

# THE FREETHINKER

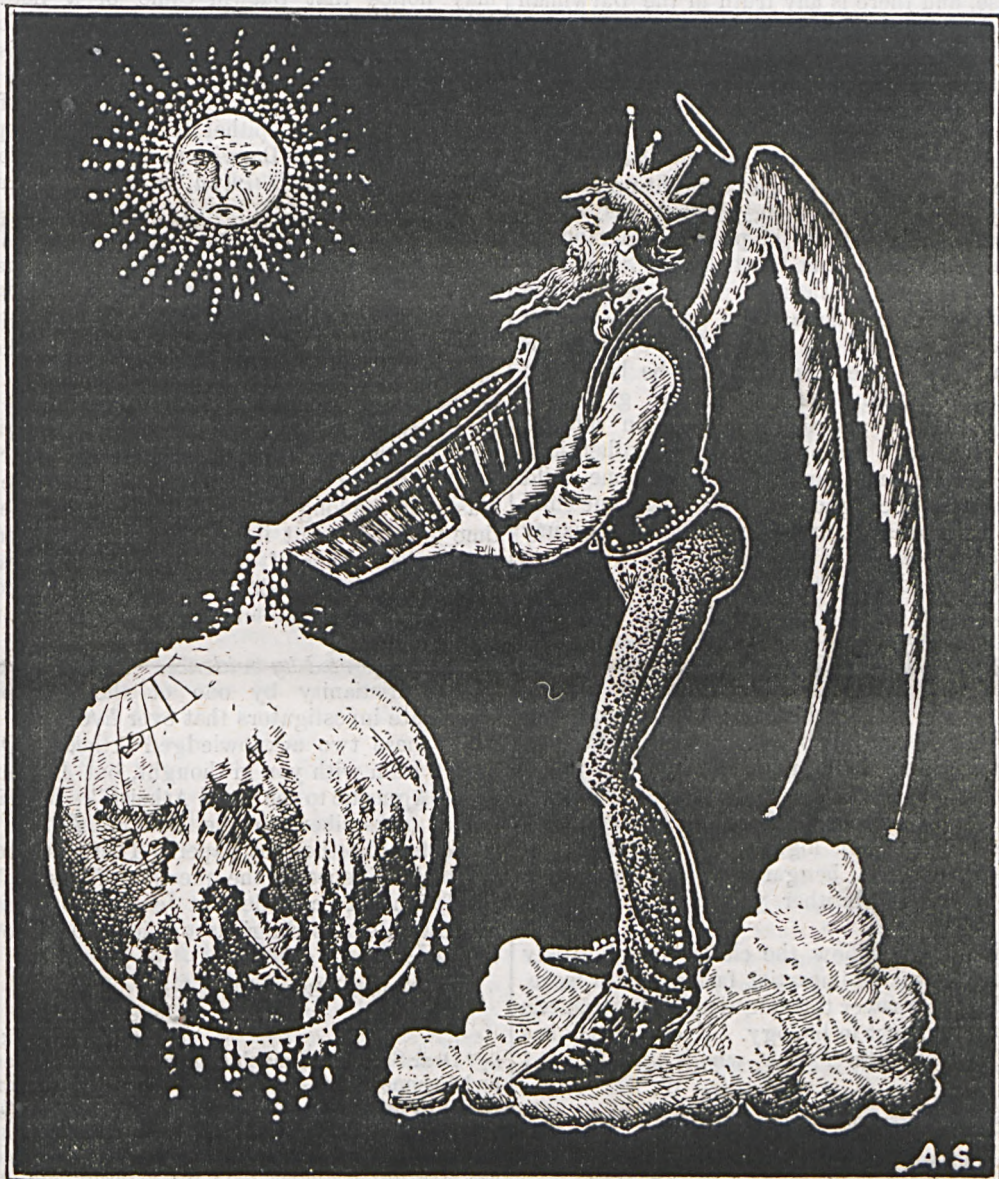
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.  
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 195.



## WASHING THE WORLD.

*And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die.—GENESIS VI., 17.*

*He that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name.—AMOS IX., 6.*

## OUR FATHER.

ASK the first man you meet, Who is his father, and he will tell you a certain gentleman, dead or alive, who had the honor of being responsible for his introduction to the world, who fed, clothed, and educated him, and finally placed him where he could earn his own living. If you were to inform him that the gentleman he referred to was *not* his father, he would certainly be surprised, and probably angry, for it seems a reflection on the character of his mother, besides insinuating that he is a bastard. Yet, if you and he were both Christians, the observation would be perfectly accurate. The Bible tells us that God is our father, and how can a man have two male parents? God is our *real* father; he gave us breath and

life; and the Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, Mr. Brown, or Mr. Robinson, who settled the doctor's bill for our mother's confinement, was a mere accidental link in the chain of events. Such is the logical conclusion of theology, yet it is scarcely accepted by a single human being. Nature is too strong for religion, so a compromise is patched up to avoid a ceaseless war, and every Christian has *two* fathers, one on earth and one in heaven, one for this life and one for the next, one for time and one for eternity.

Not only did God make "the grand old gardener," as Tennyson calls him, the apple-eating sinner from whom we have all descended, but he "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," and Jesus Christ distinctly tells us to call him "Our Father" every time we address him. No doubt, it sounds very pretty, but it is a frightful sham. In the first place, Where is "Our Father"? The Lord's Prayer informs us,

"In Heaven." That is a very uncertain address. At any rate, it is infinitely remote; and as we must all die before we stand a *chance* of going there, the prospect of ever shaking Our Father by the hand is extremely indefinite. Besides, it is getting very doubtful whether there is any Heaven at all; and if the place should be finally disestablished, Our Father will either disappear with it, or remove to a fresh address, which may be still more inaccessible.

In the next place, it is hard to understand how God can be the father of all men. The human species is very various. There are all colors, from black to white; all sizes, from the tall Patagonian to the stunted African bushmen; and all shapes, from the handsome Circassian to the repulsive aborigines of Australia. Surely, if God is the father of all these, and there is any truth in the Darwinian law of heredity, he is a very composite being.

Further, it is no less hard to understand Our Father's partiality. What should we think of a human father who lapped one child in luxury, surrounded him with every delight of spirit and sense, gave him the highest education wealth could purchase, and leisure to pursue exalted aims or gratify his personal tastes; and who brought up another child in an outhouse, starved him, vitiated his blood, wrecked his constitution, kept him in perfect ignorance of good, and taught him nothing but bestiality? Should we not cry shame on such a father? Nay, would not the law interfere, and make him pay a better regard to the duties of a parent? Yet God is precisely such a father. He lets one child be born in a palace, and another in a hovel or a slum. He gives one child plenty of good food, and feeds another on ruff-raff. He places one child in a happy home, and another in a hideous school of vice and crime. He gives one child learning, and keeps another ignorant. He makes one child work hard for a bare pittance, and keeps another in luxury without labor from the cradle to the grave. Mr. Gladstone and Currell are both God's children, so are Shakespeare and the village idiot, and so are the Prince of Wales and the last pauper who was buried in a parish egg-case.

