of income. Last year it received £12,911, as again £4,570 in 1884. In shelling out in defence of the Church, the parsons are only insuring their own incomes, though in a somewhat risky office.

A NOTABLE sign of the expected advent of Disestablishment took place at St. Albans last week. Mr. Douglas Round in presenting a chapel to the clergy of the rural deanery expressly made it a condition that he should have an undertaking to give up possession on six months' notice. This is in order to prevent the possibility of the chapel falling out of the hands of the Anglican body into those of the nation. But can the nation receive gifts upon such conditions?

MOODY has established a summer school for Bible study at Mount Hermon, not in Palestine but in Massachusetts. The students "search the scriptures" for an hour or two, and spend the rest of the day in practising muscular Christianity in the shape of rowing, swimming, cricket and tennis. This is certainly an improvement on the old style. Jesus Christ went in for searching the scripture without any of these pleasant adjuncts, but "John P. Robinson he, says they didn't know everything down in Judæe."

THE Rev. Augustus Jessopp, who although a clergyman, is a gentleman of shrewd sense, wit, and a sound scholar, in an article upon "Letters and Letter writing," in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, noticing the absence of all save stilted letters during the period when Christianity was predominant, remarks, "For a thousand years people were afraid of expressing their real sentiments, they were afraid of one another; orthodoxy was the one thing needful, and any revolt from the tyranny of the dominant authorities was visited upon the rebel with no sparing hand. How could people write freely as friend to friend with a halter round their necks? It was not till the time of the Renaissance that men began to unbosom themselves again." What an impeachment of religion and a vindication of heresy to come from a clergyman.

MR. ENDEAN, of the London School Board, protests against the questions put to candidates for teacherships in elementary schools as "too advanced." The first is this—"What would be now thought of crusades, trial by ordeal, and Smithfield fires?" No doubt such a question is in a certain sense "advanced," but any person with the least gumption could answer it straight off in two words which we would rather not print. Every reader can fill in for himself.

THE *Guardian* states, and we have reason to know that it is right, that in the lower forms of schools it is customary to give the Scripture lesson almost exclusively from the historical books of the Old Testament. That is to say, under the pretence of religious instruction, children's minds are familiarised with the most savage scenes of lust and slaughter and the worst records of Bible barbarism.

THE Lord sometimes answer prayer in a terrible fashion. In New Zealand Mr. Hazard and his family, alarmed at the shocks of earthquake and the noise of the volcanic eruptions, sang "a hymn of prayer" to God. "Just as the last sweet cadence of the melody was dying away," says the record, "an enormous shower of ashes, mud, and stones descended upon the house, smashing

in the roof, and burying the occupants under the burning and scalding debris!" "Mr. Hazard and four of his children were literally boiled to death," we are told. His wife and two daughters were extricated, not by the Lord, but by some kind neighbors. What would be said of a human being who answered a reverential request in so awful a manner?

MR. HERBERT retires from the Royal Academy, and, according to an evening journal, "the only losers by his absence will be the caricaturists." The same journal remarks that "of late he has devoted himself chiefly to illustrating the Bible," as though that were the lowest depth an artist could sink to, and the last resource of incompetence.

THE Women's Christian Temperance Union of New York is making arrangements for the "Week of Prayer" for 1877, and as the Almighty is liable to get confused if all sorts of things are prayed for at once, he is to be petitioned for something separate each day. One whole day will be given to Temperance, a second to Social Purity, and a third to Woman Suffrage. The rest of the programme is still unsettled. We hope the ladies will lose no time in completing it, or the Lord may not enter their "Week of Prayer" in his engagement list.

HARRY LONG, late Orange orator of Glasgow Green, is doing his best in Australia to exhibit in his own person the folly of Christianity. At that safe distance he boasts of his success in overthrowing infidelity in England, but he has found more than his match in a debate with Dr. J. L. York, at Brisbane. Friends Symes, Collins and Evison will give a good account of Harry if they have the fortune to meet him.

THE Rev. C. Mainwaring, vicar of Stainton, near Doncaster, has got off with a fine of £5 for violently assaulting the half-witted boy who took to the vicarage a placard on which was printed "No Primrose Dames need apply." This worthy minister of God was convicted of a similar assault in 1877.

LAST week Samuel Storey, overseer of North Kelsey parish, Lincolnshire, and a licensed lay-reader, committed suicide in the vestry of the church.

AN American poet thus parodies the commencement of a Christian hymn:

"There's a land that is hotter than this,
And by faith we can smell it afar,
Where the saintly ones sizzle and siss,
And the parsons and good deacons are."

