

THE FREETHINKER

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

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JEHOVAH DEFIED.

“Neither shalt thou set thee up any image.”—DEUT. XVI. 22.

“Destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images.”—NUMBERS XXXIII, 52.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”—EXODUS XX., 4.

ROSE-WATER CHRISTIANITY.

“*Malheur au vague! mieux vaut le faux.*”—RENAN.

THE Rev. H. R. Haweis's new volume, *The Conquering Cross*, we have reviewed at length in the current number of *Progress*. In the present article we shall deal more fully with his last chapter on the Christianity of the Future. Mr. Haweis unites the critic and the prophet in these thirty pages; but, in our opinion, his criticism is faulty and his prophecy questionable.

There is, Mr. Haweis allows, a strong reaction against Christianity, and the question is asked “how, with such a hopeless Past and such a helpless Present, Christianity can expect to have any Future at all.” Mr. Haweis says that the answer to all this “lies in a nutshell,” although a good deal of ingenuity seems required to crack it. But before we deal with this compact answer, which is to dispose effectually of all insidel critics and cavillers, we beg to remind this clever clergyman of something he has forgotten. The “reaction” against Christianity began when a growing secular civilisation expanded and complicated modern life, and thus inevitably gave more freedom to the human spirit than was possible in simpler ages when the Church could easily overlook every department of society. And that

reaction has grown stronger with every fresh limitation of the persecuting power of faith. Christianity was thoroughly believed in when it was able to choke dissent. Now that its despotism is feeble and spasmodic; now that discussion is almost absolutely free, and only awaits the striking off of its last shackles; Christianity is involved in storms of scepticism, which grow ever wilder and louder, and threaten it with ruin from pinnacle to base.

The historical impeachment of Christianity is so overwhelming that Mr. Haweis pleads guilty on its behalf, and only urges extenuating circumstances. “Christianity,” he says, “has attacked Truth, resisted Progress, thwarted Reform, libelled the nature of man, caricatured the nature of God, and been at sundry times and in divers manners, guilty of every conceivable form of cruelty, bigotry, falsehood, and intolerance.” But Christianity is not Christ, says Mr. Haweis; these crimes and failures are due to “the form in which the Church has organised the religion of Jesus Christ,” and not to “the Sermon on the Mount, nor to the life of Jesus.”

Now we ask Mr. Haweis whether it was worth while to start a religion which would run on the wrong track for eighteen centuries. That is our first question. The next is, Are you sure that if you put it on a fresh track it will be the right one? Or do you think time is so valueless that the

human race can give convicted religions millenium after millenium to turn over a new leaf? Thirdly, are you quite sure that the Sermon on the Mount is the whole of Christianity? Is it not simply a portion of a big volume, called the Word of God, just as authoritative as the rest, neither less nor more? Fourthly, is it not a fact, flagrant on the pages of religious history, that *all* the "crimes and failures" you make Christianity plead guilty to have been, are, and may be justified by various passages of Scripture? Fifthly, are the maxims of poverty and submission in the Sermon on the Mount any cure for the worst evils of Christianity? Can you, dare you, try to practise them *yourself*? Did not the "society" papers chronicle your last garden-party? Did they not record the sumptuousness of your wife's apparel, and the magnificent raiment of the duchesses, countesses, and other fashionable creatures, who honored you with their noble presence? Is this how you practise the Sermon on the Mount? Do you recommend it in *this* sense, or in some other, as the panacea for the ills of humanity? Show us a single sentence of the Sermon on the Mount which you honor by practising in its unsophisticated sense, and we will allow that you are not guilty of the *cant* which clings like a Nessus shirt to the Churchmen of your school.

Mr. Haweis's attempt to explain the "errors" of Christianity is not very successful, although on his own theory of its future an explanation is necessary. He says that the Church's mistakes in condemning usury, inculcating a spurious and pauperising charity, flouting science, and enjoining a narrow asceticism, chiefly resulted from misunderstanding what Jesus said. But, with the exception of usury, which is condemned in a dozen places in the Bible, all these "mistakes" are explicitly sanctioned by that very Sermon on the Mount which Mr. Haweis eulogises. Indeed, Mr. Haweis cannot but see this; he therefore tries to remove the difficulty by contending that most of the "rules" Jesus gave "were in their nature accidental; well adapted to a crisis, but transitory." We do not deny Mr. Haweis's right to this contention, for this is a free country, at least for Christians. But we do deny its validity. Jesus never said those rules were accidental and transitory; on the contrary, they expressed, on the practical side, the very essence of his teaching. Had Jesus said so himself, we should be ready to make proper allowance for such a plea; but Mr. Haweis can hardly expect us to take his authority for how much Jesus meant for the primitive Church and how much for subsequent generations. Such a process of criticism would relegate all the awkward parts of the New Testament to a bygone age, and retain all the passable portions for present use. No doubt the clergy would like to play this little game; yet they must be very innocent if they fancy that sceptics will watch it with any feelings but those of scorn or disgust.