One day a beggar called on a parson. The man of God gave him a penny, and invited him in to say a prayer. The couple fell on their knees, and the parson began: "Our Father—." "Stop," said the beggar, "*your* father you mean?" "No," answered the parson, "*Our* father; God is the father of all." "Then you and I are brothers," said the beggar. "Ye-e-s," stammered the parson, who was taken aback by this swift logic. "Well, now," rejoined the beggar, "what a beggar *you* are to give a paltry penny to your poor brother you haven't seen all these years."

We should like to know how the clergy could satisfy that beggar that God was an impartial father. Still more, we should like them to answer this question. Monogenesis may do in theology, but not in biology. Every person has two parents, and if God is Our Father, who is Our Mother?  
G. W. FOOTE.

#### DARWIN'S RELIGION.

An esteemed French correspondent, to whom I sent a copy of the April number of *Progress*, astonishes me by questioning if the name of Darwin should appear in the "Brief Freethought Biographies." My correspondent, who is himself the author of many popular French Freethought volumes, is fully aware that the influence of Darwin's works is in the direction of Freethought, but he asks was he not personally a Christian? Fortunately the answer is easy. No, Darwin was not a Christian. He rejected all the essential features of Christianity. The evidence is indisputable. Yet since the biological Jews of Darwin are found to be held by all those most competent to judge upon the subject, many are the attempts being made to reconcile Darwinism and orthodoxy. The old school, worthily represented by Dean Burgon, repudiates any such compromise. The more astute try their best to be on good terms with Science, whom they see to be the coming king. Bishop Magee professes to see in evolution the best possible proofs of design, and nothing antagonistic to Christianity whatever. The ease with which ministers, whose salaries are in question, will reconcile the belief in evolution with the manufacture of Eve from Adam's rib may amaze us sufficiently to take

away all wonder that some of their deluded followers, unaware of any declarations to the contrary, conclude that Darwin was a good Christian. The concrete fact that he was buried in Westminster Abbey necessarily bulks more in their eyes than any abstract consideration of what must have been his principles. They are oblivious of the fact that the religious papers at the time denounced this burial as a desecration of the Christian, I should say national, edifice. They are unaware that our unsecularised Pantheon contains the ashes of many great men of questionable orthodoxy, and of at least one Atheist, George Grote, the historian.

My friend's letter suggests that since "truth never can be confirmed enough," it may be well to bring together some of the evidence that the Newton of the nineteenth century was outside the creeds. And in the first place we may notice that Darwin came of a heterodox family. His grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, chiefly for his speculations in his *Zoomania*, was accused of Atheism. A standard biographical dictionary calls it "a work in which atheism is unblushingly avowed." The accusation of Atheism was, however, false, the epithet being loosely applied to all disbelievers. Charles Darwin, in his introduction to Krause's *Life of Erasmus Darwin*, writes of his grandfather:

"Although Dr. Darwin is certainly a Theist in the ordinary sense of the term, he disbelieved in any revelation. Nor did he feel much respect for Unitarianism, for he used to say that 'Unitarianism was a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian.'"

The Unitarians, however, boast that Darwin's own father, Robert Waring Darwin, reposed on their feather-bed; at any rate, he attended their chapel at Shrewsbury, and a tablet is erected to his memory therein. Darwin was brought up in an atmosphere of heterodoxy. In a conversation with Drs. Ludwig Buchner and E. B. Aveling he said, "I never gave up Christianity until I was forty years of age." Asked the reason of the long delay, Darwin replied he had not had time to think about it. "On further inquiry he told us that he had, when of mature years, investigated the claims of Christianity. Asked why he had abandoned it, the reply, simple and all-sufficient, was, 'It is not supported by evidence.'"

*Not supported by evidence.* That is the verdict passed upon Christianity by one of the most patient and dispassionate investigators that ever lived.

To these two acknowledged Atheists, Darwin further said, "I am with you in thought, but I should prefer the word Agnostic to the word Atheist." Darwin, it is known, was a subscriber to the *Boston Index*, an American Agnostic Freethought paper. There is, moreover, documentary evidence on the question of Darwin's rejection of revelation. To a student at Jena, who pressed him for an expression of his religious opinions, he wrote a letter as follows:—

"To Nicholas Baron Mengden,

"June 5, 1879,

"Down, Beckenham, Kent.

"Dear Sir,—I am much engaged, an old man and out of health, and I cannot spare time to answer your question fully—provided it can be answered. *Science has nothing to do with Christ*; except in so far as the habit of scientific research makes a man cautious in admitting evidence. *For myself I do not believe that there ever has been any revelation.* As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities.

"Wishing you happiness.

"I remain, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"CHARLES DARWIN."

In the first English report of this letter, as translated from a German version, a comma only was placed at the word revelation, which induced the artful suggestion, copied into the religious papers, that Darwin only intended to express his disbelief in any revelation as to a future life. Dr. Ernest Haeckel, however, knocked this pretty subterfuge on the head by sending a copy of the original English text, with a full stop at the word Revelation, to the *Academy* for November 4th, 1882, whence I have exactly transcribed it.

In a letter to the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, December, 1882, Dr. Robert Lewins, after commenting on the letter of Mr. Darwin to Baron Mengden, says:

"I may, without violation of any confidence, mention that, both *viva voce* and in writing, Mr. Darwin was much less reticent to myself than in this letter to Jena. For, in answer to the direct question, I felt myself justified some years since in addressing to the immortal expert in biology, as to the bearing of his researches

on the existence of an 'Anima' or 'Soul' in Man, he distinctly stated that, in his opinion, a vital or 'spiritual' principle apart from inherent somatic energy, had no more *locus standi* in the human than in the other races of the Animal Kingdom—a conclusion that seems a mere corollary of, or indeed a position tantamount with, his essential doctrine of human and bestial identity of nature and genesis."

In face of this evidence, Christians may do what they please to reconcile the doctrines of Darwinism with their crude superstitions, but they can never stultify the character of Darwin by claiming for those superstitions the sanction of his honored name.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### INGERSOLL ON FATHER MCGLYNN.

(From the Brooklyn Times.)

THE attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in Dr. McGlynn's case is consistent with the history and constitution of the Catholic Church, perfectly consistent with its ends, its objects, and its means, and just as perfectly inconsistent with intellectual liberty and the real civilisation of the human race. When a man becomes a Catholic priest, he has been convinced that he ought not to think for himself upon religious questions. He has become convinced that the Church is the only teacher, that he has a right to think only to enforce its teachings. From that moment he is a moral machine. The chief engineer resides at Rome, and he gives his orders through certain assistant engineers until the one is reached who turns the crank, and the machine has nothing to say one way or the other. This machine is paid for giving up his liberty by having machines under him who have also given up theirs. While somebody else turns his crank, he has the pleasure of turning a crank belonging to somebody below him.