THE people at Ponder's End have been petitioning the Enfield magistrates against the "intolerable nuisance" of the Salvation Army, "especially on Sundays." The petition continues: "The noise at times is really unbearable. No respect is paid for the dying or other persons lying ill, and the more often the Army are told to depart the longer they stay." The inspector of police said there was no doubt about the thing being a nuisance, but he had no power to interfere. The magistrates told him to send a copy of the petition to Scotland Yard and ask for definite instructions.

THE *Weekly Freeman*, an Irish Nationalist organ and of course Catholic, says that the Crawford Divorce Case "throws a lurid light on the doings of a section of society in England, which, having freed itself from the trammels of religion, appears to have thrown off at the same time all those restraints and obligations which are the very basis of society itself." What solemn idiocy this is to be sure. One would think the Divorce Court was kept going by Freethinkers instead of Christians. Besides, what have Mrs. Crawford's vagaries to do with Freethought? There was not the slightest evidence of her heterodoxy. On the other hand, Mrs. Ashton Dilke is reputed to be sceptical, and she affirmed in court instead of taking the oath; yet the *Weekly Freeman* allows that "the manner in which she stood by her erring and miserable sister even in the depths of her degradation is a noble example of the self-sacrifice of which some women are capable." Really the *Freeman* should get a scribe with a glimmering of logic to write its pious leaders.

THE balance-sheet of the Church of England Scripture Readers Association is an extraordinary document. Out of £11,448 14s. 4d. no less than £10,553 0s. 4d. went in salaries. No wonder the officials strive hard to keep the Association's income from falling, and no wonder they applauded Canon Cadman's remark at the annual meeting that it was everybody's duty to "offer a prayer, or pay a subscription," the latter of course preferred.

TALMAGE having preached about the "white hairs of Jesus," some of the newspapers supposed it was a mere fancy of his own, and Talmage calls them (or the writers we may suppose) "poor fools" for not knowing that Revelation (i, 14) describes the head and hair of Jesus as being "white like wool." As Talmage knows that the Bible is true and that in calling his brother a fool he stands in danger of hell fire, it is evident he estimates either the veracity of Jesus or the temperature of hell fire at a very low figure.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 15, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Sown, N. at 7.30
Tuesday, Aug. 17, Freethought Institute, York Street, Walworth.

AUGUST 22 and 29, Hall of Science, London.

SEPT. 5, Liverpool; 12, South Shields; 19 and 26, Hall of Science.

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

CORRESPONDENTS.

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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.

SCALES 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.—E. J. H.

PALENUROS.—Thanks for the cuttings.

JOHN BELL says: "I trust you will keep your courage up, for more than myself regard you as the real moving power in the Freethought party." Our correspondent is too flattering, but whatever courage we possess is not likely to desert us while we keep a good pulse and a sound stomach.

H. T. B.—For a *Freethinker* of eighteen you show great interest in the cause. We believe there are many others who take an extra copy of this journal weekly to lend where it may be useful. That is the best possible form of advertisement. We cannot placard the walls like the big dailies, but if the *Freethinker* is quietly introduced by its friends to fresh readers it recommends itself to an ever enlarging circle.

J. GRAY sends a working man's subscription, and hopes to repeat it every week for a month.

POOR OLD MAN.—Subscription and Latin motto both appropriate.

T. REEVES.—Pleased to hear you think we "deserve the support of all liberal-minded men."

E. CLARE.—That's an old story about the Quaker who said "Well, my sympathy's worth a dollar; what's yours, stranger?" But the story is always in season, especially when it is practically illustrated by the teller. By the way, have you any fresh pictorial ideas in your fertile brain?

A. POMEROY.—Your postal order did not arrive till several days after it should have been delivered. Unfortunately, two five-pound notes sent from Devonport have also gone astray, and there may be other such remittances at present unknown to us. Friends who send loans and large subscriptions should either register the letter or forward one half of the bank-note and await its acknowledgment before sending the other. All cheques and post-office orders and postal notes should be crossed.

G. SCOTT.—We are obliged for your hearty sympathy. The South Shields Branch has the honor of being the first to send us any assistance.

C. CHASE.—Thanks. We value your wife's subscription the most. Freethought will be a made thing when the ladies take more interest in it.

T. RILEY, 43 Woolshops, Halifax, has a subscription list for our "Burnt Out" Fund at his shop. He promises all subscribers "sixty, yea a hundredfold, both here and hereafter." We don't know how the promise will be fulfilled, but Thomas Riley is generally a man of his word.