Let us now see what the Future of Christianity is to be, according to Mr. Haweis. First, it must dismiss the old "saintly ideal," and patronise the senses a little more; that is, it must run counter to a hundred striking passages in the New Testament. Next, it must "fit in science," as though science could be fitted in to the puerile metaphysics of superstitious Jews. Further, it must cling to the Supernatural, as if, while it retains the Bible, it could do anything else. Rénan says that "the negation of the Supernatural has become an absolute dogma for every cultivated mind." But Mr. Haweis holds that "the Supernatural is the life of every religion," and that "a ridiculous religion, with Supernaturalism, will always be more influential than a religion, however sensible, without it." Mr. Haweis is quite right, and Christianity is a living proof of his accuracy. Yet Rénan is also right. Supernaturalism, in any honest sense of the term, *is* dead in the daily life of the people, and dead in every cultivated mind. What is left is its ghost, or after-glow: a belief, as Mr. Harrison says, in a sort of a something; or, to use Mr. Haweis's more mystical, though essentially identical phraseology, "a something which unites our spirits to God and enables us to feed on him." What "feeding on him" means, unless it means getting a handsome living as a preacher, Mr. Haweis does not condescend to inform us. Nor does he explain the meaning of his statement that Jesus "stands out in history revealed as the essential Purifier and Savior of the race to the end of the world." It is a long way to the end of the world, and history is only concerned with the past. That Jesus Christ has *not* purified and saved the world stands out in his-

tory very plainly; indeed, Mr. Haweis himself admits, first that "we need, in fact, a new Reformation," and secondly that "this Reformation has long since begun outside orthodox Christianity." Nay, he goes further, carried away by a sudden whiff of downright sincerity. "The Protestant religion under Victoria," he says, "is quite as much behind our age as the Roman Catholic religion was behind the times in the days of good Queen Bess." True, but why? The answer is simple. Religion is *always* behind the age. It is a worship of the past, a consecration of its follies, a perpetuation of its mistakes. What Mr. Haweis deplores is inevitable. Religion *must* be behind. Except where society is stagnant, people are always in advance of their creeds. Civilising mankind is a hard task, but civilising their gods is harder.

Mr. Haweis may attract a few Christians who are ashamed of the worst features of orthodoxy, but at best his school of thought, to use his own words, is accidental and transitory. His Christianity is not like Catholic theology, a laborious deduction from the Bible and the Fathers; it is an arbitrary sentimentalism, indefinite as clouds, fantastic as dreams, and doomed to sterility. Fortunately there is an unconscious logic in the human mind, and the chaos of a creed without doctrines cannot be permanent. It is a sign of dissolution, and in that sense it may be welcome. But it is no pioneer of truth. It is, indeed, a hindrance, for it urges men to live among the *débris* of an ancient faith rather than seek new foundations for a grander structure. On the moral side it is cowardice, on the mental side confusion. Mr. Haweis professes great admiration for Rénan, and we commend to his attention the motto we have selected from that great writer, who if he has some of the sentimentalisms of his race, has also its trenchant logic. *Malheur au vague! mieux vaut le faux*—"A pest on the vague! the false is better."
G. W. FOOTE.

THE LOGIC OF THE LOGOS.

A PERSONAGE sent from heaven to enlighten the inhabitants of this benighted world might reasonably be expected to be so clear, definite, and reasonable in his statements that a wayfaring man, though a fool, might understand them. Christians may profess to find this clearness and sweet reasonableness in Jesus, but certain it is that the Jews, and even his own apostles, continually misunderstood him, and from that time to this Christians have constantly disputed as to the meaning of his words.

When he announced himself as the Light of the World the Pharisees met this, to them, monstrous assertion with the remark, "Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true" (John viii., 12, 13). Jesus, who a little before said, "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true" (John v., 31), answers "Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go." Why one whose veracity is in dispute should be believed because he says he knows whence he comes and whither he goes is unexplained. Jesus proceeds, "It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." Whence it would appear that he and his Father were two men. He misses the point of the law, which is that the two witnesses should be independent. Elsewhere he says "I and my Father are one." To appeal in testimony of his claims to himself and to a witness, one with himself, who could not be put in evidence, was little better than a quibble.