Of course, the Catholic Church is supposed to be the only perfect institution on earth. All others are not only imperfect, but unnecessary. All others have been made either by man or by the devil, or by a partnership, and consequently cannot be depended upon for the civilisation of man.

The Catholic Church gets its power directly from God, and is the only institution now in the world founded by God. There was never any other so far as I know, except polygamy and slavery and a crude kind of monarchy, and they have been, for the most part, abolished.

What right has a priest to go into the thinking business? He must kiss the toe of the Pope, and even a corn on that toe has a far better right to think than he. And anyone who has bowed to this authority can only regain his independence by open revolt.

The Catholic Church must be true to itself. It must claim everything, and get what it can. It alone is infallible. It alone has all the wisdom of this world. It alone has the right to exist. All other interests are secondary. To be a Catholic is of the first importance. Human liberty is nothing. Wealth, position, food, clothing, reputation, happiness—all these are less than worthless compared with what the Catholic Church promises to the man who will throw all these away.

A priest must preach what his bishop tells him. A bishop must preach what his archbishop tells him. The Pope must preach what he says God tells him.

Dr. McGlynn cannot make a compromise with the Catholic Church. It never compromises when it is in the majority. Now and then a priest, or a member, who wishes to do a little thinking for himself—one who wishes to have a little freedom—says to the Catholic Church, as the rooster did to the horse, "Let us agree not to step on each other's feet"; but the Church never makes the agreement.

I do not mean by this that the Catholic Church is worse than any other. All are alike in this regard. Every sect, no matter how insignificant—every Church, no matter how powerful, asks precisely the same thing from every member—that is to say, a surrender of intellectual freedom. The Catholic Church wants the same as the Baptist, the Presbyterian, and the Methodist—it wants the whole earth. It is ambitious to be the one supreme power. It hopes to see the world upon its knees, with all its tongues thrust out for wafers. It has the arrogance of humility and the ferocity of universal forgiveness. In this respect it resembles every sect. Every religion is a system of slavery.

Of course, the religionists say that they do not believe in persecution; that they do not believe in burning and hanging and whipping or loading a man with chains simply because he is an Infidel. They are willing to leave all this with God,

knowing that a being of infinite goodness will inflict all these horrors and tortures upon an honest man who differs from the Church.

In case Dr. McGlynn is deprived of his priestly functions, it is hard to say what effect it will have upon his Church and the labor party in this country.

So long as a man believes that a church has eternal joy in store for him, so long as he believes that a church holds within its hand the keys of heaven and hell, it will be hard to make him trade off the hope of everlasting happiness for a few good clothes and a little good food, and higher wages here. He finally thinks that, after all, he had better work for less and go a little hungry, and be an angel for ever.

I hope, however, that a good many people who have been supporting the Catholic Church by giving tithes of the wages of weariness, will see, and clearly see, that Catholicism is not their friend; that the Church cannot and will not support them; that, on the contrary, they must support the Church. I hope they will see that all the prayers have to be paid for, although not one has ever been answered. I hope they will perceive that the Church is on the side of wealth and power, that the mitre is the friend of the crown, that the altar is the sworn brother of the throne. I hope they will finally know that the Church cares infinitely more for the money of the millionaire than for the souls of the poor.

Of course, there are thousands of individual exceptions. I am speaking of the Church as an institution, as a corporation—and when I say the Church, I include all Churches. It is said of corporations in general that they have no soul, and it may truthfully be said of the Church that it has less than any other. It lives on alms. It gives nothing for what it gets. It has no sympathy. Beggars never weep over the misfortunes of other beggars.

Nothing could give me more pleasure than to see the Catholic Church on the side of human freedom—nothing more pleasure than to see the Catholics of the world—those who work and weep and toil—sensible enough to know that all the money paid for superstition is worse than lost. I wish they could see that the counting of beads and the saying of prayers and celebrating of masses—and that all the kneelings and censer-swingings, and fastings and bell-ringing, amount to less than nothing—that all these things tend only to the degradation of mankind. It is hard, I know, to find an antidote for a poison that was mingled with a mother's milk.

The laboring masses, so far as the Catholics are concerned, are filled with awe and wonder and fear about the Church. This fear began to grow while they were being rocked in their cradles, and they still imagine that the Church has some mysterious power; that it is in direct communication with some infinite personality that could, if it desired, strike them dead, or damn their souls for ever. Persons who have no such belief, who care nothing for popes, or priests or Churches, or heavens or hells, or devils or gods, have very little idea of the power of fear.

(To be concluded.)

## ACID DROPS.

PIOUS gambling is a ready means of procuring money for religious purposes. At St. John's Church, Bacup, sixpenny lottery tickets are issued, giving purchasers a chance of winning a cottage worth £150, or the cash to purchase one elsewhere if preferred. The next prize is a piano worth £40. Demoralisation, illegality, temptation to youth, matter little when the Church wants money. If other people organised such lotteries the police would prosecute. The Church enjoys an immunity in such wrong-doing, and it is time that it lost it. The law should be put in force against parsons just as it is against publicans and sinners.

LEWIS BURGESS, who startled the worshippers in Westminster Abbey by announcing that he had come as a judge, and that his hearers were to stay in hell and be damned, has been sent to the workhouse as a lunatic. Some at least of the biblical prophets were even more fit for the lunatic asylum. Lewis Burgess, who addressed his scraps of Scripture to "heathen Christians" and "ignorant infidels," appeared decently, if strangely, clad in a white jacket, with a large red heart on his breast. Isaiah went about naked for three years.

"KING SOLOMON'S MINES," by Rider Haggard, is being parodied in a burlesque novel called *King Solomon's Wives*, by Hyder Ragged. As this is a sacred subject the writer must beware of a prosecution for blasphemy.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Liberator* cites Hayter's statistics for the Colony of Victoria, from which it appears that at marriages

performed according to the Church of England 9 per cent. signed with marks; of Presbyterians, 8 per cent.; Roman Catholics, 22 per cent.; Unitarians, 3 per cent.; and Jews, 2.6 per cent. The Criminal Statistics show that the Roman Catholics contribute 30.53 prisoners to 10,000 of the population, the Jews 22.6, Protestants 16.13, "No Religion" 5.58.

ACCORDING to a Reuter's Telegram, Mr. Joseph Smith, son of the celebrated Mormon prophet, has been denouncing polygamy. Mr. Joseph Smith, junior, finds polygamy gave him too many brothers and sisters, so the good old Bible institution must go!