J. CHABTREE.—We shall always remember your many kindnesses.

W. CABELL points to further inaccuracies in the New Testament, as in Mark ii., 26. Mr. Wheeler's article did not pretend to be exhaustive. The citation "it is more blessed to give than to receive," may have been a traditional saying of Jesus, or it may have been in the lost Gospel according to the Hebrews. (2) Matt. xvi., 14, shows that John the Baptist was dead. (3) The words "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," are capable of two interpretations. The notion of tempting Providence seems to us too modern. (4) John viii., 40, is also ambiguous. It may mean that Abraham was not a religious teacher, or that he would not act as his descendants were acting. (5) The narrative only says that Peter began to curse and swear; not that he cursed and swore at Jesus.

EX-RITUALIST.—Shall appear.

J. H.—We are always glad of cuttings, though we cannot always use all that are sent.

W. HART.—Glad to hear you are plying the Christians with our *Bible Absurdities*. Their specific for converting you is worthy of them. They might reflect, however, that shutting yourself up for twenty-four hours to meditate on the beauty of Christianity is not likely to produce much effect. We tried it for twelve months—or rather it was tried on us—with what result all can see.

R. DAWSON.—*Progress* sent. You gave no address but Low Spenny-moor. Glad to hear that *Prisoner for Blasphemy* "affords great satisfaction and is well handed round."

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—We are pleased to see Freethought spreading so in the navy. Your Christian shipmate must have a queer notion of Providence if he thinks our fire was "a visitation from the Lord to bring us to himself." A man who tried to teach his neighbor by setting his house on fire would get five or ten years' penal servitude. Gods and ghosts ought to be dealt with in the same way.

W. WARD (Liverpool).—Thanks for the enclosure. We are also obliged to you for distributing a year's accumulation of *Freethinkers* at Mr. Bradlaugh's evening lectures.

J. E. ROUSE.—Shall appear. Always glad to hear from you.

E. BROOK.—No doubt, as you hope, we shall tide over this trouble. We begin to see the end of it already.

J. H. WHITHAM.—You will see that our appeal is being generously responded to. We do contribute our share to promoting the Radical cause, but we put Freethought before and above everything else.

J. H. MAC.—Your lines are unequal. As you get more vigorous you lose finish. The subject is ticklish, and requires very careful treatment.

CORRESPONDENTS are again particularly requested to send their orders for literature to Mr. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, and not to Mr. Foote.

W. H. SPIVEY (Huddersfield Branch N. S. S.) writes: "On behalf of our members, I send you our hearty sympathy. We intend to show it in a practical way in the course of a week or two. At the present moment we have our hands pretty full, as we are taking a new room, and have to meet heavy expenses."

W. LANGTON.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. TAYLOR.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. S.—Glad to hear you appreciate Mr. Ball's verses.

G. NAEWIGER.—Shall appear.

YOUNG DEVON.—You may rely on our "pegging away in the old style."

W. PAYNE writes "I was agreeably surprised last Friday while in a stationer's shop in this town (Morecambe) to come across the *Freethinker* of which, I was told, a few copies were sold every week. At sea-side places there are so many pious ignoramuses bellying forth their stupid cant that the sight of the *Freethinker* openly exposed for sale is really refreshing."

INQUIRER asks why the *Freethinker* and other Secular pamphlets are not regularly on sale at the Midland Arches on Sunday mornings. Open air meetings are robbed of half their value when there is no literature for circulation.

W. MORTIMER.—Very pleased to hear from you, and hope to see you again when you come south.

ATHEIST SCULPTOR writes "I am glad to see you are nothing daunted. Anything I or others may send you is mere justice in helping you to purchase arms and ammunition for the fight."

J. M. U. says: "Under the name of 'Devonian' it was my privilege to head your Defence Fund when you were the victim of Christian bigotry, and I have much pleasure in advancing you £12 in your present misfortune." We hope our correspondent will not fail to introduce himself after the lecture at Milton Hall.

H. OWEN.—Many thanks. Those who send promptly render us the best assistance.

W. B. F. sends cheque, and adds "much honor is due to Mr. Moss for beginning the subscription."

T. H. STOKES points out that the Hodges and Chalker affair we dealt with last week did not occur at Bristol but at Street, Somerset, near Bristol.

WELL-WISHER.—Not likely.

J. KING writes: "I am exceedingly gratified with the contents of this month's *Progress*. Such a magazine deserves the support of every *Freethinker*." Our correspondent is quite right in his remarks on the use of "either," but unfortunately language is still a very imperfect instrument.