His triumph over the Pharisees by asking if the Christ was the Son of David, how then did David call him Lord, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand," etc., was certainly not a triumph of logic. It is related that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." We should have liked to ask him what evidence there was that David wrote the Psalm quoted, or that Christ is referred to in it. The word translated "my lord" means nothing more than "master."

On the important question of marriage and divorce Jesus appeals neither to fact nor to reason. He begins by saying, "Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. xix., 4). Now it is a fallacy to give, as the reason for the sanctity of marriage, the fact of there being both male and female.

Difference of sex is the indispensable condition of marriage, but it does not indicate whether it should be monogamous or polygamous. Immediately after this he, without giving woman the same privilege, allows a man to put away his wife for fornication, and says Moses suffered wives to be put away "because of the hardness of your hearts"—which to a carnal mind is far from a satisfactory reason.

To the pertinent question of the Sadducees, as to whose wife after the resurrection the woman would be who had married seven brothers, Jesus evades the point by saying that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, and then goes on to show that the old polygamists, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still living by the stupid argument that God said "I am the God of Abraham," so that when Cornelia said, "I am the mother of the Gracchi," they must still have been in existence, their death notwithstanding.

If it was with logic such as this that he discoursed concerning the resurrection of the dead, we can scarcely wonder that it was so unintelligible to his disciples that it is said even after his own resurrection had taken place, "As yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead" (John xix., 9). They might well have been excused, for the Scripture certainly says nothing on the subject, and the utterances of Jesus himself appear to have been of the most enigmatic description. After he had whipped the dove-sellers away from the temple and overturned the tables of the money-changers, the Jews asked him what sign—or miracle—he could show in proof of his authority to commit this outrage. His answer was, "Destroy *this* temple, and in three days I will raise *it* up." The Jews naturally replied, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" The evangelists explain that "he spake of the temple of his body;" but it is evident neither the Jews nor his disciples understood this, for it is said the latter remembered when he was risen from the dead. A method of speech by which the auditor understands one thing and the speaker privately intends another is properly known as Jesuitism, and the Society of Jesus can cite their divine exemplar in defence of their casuistry of "intention." Indeed he is said to have dealt in parables "that seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv., 12).

The celebrated reply about the tribute to Cæsar was a neat evasion of a difficulty, but about as poor a piece of logic as can be found. The question was what right had Cæsar to tribute. The answer of Jesus was as beside the mark as for a person to defend the right of the Queen to take as her own every letter posted in Great Britain, India, and the Colonies, because her effigy is on the postage stamp.

Another statement betraying want of lucidity is the one that "There is nothing from without a man that entering can defile him; but the things which come out of him those are they that defile him" (Mark vii., 15). No child needs telling that its excretions are more noxious than its food. But men are defiled daily with intoxicating drink, against which they get no warning from the Logos. And the statement is as false on the moral side. All evil communications, foul example, and bad influences which enter from without are sources of moral defilement. Jesus attributes all evil to the heart, which is just as true and just as false as the direct contrary would be.

The Logos excelled in paradoxes. "Blessed are they who mourn." "The last shall be first and the first shall be last." "He that hath to him shall be given; and he that hath not from him shall be taken even that which he hath." "Whosoever believeth in me shall never die." "Let the dead bury the dead." Such aphorisms are pithily put, but they show the mystic rather than the reasoner. Surely the utterances of a deity should not be of such a character that they need interpretation in order to be rendered rational.

J. M. WHEELER.

A NUMBER of ministers have arranged to meet the Lord in simultaneous prayer from seven to eight of a morning. One of them, writing from St. Petersburg, is anxious that the ministers "all over the world" should carry out this scheme and thus "meet in prayer." He forgets that difference of longitude means difference of time. When it is eight o'clock at St. Petersburg it is six o'clock in London, one o'clock in New York, and ten o'clock yesterday in San Francisco.

ACID DROPS.

AT Skendleby Church, Lincolnshire, the clock weights fell the other Sunday and killed one of the bell-ringers, just as preparations were being made for the evening service. What is the moral of this? Perhaps the editor of the *Christian Herald* will inform his superstitious dupes. If an Atheist had been killed the moral would have been obvious, and would have been duly impressed upon the ignorant simpletons who patronise that pious journal, but the only moral to be drawn from the death of a Christian is "Blessed are they that die in the Lord."