A LETTER of Cardinal Manning, referring to the question of the propriety of permitting Roman Catholics to become members of the Knights of Labor, shows that he at least desires the Church to throw its influence on the side of democracy. He says: "Hitherto the world has been governed by dynasties; henceforth the Holy See must deal with the people." Cardinal Manning thinks that he himself is qualified to become a Knight. If the Pope is as clear-sighted as the Cardinal, it is quite on the cards that the Church may try to modify its traditional policy of siding with the oppressors.

MISS WOLFE, who has just died at New York, has left nearly £200,000 for the erection and endowment of a cathedral for the Episcopal Church of the United States. She has also given her large house for the use of the bishops and clergy. Thus supernatural hopes and terrors are transmuted into abundant cash for the poor servants of Christ. The money is really obtained under false pretences and under the undue influence of a delusion.

DR. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, an able Scotch preacher, was so exceedingly nervous that the dropping of an umbrella, or a stick, in church, would keenly annoy him. The *Christian Herald* says: "The cause of this excessive nervousness of temperament is said to have been a startling shock he received while he was a young minister in Liverpool. In conducting a funeral service, he had just read the solemn words, 'For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised,' when, almost into his very ear, a man among those present blew a loud trumpet blast! The effect on the young minister was overpowering, and he was completely unnerved. Throughout his life he is said to have felt the effect of this shock." This illustrates two points, the effect of religious terrorism in unnerving people, and the slight amount of fortitude which religious belief communicates to Christians in resisting the effects of fright and panic. Many minds are ruined for life by religious fear and are driven into the lunatic asylum.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* falls foul of Spurgeon for blowing a pæan, as it says, "on the big tabernacle trumpet to the praise and glory of the Calvinists." He is described as being on "the down grade," and as irritating vast numbers of Christians, at whom he aims the dart as heretics, first of course dipping the dart in his own favorite heresy. Christians are always quarrelling and accusing each other of heresy, yet the *Christian Commonwealth* continually talks of Christian unity as if the rash dream were a practical scheme. The failure of two thousand years counts as nothing. Christian visionaries are as sanguine as ever. No amount of fact weighs against the mighty force of delusion.

THE *Church Times*, in an article on "The Marriage Laws," brings out the distinction between Christian and Secular Morality. It censures the Upper House of the Canterbury Convocates for timidly advising that the innocent party in a divorce suit should not marry during the life-time of the other. It justly says it is not their business or anybody's business to discountenance marriages that are lawful, but such marriages are not lawful, but forbidden by Scripture. So that Scripture, as interpreted by the *Church Times*, would condemn any married person whose partner was unfaithful to celibacy for the rest of his or her days.

AT St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Winchester, Mrs. A. Hiron suddenly died through the bursting of a blood-vessel during prayer.

THE Rev. Albert James Sumner, of Malin's Lee, Shropshire, described as an interesting young curate, has had to drop £100 as a solace to the wounded feelings of Miss Kate Robson, a schoolmistress of Lincoln, to whom he had promised marriage. He had broken off the engagement and married another lady.

THE Rev. George Mingins, of New York, said in the course of a sermon the other day: "The churches are full of pious humbugs. You can't walk forty yards without dislocating your shoulder by running against one. We have got lots of dignified Christianity that won't touch anything in rags." What do his brother parsons think of this denunciation? Probably that it is more true than pleasant.

THE Russian priests are exasperated by an order from the Holy Synod, which prevents them from receiving money of penitents at confession, and also disallows collections during divine service. The faithful are to confine their offerings to the poor-boxes at the door of the church. The peasantry are delighted.

The clergy naturally see Atheism and the ruin of religion in the new regulations.

G. W. CLEMENTS, B.A., son of a clergyman, has just been sentenced to six weeks' hard labor for stealing books from the Oxford Union Society. Edith Boyden, daughter of a clergyman, was charged at the Birmingham police-court with stealing various articles. The bench only imposed a penalty of £5, being somewhat influenced by the plea of kleptomania. Clergymen seem to be quite as liable to have their children go wrong as other people, in spite of the vaunted advantages of Christian training and example.

IN France they have an Anti-Atheistic League presided over by M. Jules Simon. It does not, however, receive much attention from the working classes.

The *Christian Herald* narrates what it terms a "beautiful incident" of a child on a shipwrecked steamer, who cried out, "Save me next." This, says the *Christian Herald*, "is a cry that ought to go up from millions of hearts. The barque of life will go down some day, and if we are not saved in Christ, we must be eternally lost." It is the general selfishness of the frantic desire to be saved next that causes so much mischief in sinking ships. The craving for personal safety has nothing "beautiful," or commendable, about it, but panic-stricken Christians naturally like to persuade themselves that their selfish longings are grand and noble. If the child had asked the sailors to save *somebody else* first, the incident would have been a beautiful one to those who do not accept Christian selfishness as their ideal of moral goodness.

SUNDAY music at the Leeds Coliseum is put down by a prosecution. It was shown that a charge was made for admission to certain parts of the hall, and the secretary had to give an undertaking to the magistrate that he would not repeat the dreadful offence of having music on a Sunday. Music, it is notorious, hath charms to soothe the savage breast, that is, it is a great civilising agent. But Christianity is jealous of rivalry.

A YOUNG man of the Jewish persuasion complained at the Thames police-court of the intolerance of the police and others, who wouldn't let him say his prayers in his own fashion. This poor persecuted martyr went to the Jewish Shelter for the poor, in Leman Street, Whitechapel, and commenced praying aloud according, as he says, to the rule of his faith. Other poor Jews in the Shelter complained that he was annoying them by praying so loudly, and asked him to stop. Of course, having God on his side, he declined to consider the comfort of his fellow mortals. Finally he had to be ejected by the police. Mr. Lushington's remarks gave but cold consolation to the enthusiastic pietist. They amounted to a verdict of "Serve you right."

B. T. FRANCIS, a prominent member of the Church Army, has committed suicide by drowning himself in the Grosvenor Canal. He was "very religiously inclined," and shortly before his death he read several pages of the Bible aloud and talked upon various passages. Once he was taken home by a policeman, and was ejaculating Scriptural phrases all the time. The kind Christians who make Atheism responsible for all suicide are evidently not always accurate. Religious suicides are frequently reported in the papers. The suicide of a Freethinker is seldom heard of.

The *Rock* says that the excess of Roman Catholics over Protestants in India is to be accounted for by the fact that the former have been there very much longer than the latter, and "that in olden days the Portuguese used to compel natives to be baptised, as was the case with the Spanish in Mexico and Peru." The Catholic writer, T. W. Marshall, in his work on Christian Missions, gives plenty of evidence that Protestants have also used compulsion, and the *Rock* ignores the fact that St. Francis Xavier was far more successful in India, three hundred years ago, than any Protestant missionary since.

CHARLES DOREY, chief cashier of the Brighton Union Band, has been sent to prison for twelve months with hard labor for embezzlement. He was assistant-secretary to the Irish Church Missionary Society.