W. C. SAVILLE.—Shall appear. A Radical Association objecting to *Freethinkers* is a species of suicide. *Freethinkers* furnish a very large (perhaps the largest) part of the working strength of Radicalism, not only in England but in every other country.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Echo—Chicago Tribune—Liberal—Scripture Reader's Journal—Boston Herald—Liberator—Truth-seeker—Republican—Boston Investigator—Evening Chronicle—Lucifer—Todmorden Advertiser—Dublin Evening Mail—Ironclad Age—South Wales Daily News—Birmingham Daily Mail—Stroud News.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS morning (Aug. 15) Mr. Foote delivers an open-air lecture in Regent's Park, and a big audience is expected. In the evening he lectures at Milton Hall.

MR. FOOTE lectured at West Hartlepool last Sunday, and considering the fine weather there were very good audiences. Several friends came over from Stockton and other places. The evening lecture, "An Hour in Hell" was especially relished, the audience laughing at one minute and applauding the next, and giving the lecturer quite an ovation at the close.

AS Mr. Foote was walking to the theatre for the morning lecture he was accosted by a pale-faced wild-eyed woman in black who seemed connected with the Salvation Army. "Are you Mr. Foote?" she inquired. "I am," was the reply. "Then," she rejoined, "I am ordered by my Master to tell you that you are not satisfied with going to hell yourself, but you drag other people to hell with you." It was no use talking to the frenzied female, so Mr. Foote thanked her for her solicitude about his future temperature, and wished her good-day, much to her annoyance, for she was evidently bent on working up a scene in the street. She spent the rest of the morning at the theatre door, button-holing the people as they came up, and begging them in God's name not to listen to that infidel. She was of course treated good humoredly; but what would have happened if a female *Freethinker* had stationed herself at the nearest church door and tried to divert the congregation from their pews? We suspect the policeman would have been sent for immediately.

PERHAPS this is an opportune place to remark on the wanton brutality of the police who dragged Mrs. Blackwell through the streets to the police-station last Sunday afternoon for distributing *Freethinker Tracts* in Regent's Park. This may be an offence against the regulations, but it did not warrant her being dragged

along and bruised and made ill. Perhaps some North London Freethinker will inform us what are the Regent's Park regulations upon this subject.

AN erratic Christian, hailing from Leicester, has notified that our latter end is fast approaching, so fast indeed that we shall barely have time to edit another number of the *Freethinker*. "Know," he says, "that from the date of your reading this within seven days you shall be attacked with a fearful disease and that upon your death occurring you shall suffer the torments of hell." This genial prophet also informs us, though it sounds paradoxical, that we shall see ourselves put in the coffin and buried. We print this as a "Sugar Plum" for the many Christians who read this paper in spite of themselves, like the monkeys Darwin refers to, who could not help looking into the frightful snake basket. This pious gentleman has evidently been reading the *Cursing Psalm* or Jesus Christ's diatribe on the scribes and Pharisees, for he calls us, "fool, liar, devil, damned spawn of hell"—but we must pause here, the rest of his epithets being too Biblical for repetition. He is a very fair sample of Christian charity. Yet on the whole his epithets and prophecies are preferable to Judge North's politer twelve months.

A FEW copies of *Prisoner for Blasphemy* have been saved from the fire. There are a hundred copies a little soiled, but quite readable, which will be sold by Mr. Ramsey for sixpence each (postage 1½d.) The rest are in good condition, and will sell at the old price—in paper covers, 1s. 6d.; bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE Battersea Branch has commenced open-air propaganda on Clapham Common. Last Sunday afternoon, however, the Christian roughs were very troublesome. We hope the stand will be well supported this afternoon (Aug. 15). The time of meeting is three o'clock. Probably a bold front shown once will quiet these rowdies for the rest of the season.

ANOTHER good chapel gone wrong. On Sunday next the Croydon Branch of the N. S. S. opens as a Secular hall the late Wesleyan Chapel, Church Street, close to the Conservative Club, Croydon. Mr. F. Haslam will lecture on the "Fall of Man." We trust the Croydon Branch will be well supported.

How these Christians love one another! Not satisfied with keeping the Jews off his Haymarket estate, the Marquis of Salisbury refuses to grant the Wesleyans of Hatfield a site for a new chapel. At the recent Wesleyan Conference in London, Mr. Harrison (of Whalley) read an extract from a lease drawn out in Lancashire, which prohibited the building of a public-house or chapel, or "any other nuisance."

WE continue to receive the *Liberal*, which is published at the Freethought township of that name in America. It is to be wished that the paper were better printed, for it is a pain to the eyes to read it at present. From as much as we can decipher without losing our sight, we gather that the little Freethought colony is duly flourishing. It has no public-house or church, but we read of a college and an orphanage, which are excellent substitutes.

WE are pleased to announce that Mr. Gerald Massey will deliver a course of lectures on literature, evolution and religion, in St. George's Hall, Langham Place, on Tuesdays and Fridays from August 31 to October 1. Mr. Massey is a thorough-going evolutionist and disbeliever in historical Christianity. Having heard and read some of his lectures, we can safely promise an intellectual treat to those who attend.

THE *Todmorden Advertiser* gives nearly four columns to the report of a lecture by Mr. J. Learoyd, of the district branch of the National Secular Society, in reply to the Vicar of Hepton-stall.

THE Liberation Society has issued a number of new pamphlets. Among them are *State Churchism: its Rise and Decline*, *The Church Property Question*, *The New Reformation*, *Disestablishment in Wales*, *Bishop Ryle on the Establishment*, etc.

BISHOP RYLE is reported as declaring "There is not a respectable insurance office in London that would insure the life of the Establishment for twenty years." No wonder some Churchmen are crying for reform in order to stave off the evil day.

BURN T O U T.

WE have given up all idea of recovering anything from the Insurance Company. Technically, they have the advantage, and we are not inclined to fling good money after bad into the bottomless pit of law. While writing on this point, we may as well correct a misapprehension which exists in some minds. Our insurance policy was dated up to next Christmas, and the tremendously increased premium we referred to was not demanded for a renewal, but on account of a supposed extra risk during the remainder of the current year, through the letting of the upper part of

the premises. Trebling the premium seemed so extravagant that we protested against it, and requested a reconsideration of the matter. The fire could not have happened at a more unfortunate moment. We must admit that the Lord is sharper than we thought him. Another time we shall be prepared for him, and as our publishing stock will be (so to speak) partly mortgaged to those who have lent us their money to continue the business, we shall take care that it is fully insured at every moment at whatever cost.

Subscriptions are flowing in apace. We heartily thank the many friends who have come, and are coming, to our assistance. Their prompt generosity has lightened our burden and brightened our prospect. They tell us we deserve their support; at any rate, we hope to justify their confidence.

We also publish a further and larger list of loans. In some cases the lenders refuse to take interest. In all other cases we send a copy of the following voucher:

"Six months after notice in writing sent to me by registered letter, I promise to pay [Mr. A. B.] or order the sum of for money lent me, and meanwhile to pay interest on the same at the rate of five per cent. per annum."

This voucher is properly stamped, according to the amount of the loan, and is perfectly valid. Mr. Bradlaugh gave us his advice on this point, and his legal opinion is worth that of any lawyer's in England.

We still need funds, for our publishing business cannot be carried on without a good deal of capital invested in stock. But the security is a sound one, and we offer a fair rate of interest. We venture, therefore, to hope that our friends and supporters will place the funds we require at our disposal, so that we may carry on the war against superstition with the old, and even more than the old, vigor and effectiveness.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—H. T. B., 2s. 6d.; John Bell, 5s.; E. Clare, 10s.; T. G. Reeves, £1 1s.; Poor Old Man, 10s.; James Gray, 1s.; E. Hickman, £1; J. Crabtree, 10s.; Charles Chase, 2s. 6d.; Ellen Chase, 1s.; South Shields Branch N. S. S., £1; T. Chapman, 2s. 6d.; R. C., 2s. 6d.; A. Justins, 2s.; G. Payne, £10 10s.; Jaques, 1s.; A. Friend, 2s. 6d.; J. King, 5s.; Well Washer, 2s.; J. H. Stokes, 1s.; W. B. F., £2; Atheist Sculptor, 5s.; Dr. W. Mortimer, 10s.; Young Devon, 1s.; J. H. Whitham, 5s. *Liverpool* (per W. Ward): W. Ward, 2s.; C. Chappel, 6d.; C. S., 1s.; W. Sweizer, 1s.; W. Newcombe, 1s.; J. Tanner, 10s.; J. W., 10s.; F. Clark, 6d.; H. Meek, 2s.; C. D., 1s.; J. Thoms, 1s. *Young Freethinker*, 1s.; B. Dawson, 2s. 6d.; W. Hart, 2s.; G. Thackeray, 1s.; A. Pomeroy, 5s.; A. W. P., 1s.; M. A. T., 6d.; R. H. Dyas, 10s.; C. Tupman, £1; J. W. Hare, 10s.; W. H. Harris, 2s.; J. Graham, 3s.; A. Tarleton, 1s. 6d.; J. S., 1s.; E. L. G. (Glasgow), £5; J. Schofield, 2s. 6d.; J. M. D. Worsnop, 2s. 6d.; A. Anderson, 2s. 6d.; James Gray, 1s.; J. Caspar, 10s.