#### THE TRINITY ILLUSTRATED.

SCENE: Clerkenwell Green. Christian Friend: "Yes, my dear friends, even the doctrine of the Trinity may be explained in sweet reasonableness. Do you perceive for instance the *three* men in that cart? There you have a symbol of that holy mystery the three in one."

1st Sceptic: "I think I might begin to understand the sweet reasonableness if you would show me *one* man in *three* carts."

2nd Sceptic: "The matter would, I think, be simplified if we could see *three* carts in *one* man."

3rd Sceptic: "All my wavering faith demands, is to see *one* cart in *three* men."

4th Sceptic: "I want three carts who are one man or three men who are one cart. The 'Carmen' who is one girl is the only approach to a solution I know of."

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 24, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, "Ghosts and Gods."

MAY 1, Camberwell; 8, Portsmouth; 15, Bristol; 22, Ball's Pond; 29, N. S. S. Conference.

JUNE 5 and 12, Hall of Science, London.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 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.—Casa Bianca.

J. FOREMAN.—The pretended sentence of Pontius Pilate upon Jesus Christ is a bogus document to which no scholar gives any credence. The forger makes the same mistake as John in speaking of the year of the Pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas. The Jews never had but one high priest at a time, and his office was held during his life.

W. BECKETT.—Palestine is under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey and most of the inhabitants are Mohammedans, although there are many Jews and a sprinkling of Christians, some of the Greek Church, some Catholics, and some Protestants.

H. VIOLETT.—Communications for the *Freethinker* should be sent to the editor.

W. CABELL sends 10s. 6d. for Mr. Kemp.

W. HARDAKER.—Paine was born at Thetford in Norfolk. It is the house in which Dryden lived in Fetter Lane that is being pulled down.

W. MANUEL.—Your cutting about Ingersoll's conversion is dated Dec. 5, 1886. His own answer on the subject appeared in the *Freethinker's Magazine*, March 1887, and is referred to in our number for March 27.

JAMES MITCHENER, 1 Earl Street, Sloane Square, S.W., supplies the *Freethinker* and Freethought literature.

S. WILLIAMS.—The report we publish of the Debate between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote is not a reprint of the merely summary report which appeared in the *National Reformer*. It is a separate *verbatim* report, taken by a first-rate shorthand writer at considerable cost, and revised for the press by both disputants, making a handsome volume of 152 pages.

G. SYKES.—The mouse is mentioned in Lev. xi. 29, and Isaiah lxvi. 17.

J. O. YOUNG.—(1) "It is easier for a camel," etc. certainly implies something very like impossibility. Besides, Jesus told the young lawyer that he needed only one thing to be perfect, and that was to give all his wealth to the poor and become poor himself. (2) We scarcely agree with you as to Aberdeen. There are many Freethinkers in that godly city, and they would make headway if they had more grit in them. (3) Mr. Burns's opinion of Mr. Bradlaugh is not worth troubling about. He must be very hard pressed to justify his prejudice when he complains that Mr. Bradlaugh takes money for every lecture, for that gentleman gives many benefit lectures in the course of twelve months. Ordinarily, however, he takes what people pay to hear him, and if he hasn't a right to the money we should like to know who has. Mr. Bradlaugh lives by his tongue and pen, which is a perfectly honorable method of earning a living. And pray how do the Socialist lecturers live when they leave manual labor? (4) Glad to hear of your success in proselytising. Immense good can be done by private propaganda among acquaintances.

A. HEMINGWAY.—Inserted as desired.

A. E. W.—(1) Cardinal Newman left the English Church because faith logically leads to Rome. See his fascinating *History of My Religious Opinions*. (2) Nobody knows who was the first Bishop of Rome. Peter's bishopric is a pious legend. The fact is, the term bishop was very promiscuously used at first, and its fixed meaning was the work of many generations. There are also legendary Popes, but the first who assumed the title of Pontiff (an old dignity of Roman Paganism) was St. Damasus (366-381). (3) You ask "Supposing Christianity to be true, which is the right sect?" We should say Catholicism. The voice of the Church is the only warrant Protestants have for their Scriptures. (4) Yes, that or some other initials. (5) The *Freethinker* began in May, 1881. (6) Mr. Wheeler has not published a tract entitled *Hell and Heaven*.

W. R.—(1) There are many volumes on the Irish Question, but we do not know any which gives the *pros* and *cons* together. (2) Bohn's edition of Gibbon is the cheapest complete one. You had better get Hume second-hand. (3) We advise you to get Lewes's *Biographical History of Philosophy*, and Bain's *Moral Science*.

E. MOORE.—We respect every form of sincerity, but reserve our right to laugh at its intellectual extravagances.

J. BRADBURY.—Mr. Foote's Bristol lectures will be delivered in St. James's Hall, Cumberland Street.

J. ARCHER.—Mr. Ball's article in reply to the *Rock* anticipates the Bishop of Peterborough's objections to Atheism. Thanks, all the same.

J. YOUNG.—We have read it with interest.

A. BRYCE.—According to the Jew-books, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash of Israel, were contemporary with Joash of Judah. It appears from 1 Kings x., 32, that towards the end of Jehu's reign, Hazael

"smote them in all the coasts of Israel." He followed up his successes and oppressed Israel in the next reign. 2.—The "sun dial of Ahaz" is referred to, Isaiah xxxviii., 8, in connection with the miracle (which was, perhaps, worked by altering the inclination of the dial). There is no reason to suppose Ahaz invented it. Herodotus (ii., 109) tells us sun dials were used by Babylonians and Egyptians. Some think Ahaz got it from Tiglath-Pileser, king of the Assyrians. See 2 Kings xvi., 10, and xxiii., 12.

F. HART.—Mr. Foote acknowledges with thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—L'Union—Lucifer—Bohemian—Truthseeker—Rock—Liverpool Pink—Peterborough Advertiser—Y. Werin—Jus—Thinker—Western Figaro—Menschentum—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Independent Pulpit—Liberator—La Semaine Anticlericale—War Cry—Ironclad Age—Boston Investigator—Cape Mercury—Armory—British Messenger.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS.

COLONEL INGERSOLL is still alive and kicking, as our readers will see by the article of his we reproduce in another column. Considering that Ingersoll has been converted so many times, his obstinacy in preaching Freethought is simply miraculous. We shall be delighted to hear that he has recovered his voice and taken to the platform again. Now that Ward Beecher is gone, there is no one in America to hold a candle to him as a popular lecturer.

WE beg to call attention to the appeal from Manchester which appears in our advertisements. The Building Company, for securing a Secular Hall for the Freethinkers of that city, has made gratifying progress, but further support is needed before the purchase can be completed, and there is less than six weeks to find the necessary funds. We earnestly trust that no Freethinker in Manchester who can lend any assistance will withhold it, and we venture to hope that a few more sympathisers in other parts of the country will be found to give a helping hand. It is really difficult to overrate the vital importance of this scheme to the future of Freethought.