LOANS.—T. W., £50; Humphrey Owen, £10; J. M. U., £12; Edward Brooks, £5.

Erratum.—The ten guineas from G. Payne, acknowledged last week as a loan, should have been a subscription.

A CHRISTIAN CREED.

THE Rev. George Brooks sent a letter to the leading statesmen of both parties, asking for a definition of their principles, and the results of these inquiries were duly set forth in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mr. G. A. Gaskell, of Bradford, thought this a good opportunity for making a similar inquiry into the principles of the Christianity of which the Rev. George Brooks is one of many discordant professors and preachers. So, imitating the reverend gentleman's original letter of inquiry, with only the slight alterations necessitated by the substitution of "Christianity" for "Liberalism" or "Conservatism," he sent off the following:

"REV. SIR,—Will you kindly inform me what in your judgment are the fundamental principles of true Christianity, and where those principles are most fully and clearly stated? Wh are the ablest and most authoritative exponents of the religious doctrines commonly adopted by Protestant Christians? My reason for asking these questions is that considerable confusion and uncertainty seem to exist in regard to what constitutes true Christianity. A congregation of church members, as things go now, has no standard by which to judge of the religious conduct and teaching of a clergyman—that is, to determine whether he has been faithful to Christian principles or not. I think you will see the point of difficulty. An answer as full and complete as you can make it will be regarded as a favor. I trust that you will give permission for your answer to be published.—I am, etc.,
"To the Rev. George Brooks. "G. A. GASKELL."

The catechised parson has the courage to answer this challenge in an article entitled "The Christian Creed," which appears in the *Christian Commonwealth*. But the answer is a lame one. It is the answer of the theological ostrich that remains blind to all unpleasant difficulties. The New Testament is given as the all-sufficient Christian creed, and Christ, John, Paul, Peter and James, as among the ablest and most authoritative exponents of Protestant Christianity. But as this may be objected to as vague, some particulars supposed to be more definite are given. These consist of the usual theological statements that Jesus is the son of the living God and that he died for our sins, and so forth. The only practical or quasi-practical guidance is in the paragraph which says that salvation requires among other conditions "complete submission to the will of God." But whether this complete submission requires us to kill witches and stone Sabbath-breakers and heretics, as commanded by God in the Old Testament, or to sell all we have and resist not evil and take no thought for the morrow, as we are foolishly commanded by God in the New Testament, the reverend exponent of this practical Christian creed does not choose to tell us. He likes the glamor of a sweeping phrase that does not descend to the suicidal particulars asked for by thoughtful minds aiming at sober reality rather than the intoxication of sentiment and religious feeling.

Mr. Brooks says that "all who truly repent, believe, and obey. . . constitute the true Church of Christ." But this does not enable us to decide whether Romanism, Lutheranism, Mormonism, Shakerism, or any other "ism" is the true form of Christianity. The proper Christian answer to Mr. Gaskell's inquiry concerning how we are to judge of the religious conduct and teaching of a clergyman would be that we are not to judge or condemn at all least we be judged and condemned ourselves. If the New Testament is the test, as Mr. Brooks holds, then no sect is truly Christian and no true Christian ever existed, for even Christ himself frequently acted in flagrant opposition to his own impossible teachings. He called down curses and woes, and he dooms men to endless torment for not believing in him. The New Testament is full of conflicting instructions. Two of its writers withstood each other to the face. But clerical ostriches like Mr. Brooks cannot "see the point of difficulty," because the New Testament furnishes us with a standard of conduct, and is the "only authoritative rule of faith and practice." Those blind leaders of the blind utterly ignore the patent fact that earnest men draw all manner of conflicting doctrines and rules from this vaunted standard, and hence the Bible has ever proved an apple of discord among individuals and among nations. It contains the ill-digested opinions of many ill-instructed minds, and is not even as good a guide to morality as the dictionary would be. Almost anything can be proved from this Bible. As Dr. Collier says in perfectly good faith, in his *Meditations upon the Essence of Christianity* (p. 95)—"The Bible itself has the valuable merit of containing whatever the interpreter wishes to say." Such a standard only enables men to support and justify their own opinions as infallible decisions of God. It gives no real trustworthy help in the way of practical guidance, and much help towards bitter quarrelling and obstinate fighting.