"HEAR prayers, deposit your hat, and your seat is your castle. That is the use of 'prayers' in the House of Commons—none other, except perhaps in the case of a very few sincere men; and the sooner, for religion's sake, this blasphemous farce is done away with the better."—*Echo*.

MR. FOOTE'S new pamphlet, *Royal Paupers*, will be ready on Monday. It is a Republican's contribution to the Jubilee, and like all the author's political pamphlets it is sure to be widely circulated.

OWING to the pressure of other work, such as seeing the new edition of *Crimes of Christianity* through the press, Mr. Foote's second instalment of *Bible Heroes* was somewhat delayed, and he tenders his apologies to the many purchasers who were kept waiting. Two new numbers are in preparation, and will be announced shortly. The work bids fair to rival *Bible Romances* in popularity. A new edition of the latter work is also in preparation.

DEAN BURGON'S violent attack on Canon Freemantle in this month's *Fortnightly Review* at any rate makes it clear that between Moses and Darwin there is a great gulf fixed which there is no possibility of bridging over. Adam, as Dean Burgon points out, is depicted in the Bible as of more than human sagacity. He knew his wife came from his bones, although in deep sleep at the time. Moreover, as the Dean points out, the chronology of Scripture cannot be stretched to make the creation date much above six thousand years ago.

THE *Echo* points out how the Freethinkers have denounced our foreign wars and sanguinary blunders while the ministers of the "Prince of Peace" were inexcusably silent. Three thousand two hundred Nonconforming clergymen have signed a protest against coercion in Ireland, but the *Echo* wants to know how many of them had the courage to protest against our military coercion in the Transvaal, in Egypt, and in the Soudan. They can protest when a large Liberal party is at their back. When the Liberal party itself is the culprit they are dumb dogs. They court popularity and they know on which side their bread is buttered.

WE see from the French journals that Continental Freethinkers have been, as usual, celebrating Good Friday by banquets.

A REPORTER of the *Paris* has taken the trouble to question a number—a hundred, he says—of Parisians of the male sex who abstained from meat on Good Friday as to the motive of this deviation from their usual practice. Several of them replied that they did so in deference to old custom, and because they saw most people around them doing so. Not a few declared that they abstained from choice, as they really enjoyed a fish dinner once in a way. Four ate fish to please their wives, four because their mothers asked them to do so, and one because he knew

would make a good impression on the mother of a young lady whom he hoped to marry. Three answered that they left their dinner *menu* entirely to their cook, and that she had sent up nothing but fish. Two of the number were strict vegetarians. A young clubman owned that he fasted simply because it was "chic." In only two cases was there any acknowledgment of a religious motive. One man answered, "because I am a Catholic," and another, while admitting that he never put foot inside a church by any chance, stated that he was "haunted by a remnant of belief" which indisposed him to a meat dinner on Good Friday.

The *Westminster Review* which, as our readers are aware, has now become a monthly magazine, puts on a new appearance. The articles are shorter than before, but they are all of a solid sterling character. The general policy of keeping them anonymous is preserved, although, in certain cases, the writers' names are given. In the present number, for instance, Mr. Oscar S. Strauss writes on "Religious Liberty in America." Mr. Strauss does not appear to apprehend much danger from the fanatics who want "God in the Constitution," and he quotes a treaty of Washington with Tripoli which directly declared that "the government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the *Christian religion*." There are other excellent articles, notably those on "Home Rule," "Physic in Japan," "State Directed Colonization," and "The Greville Memoirs."

MR. THOMAS WALKER, the well-known Australian Freethought lecturer, has been duly elected a member of the New South Wales Parliament, and has taken his seat as a representative of Northumberland (N.S.W.) We regret to notice that Mr. Walker did not raise the oath question.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S monograph upon Hume is the latest volume of the shilling issue of *English Men of Letters*, edited by John Morley. Freethinkers who have not yet read this little book will do well to procure it.

DR. VOELKEL, of Magdeburg, has issued a new *Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt*, as the central organ of the free religious party in Germany. The first number contains an article on the Secularisation of Hospitals, and a translation from M. J. Savage, of "Man in the Light of Evolution." We notice from the reports that Dr. L. Buchner, the famous author of *Force and Matter*, has been lecturing with success at Vienna.

### THE ROCK ON DESIGN.

THE *Rock* has been strengthening the foundations of Christianity by a leading article on the Design Argument. Of course one is not surprised to find the article characterised by signs of blindness, stupidity, and even dishonesty. Nevertheless its grandmotherly echoes of rampant dogmatism seem so evidently due to mental incapacity that it is not worth while being indignant even with what in a clear-sighted writer would be deliberate trickery and imposition.

The following sample illustrates the nature of the methods employed:

"In the audacities of unbelief at the present time there are those who deny that the world exhibits any proof of design. There was once a man who arrogantly said that if God had consulted him when He made the world he could have told Him how to make it better! We have even met with writers who have impugned the Divine skill and benevolence in the construction of the human eye. Comte, the author of the Positive Philosophy, takes on himself to criticise and censure Nature. But the great sceptical writers who have had an intellectual reputation to maintain have shrunk from any such extreme. Even the infidel Hume writes: 'The whole frame of Nature bespeaks an intelligent author, and no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion. . . . The whole chorus of Nature raises one hymn to the praise of the Creator.' And Dr. Darwin shrank from the assertions of some of those who would out-Darwinise Darwin. 'To suppose,' he writes, 'that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic observation,' is not designed, 'seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree.'"

Turning to Darwin's *Origin of Species* for the passage quoted, I find that the whole substance of Darwin's contention is that the formation of the eye by natural selection seems absurd, but is nevertheless true in fact. His next sentence to that quoted by the *Rock* shows this clearly enough to any but a Christian logician, for Darwin goes on to say:

"When it was first said that the sun stood still and the world turned round, the common sense of mankind declared the doctrine false; but the old saying of *Vox populi, vox Dei*, as every philosopher knows, cannot be trusted in science."

Darwin then proceeds to show the steps by which the

eye has been developed. The *Rock*—besides the comparatively innocuous substitution of the words "is not designed" for Darwin's words "could have been formed by natural selection"—simply quotes the part of Darwin's observations which will convey a thoroughly false impression of his views by being disjointed from the context.

The statement of Hume's views is also somewhat misleading. The latter part of the quotation is from the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, and is put into the mouth of Cleanthes, who, of the two disputants, *least* represents Hume's real views. The first part is from another work, the *Natural History of Religion*, and Hume, while undoubtedly commencing by accepting the design argument—thus conciliating orthodoxy and ordinary opinion as far as possible—yet also comes to the conclusion at the end of his inquiry into the Natural History of Religion that "The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject."