W. P. BALL.

NEW VERSION OF THE FIRST PSALM.
(Suggested by the poet Burns's rendering of the same.)

The man who preaches God is good,
But don't believe it though,
Shall get a yearly income of,
Say, fifteen thou. or so.

He preaches Jesus died to save
The whole of human kind,
And, with Pope's Indian savage, swears
That God is in the wind;

That man shall have a first-class seat
In regions high above—
Shall dwell for ever with the Lord,
And flap wings with the Dove.

But he who nurtures unbelief,
And dies, unwashed, in sin,
Shall with the Devil into hell
Most surely be pitched in.

For God created some to save,
And others so that he
Might plunge them headlong into hell
For all eternitie!

GEORGE GOODEVE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice in "Acid Drops" of your issue of August 1, some remarks on the annual report of the Bradford Secular Society that are calculated to convey an impression most unfair to our Society, and I hope you will give the following explanation a corner in your next issue, as some set-off to the hasty and harsh criticism you have chosen to indulge in in your present one. In February, 1885, our Society found itself in financial difficulties, the result of having in that season alone delivered fifty-four Freethought lectures, to every one of which the admission had been free; and it was necessity and not choice that caused us to sub-let our hall. The alternative course was to go blundering along, continuing to lose money every Sunday, and in the end we should have been owing a number of confiding tradesmen a lot of money it would have been utterly impossible for us to pay. We are not built that way in this district, and so we adopted the course which common sense and honesty both pointed out, and sub-let the hall.

It has been our custom to publish a yearly report and balance-sheet, showing every halfpenny received and the way it has been spent, and I venture to suggest if some other societies had the courage to do the same it would be more satisfactory both to the donors and others. We see nothing to be ashamed of in the present report and so we continued our usual practice and "incurred the expense of printing such a mean and miserable document." We have not been inactive either, but at elections, and by petitions, etc., have carried on our work as best we could. Only the Sunday before last we voted one pound for Freethought tracts for distribution, and also decided on having lectures so far as our funds allowed, if we could get a suitable hall (our tenancy of the last having expired). Your calling upon the present society to "either do something or wind up" is a piece of gross impertinence on your part, which nothing but your evident ignorance of the existing state of affairs here can in any degree palliate,—Yours truly,

J. THORNES, Sec.

[We print Mr. Thornes' letter in full, despite our restricted space, to show our love of fair play. When Mr. Thornes speaks of our "impertinence" in criticising the Report, he surely forgets that it was sent us presumably for notice. Mr. Thornes' explanation of the Society's inactivity is plausible, but he forgets to explain how the deficit was incurred. Under the mistaken notion that "free lectures" are the right thing—an idea which is excellent in theory but vicious in practice—the Society trusted to collections, that rarely amounted to a half, and sometimes not to a quarter of the expenses. Lecturers were also brought from London and elsewhere, and paid miserable fees, occasionally less than their railway fare and hotel bill, with never any balance for themselves. The experiment was a self-convicted failure, but still the Society persevered, not so much at its own expense as at the expense of the unfortunate lecturers who were systematically exploited in the interest of what was proved to be only a fad. We write this with the 1884 balance-sheet before us, which bears out every word we have uttered. For Mr. Thornes personally, and some of his colleagues, we have much respect, and his present sputter does not impair it. But we are sincerely impatient for our sin, and we do not retract a line; on the contrary, we repeat that the Bradford Secular Society should do something or wind up. To tell us that its operations are all that can be done in such a great town, is simply absurd, and twenty letters from Mr. Thornes will not alter our opinion.—Ed.]

REVIEWS.

The Duke of Somerset's Scepticism. By KENTISH BACHE. Parker and Co. One Penny.—A very poor criticism of a rather poor book.

The *Republican* for August contains a portrait and sketch of the late Lloyd Jones. Republicans throughout the country who believe in upholding the true flag of their political aspirations will regret to read the notice that on and after Sept. 1 this journal will be published under the title of the *Radical*.

God and His Book. Part II. By SALADIN. Stewart and Co.—We have already noticed the first part, and as the second ends in the middle of a sentence we must defer serious criticism till the work is completed. Meanwhile we may hint that the information it contains might easily be conveyed in a smaller space, which is a matter of importance in this busy age. As a matter of fact, too, the Hebrew myth of the Fall was not derived from India, but from Persia.