The *Rock* says truly enough that the design argument is one of the most varied, interesting, and instructive kind. But it makes a mistake in saying that as knowledge increases the evidences of design accumulate. The evidences of *adaptation* increase. Scientific men are continually discovering fresh proofs of multiform evolution through variation and survival of the fittest. But the *Rock* will not or cannot look this view fairly in the face. It asks the stupid old question "Was this world made by chance, or was it made by design?" and is perfectly blind to the consideration that these are not true alternatives and are *both* rejected by the scientific mind which believes in the reign of natural law. The apparent precedent improbability of the arrangement of atoms into the present "order and beauty of the processes of Nature" counts as nothing *after* the fact. It may be a billion to one *beforehand* against the existence of a Cæsar or a Shakespeare or a Buddha, but the relative improbability is no argument whatever against their actual existence.

The *Rock* is careful to let its readers know that it is sufficiently orthodox to reject the doctrine of evolution and sufficiently inaccurate, or inappreciative of facts, to state that Darwin never propounded this doctrine as more than an hypothesis. It holds that evolution does not necessarily conflict with design. "Darwin," it says, "thought that Nature might have been evolved from a single germ, but whence is he to obtain his single germ?" If he obtains it, the *Rock* alleges that God may have created this germ "on a conscious plan," and the germ then would "be in itself a design." Darwin certainly never thought that "Nature" (as the *Rock* has it) could arise from a single germ, but only that all the living things upon this earth have probably descended from a few original types and *may* have descended from only one original prototype. The incapacity for accurate thought which substitutes the universal expression "Nature" as a correct equivalent for the exceedingly small part of Nature possessing life, and which comfortably ignores *adaptation* as the scientific equivalent and explanation of the old theory of design, naturally sees in the reticence and modesty of Darwin's conclusions a still vacant space which the religious mind can fill up with an initial Creator or Designer or First Cause, although this hypothetical person or principle is quite foreign to the whole tone of Darwin's works and of science generally.

The worst of the design argument is that it proves too much. If the beneficial adaptations prove a benevolent designer, then equally the innumerable injurious and destructive adaptations demonstrate a malevolent designer. It is perfectly true that the teeth and claws and talons of the carnivora, the serried rows of inward-turning teeth in the shark's jaw, the poison fangs of the adder, the stings of the wasp and of the scorpion, the spider's web, the Venus's fly-trap, and so forth, are beneficial to the animal or plant possessing such means of mischief and destruction. This agrees perfectly well with the doctrine of natural *adaptation*, but not at all with the idea of benevolent design. As the supposed designer (if he exists) must be strikingly malevolent as well as strikingly beneficent—which are contradictions—the argument is evidently worth little. The logical absurdity of malevolent benevolence in which it lands us shows that its reasoning cannot be valid—unless indeed the alleged deity is to be credited—or rather discredited—with evil passions and human imperfections and limitations.

The only example of "alleged incongruities in Nature," as a writer in the *Rock* calls them, which that defender of the faith cares to notice is that of the rudimentary organs\* which have become atrophied or abortive. His pettifoggish answer is that this is only "a side issue," and that Sir James Paget shows, or almost shows, that these apparently useless vestiges withdraw some substances from the blood which would otherwise be injurious—a supposition thoroughly absurd. What special elements, for instance, are withdrawn by the rudimentary ear-muscles and nose-muscles which we all possess, but which not one man in a hundred can use? One surgeon sarcastically says of the vermiform appendix to the *cæcum* that its only use is to give us an extra chance of dying. It is a little blind alley in the intestines in which small hard substances such as cherry-stones, may get fixed and cause inflammation and death. Intelligible as the remains of a large organ in a lower and earlier form of life, it is inexplicable on the design theory.

If the *Rock* really wished to support the design argument against modern science, it should not shirk the task of explaining the cases which destroy that mainstay of theology. Why is the human embryo at a certain stage almost indistinguishable from the embryo of a dog, both alike being four-legged and with a large thick tail suggestive of that of a reptile? Why is the gullet placed in the rear of the wind-pipe, so that food has to pass over the mouth of the latter, with the result that we sometimes get nearly choked with a crumb going down the wrong way? Why does the recurrent laryngeal nerve, in going from the brain to the larynx, pass down the neck for no purpose whatever, and then return upwards again to its destination? Science shows that in an earlier and fish-like stage—a stage still retained temporarily in the human embryo—this nerve went direct, but the gill arteries, passing lower with the subsequent development, have dragged the nerve down with them. Surely God did not design this round-about method of vital telegraphy. Why, too, did the old gill-slits leave imbedded skin, which sometimes becomes a tumor? Why are the teeth first developed on the surface, then buried in the gums, and subsequently pushed through the gums with much pain and some danger? Why were carnivora and serpents planned for their evil work? Why, in short—for my space fails me—why are the endless atrocities and blunders of nature perpetrated if all is designed by infinite wisdom and carried out by omnipotent benevolence?

W. P. BALL.

### THE NEW REFORMATION.

(A Sermon respectfully dedicated to the consideration of Canon Fremantle. By J. E. Roose).

DEAR FRIENDS,—After mature deliberation I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to hold any longer my position as a Christian minister, and as this will be the last time that I shall address you from the pulpit, I intend to state briefly my reasons for abandoning my present calling. The Bible, on which the Christian religion is founded, I have discovered to be untrue. The theory of evolution has been incontestably established, and, this being so, the whole fabric on which Christianity rests collapses. St. Paul says, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans v. 18, 19.) So we see that the fall of Adam is the linchpin of Christianity; and the founder of the religion himself guaranteed the genuineness of the account of creation as given in Genesis (Matt. xix. 4, 5, 6; Mark x. 6-9.) What higher authority can we have than this? But the account of creation as given in Genesis is utterly untrue. Though there are some of you who still disbelieve the evolution theory, I think there are none among you who believe that the world was made in six days; and yet the Bible says it was so made. The science of geology clearly proves that the world was millions of years in forming; in fact, that it was never made at all. For a long time I shut my eyes to this fact, and contented myself with the explanation, which seems to satisfy other Christians, that when God said days he really meant long epochs of time. But when other discrepancies in the Bible had been brought under my notice, I came to consider this matter further with a view to finding out whether the writer of Genesis really

meant epochs when he said days. Now, the first thing that struck me in this regard was that there is a Hebrew word for epoch, and that if epoch had been meant that that word would have been used, and the second was that the word "days" is emphasized in the Biblical narrative by "and the evening and the morning." Now an epoch has no evening or morning, and it is therefore, perfectly clear that the writer meant what he said. Just listen what nonsense would be made of the fourth commandment were epoch substituted for days: "Six epochs shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh epoch is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. . . . For in six epochs the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh epoch: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh epoch, and hallowed it." I further reflected that before geology had taught people better they believed this account, and called those who denied that the world was made in six days wicked infidels. Now, I thought it extremely unlikely that a good God could have made a statement which had thus deceived people for between two and three thousand years. But the Bible, say the apologists, is not intended to teach science, but religion. To this I am compelled to answer: If it makes statements which have been proved untrue, how can we trust those other assertions which no one knows anything about except that which the Bible tells them? It is as though a traveller published a book containing information of well known places on the Continent, and of other places in the interior of New Guinea. Is it likely that if his statements about places on the Continent were proved absolutely false, that we should believe his other statements about New Guinea? "Ah," but he might say, "I did not intend to teach you about the Continent of Europe, because I know very well you had other means of obtaining information on that point besides my book. Those statements about the Continent only crept in accidentally, as it were. My travels were written to instruct you about the interior of New Guinea." "Go away, my friend," I think we should reply; "after you have shown such ignorance, and proved yourself so untrustworthy, how can you expect us to be such fools as to believe your statements concerning New Guinea? Although none of us have been there to know whether your statements concerning it are correct or not, you have yet proved yourself a liar, and unworthy of credence." I have found many untruths and inconsistencies in the Bible, and I would recommend to your careful perusal two small pamphlets, compiled by Messrs. Foote and Ball, entitled respectively *Bible Contradictions* and *Bible Absurdities*. Go through these with Bible in hand, and I have no doubt that when you have done so you will acknowledge that I have acted rightly in determining to leave the Church and my thousand pounds a year salary. For my own part I have come to think with Professor Huxley that it warps a man's sense of truth to be constantly trying to reconcile impossibilities, and I shall do so no longer. I have determined to seek some employment in which I can earn my living as an honest man, and shall for the future leave the task of word-twisting, and that of spinning finely drawn out theories, in vain attempts to make the Bible meet the requirements of justice and science, to those who seem to find the employment a congenial one. I for one wash my hands for ever of such ignoble work. I have thrown off my chains, although they were of gold, and though I may be unable to find a situation which will pay me a tenth part as well as the Church, I shall remain at all events honest.

DAMASCUS.—The street called Straight is straighter than a corkscrew, but not as straight as a rainbow. St. Luke is careful not to commit himself; he does not say it is the street which is straight, but the "street which is called Straight." It is a fine piece of irony; it is the only facetious remark in the Bible, I believe. We traversed the street called Straight a good way, and then turned off and called at the reputed house of Ananias. There is small question that a part of the original house is there still; it is an old room twelve or fifteen feet under ground, and its masonry is evidently ancient. If Ananias did not live there in St. Paul's time, somebody else did, which is just as well. I took a drink out of Ananias's well, and singularly enough, the water was just as fresh as if the well had been dug yesterday.—Mark Twain's *New Pilgrim's Progress*.

### REVIEW.

*Is the Universe Self-existent?* By C. E. FORD, 52 Cobden Road, Brighton.—A thoughtful Freethought essay by a former member of the Brighton Young Men's Christian Association.

AN American paper says that during Lent the women have done all their repenting in seal-cloth and sashes.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL Teacher: "Who was king after Saul?" Scholar: "David." S. S. T.: "Who followed David?" S. S.: "Solomon." S. S. T.: "And who came after Solomon?" Little Girl (out of turn): "Oh, please, miss, I know." "Who, then, Dottie?" "The queen of Sheba."

COUNTY-COURT Judge Gamble fell dead while addressing the Church Synod at Dublin on Tuesday last.

\* "Vestigiary organs"—i.e., vestiges—would perhaps convey the true meaning more correctly. To ordinary people the word "rudimentary" conveys the wrong idea of an elementary form in process of evolution to something higher, rather than mere degenerate remains or vestiges, which is the sense in which the expression "rudimentary organs" is always used by evolutionists.

**PROFANE JOKES.**

A FREE Church organist has been discharged for playing, though very slowly and solemnly, a march from an opera bouffe. Seventeen deacons recognised it at once.

In an old Bible in Wales, the record of a birth is entered in this wise:—"Elizabeth Jones, born on the 10th of November, 1785, according to the best of her recollection."

SOME years ago a clergyman was preaching to a large audience in a wild part of Yorkshire, and announced for his text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." He had scarcely read the words, when an old fellow stood up and said, "I tell you folks that's a lie! I know his father well. He lives fifteen miles from Scarborough, in an old tumble-down shanty, and there ain't but one room in the house."

It was in an experience meeting in an African Methodist Church over in Virginia, writes a Washington Correspondent. They had been singing the well-known lines, "While the lamp holds out to burn, the vilest sinner may return." A new convert had been giving in his confession. He had told the brethren and sisters all the sins of his life, and more too, with all their aggravations. He had confessed to every crime known to the statutes and every sin known to the decalogue. When he paused for breath, gasping at his own wickedness, a brother in the gallery shouted solemnly,— "Put out dat lamp!" "Wha' for?" asked the pastor. "Coz," said the solemn brother, "de viles' sinner done return!"

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**SPECIAL APPEAL.**

The Committee of the Manchester Branch N. S. S. gratefully acknowledge the liberal support which has already been given to the scheme for purchasing a Hall, and especially thank the London, Liverpool, and other friends at a distance, for their valued help. In consequence, however, of the shortness of the time allowed for the completion of the purchase, they are compelled to make a Special Appeal to Secularists both in and out of Manchester for further aid, either in donations or in subscriptions for Shares. The amount already subscribed, chiefly by Manchester friends, and in the short space of three months, is about £800; this, with the Spencer Legacy of £500 leaves £500 still to be provided by the middle of June next.

The Committee are very desirous of securing the full benefit of the offer made through Mr. Bradlaugh as mentioned in the N. R. of April 3; 250 Shares have already been taken in lots of not less than five Shares in accordance with that offer, and subscriptions for a further 200 shares will benefit the cause to the extent of £50 additional.

Apart from this, however, the Committee feel assured that there are many friends throughout the country who both can and will help by taking one or more Shares, or by a donation, when they understand that further aid is needed in order that the purchase may be completed at the agreed date.

Prospectuses with form of application can be obtained from the Hon. Sec. of the Company, Mr. Geo. Payne, 20 Kennedy Street, Manchester, who will be glad to furnish any information required. Donations may be forwarded to the Treasurer of the Branch, Mr. E. G. Field, 9 Rye Street, Clarendon Road, C. on-M. Manchester, or to the undersigned at 25 Higher Chatham Street, Manchester.

A. HEMINGWAY Hon. Sec.

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**PROGRESS**

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The APRIL Number contains  
A New Religion. By G. W. Foote.  
Shelley and the Christian Faith. By H. S. Salt.  
The New Sociology.—III. By James Leatham.  
The "New Sociology" Criticised.—II. By W. P. Ball.  
Sarpalus of Mardon.—III. By James Thomson (B.V.)  
Religious Dances. By J. M. Wheeler.  
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