The Cursing Psalm. A Sermon by KENTISH BACHE. Parker and Co. One Penny.—Mr. Bache contends that the expressions in Psalms cix, "Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow," etc., were uttered not by David, but by his enemies. No doubt Mr. Bache deserves a reward of merit from the Christian Evidence Manufacturing Society for his valuable discovery, which seems hardly reconcilable with verses 17 and 20. But why did not the Holy Ghost make matters plain? The very translators were deceived and head the chapter, "Imprecations on the Wicked. David complains of his enemies."

PROFANE JOKES.

"A MEN has to feet." "He done it." This was what Superintendent B. B. Russell, of Brockton, placed upon the blackboard for the pupils to correct. This was the way one boy corrected it: "He didn't done it; God done it."

Bobby had spent the greater part of Sunday afternoon committing to memory the Lord's Prayer. As he knelt at his mother's knee at bed-time, he looked up to her and said: "Mamma, won't God be surprised when he finds I can say two prayers?"

A CONFECTIONER in Hastings buys out an unsuccessful tradesman's stock, amongst which is some "almond rock" which has been made a little too long. Wondering how he should dispose of them quickly he hit upon the happy expedient of placing them in his window so that the children going to Sunday-school could not fail to see them, and placed a label over them thus—"The Rock of Ages, 2d. per lb."

YOUNG ministers of the Scotch Church are obliged to preach a certain number of trial sermons, and the story is told of one probationer, who, when he offered the preliminary prayer, supplicated the Almighty on behalf of the Professor who had instructed him, and who was in the congregation. "Lord," said he, "have mercy on our Professor, for he is weak and very ignorant. Strengthen his feeble hands, confirm his tottering knees, and grant that he may go out and in before us like the he-goat before thy flock."

THE rector of the parish of Helland in Cornwall asked another preacher to take his place during his absence at the sea side. A day or two afterwards he received in reply a telegram in which the name of the parish had been read by some intelligent telegraphic clerk as two words. The clergyman's message ran thus: "Gone to Hill and will stay there till you come back."

ANOTHER tale of a somewhat similar mistake is that of the parson's wife who asked the railway porter the name of a country station where the train was just then stopping. "Elmham," replied the man. "What?" cried the astonished lady. "Elmham," he again replied. Next day an indignant complaint was forwarded to the board of directors, and the porter had to answer a charge of using dreadfully profane and insulting language.

36pp. Pamphlet, in colored Wrapper. Price 3d.

MRS. BESANT'S SOCIALISM.

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."—*Literary World*.
"Torrent of personal abuse and slander."—*Mrs. Besant in the National Reformer*.

"The most able, comprehensive, and vigorous reply to present-day Socialism that we have yet seen." "Should be read by all who wish to know the other side of her visionary picture."—*Freethinker*.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St., E.C.

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By ARTHUR B. MOSS.

SECOND EDITION. ONE SHILLING.

The *Middleboro News* says: "These essays are brimming with careful thought and judicious research."

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PROGRESS

The Freethinker's Magazine.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The AUGUST NUMBER contains—

- Defending the Faith. By the Editor.
- The Praise of Books. By S. Britton.
- Historical Sketches of Freethought in England. By J. M. Wheeler.
- Praise and Blame. By M. M.
- The Christian Miracles. By Lucianus.
- The Lover's Return. (A Poem.) By B.V.
- Maudsley on Supernaturalism. By Hero E. Jewel.
- Epictetus. By James Thomson (B.V.)
- Swinburne's Miscellanies. By Philip Sidney.
- Reviews.

Summer Number

OF THE FREETHINKER.

CONTENTS—

ILLUSTRATIONS.

- Captain Noah's Menagerie (Twelve Sketches) The Trinity Solvod. (Athanasius nowhere). Joseph Sold by his Brethren.
- Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image. Moses in the Bull-rushes.
- Hebrew Old Clothes. A God of Letters.
- The Confidence Trick. Salvation Howlers.
- Healing by Faith. Rustic Religion.
- A Celestial Conference.

ARTICLES.

- A Sermon on Sin. By G. W. Foote.
- Socialist Riots in Jerusalem. By J. M. Wheeler
- Eve's Diary. By W. P. Ball.
- A Seaside Sermon. By W. C. Saville.
- The Death of the Atheist's Child.
- The Apostles' Whit-Sunday Conference. By Scoffer.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- Samuel Called. By A. B. Moss.
- An Excursion to Heaven. By E. Vans.
- Discovery of a Letter by Mary Magdalene.
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