THE Vicar of Pickhill, near Thirsk, refused to allow a Wesleyan minister to read the burial service over the son of a Wesleyan farmer. He said the notice was not in legal terms, and he wanted to conduct the service himself. In consequence of this tyrannical but probably illegal refusal, the Wesleyan minister read the burial service outside the churchyard, and the body was then carried to the grave, where the vicar, in spite of all remonstrances, insisted on reading the Church of England service. The mourners came away and left the vicar still reading. If the clergy behave like this to fellow Christians, what can Freethinkers expect of them? It is time that disestablishment thoroughly deprived the parsons of the power of carrying their intolerance to the grave in this unseemly manner.

AT Llangowan, in North Wales, a horse has been buried in the cemetery, among the Dissenters of course, for Churchmen would never consent to bury the animal in their own consecrated part of the cemetery. The horse was injured in the recent tithe riots and had to be shot. As the owner was boycotted no farmer would allow the carcass to be buried in his field, and the local sanitary authority threatened a prosecution, so as the easiest way out of the difficulty the poor victim of the resistance to ecclesiastical robbery was buried among his betters. What would Swift's Houyhnhnms have had to say of this performance of the conceited Yahoos fighting over pious thefts? Wonder whether the horse will so benefit by the Christian services and general sacredness as to rise up with his companions at the Judgment Day?

THE *Rock*, disbelieving the evolution of language, ridicules the idea of "a race of dumb men agreeing among themselves that they will try to find some means of communication, and then setting to work to make a language and school their organs to the enunciation of it." Such an idiotic conception of the natural origin of speech is worthy of a cast-iron mule. No scientific man could ever propound such silly twaddle. The *Rock*, however, is proud of its caricature of science, and thoroughly proves the falsity of all development theories from texts in Genesis, and by Christ's miraculous gifts of speech to various deaf and dumb people. As if these childish stories were still unavailable as disproof of the great scientific facts and discoveries of modern times! Wake up, wake up, ye Rip Van Winkles of the religious press.

DURING a negro funeral at Mount Pleasant in Tennessee, a storm came on and the mourners took refuge under the trees of a cemetery. Nine persons who were standing under a large oak were struck by lightning and killed on the spot. Three clergymen and the mother, and two sisters of the girl that was being buried were among the victims thus slain by the act of God. He killed them for the sin of taking shelter during a storm apparently. Perhaps he had a fancy for hearing more funeral services, and so made one funeral the cause of nine others. But why did he kill three clergymen? Ought not their presence to have sanctified and protected the tree better than a thousand lightning rods or other vain devices of mortal man?

THE Rev. G. M. Murphy, pastor of the Congregational Church, Borough Road, Southwark, died suddenly on Sunday morning. The Lord doesn't seem to preserve Christians from "sudden death" any more than he does Freethinkers, although the former pray to be preserved from such undesirable translation to glory and the latter do not.

A CONTINGENT of the Salvation Army drove past our office on Monday in brakes. Banners were flying with "Blood and Fire," "Death," "Repent," "Cleansed," and similar mottoes inscribed thereon. The musicians in braided uniforms were in front. We took them at first for a German band and we were wondering at the little undersized perky-nosed specimens of which this band was composed, but the banners undeceived us. One seldom sees a stalwart man among these Salvationists. They seem to be composed of boys and weaklings. Their moral and intellectual qualities seem on a par with their physical development. The brakes were evidently driving off to the Alexandra Palace where there was to be a review of 20,000 Salvationists by "General" Booth. At this review there were "Iron Horse Artillery," "Cavalry Forts," and eighty brass bands. Religious humbug is far from being played out yet.

AMONG the forty groups forming open-air meetings in the grounds were the "Beezlebug Bombardiers," the "Cheerful Charmers," and the "Palm Wavers." The "General" delivered an address of which the keynote was the word "collection," and

a huge money-box received the result. The Army is said to be increasing. It now includes 2,212 corps. Five years ago there were only 320. If success is the criterion of religious truth, as Christians often pretend when arguing with Infidels, the Salvation Army with its mixture of child and savage and quack and tom-fool is evidently the one genuine form of Christianity. What do the respectable Christians say to this pleasing reflection?

"MAJOR" PEARSON, of the Salvation Army, is reported to be continuing his miracles of faith-healing at Willenhall, near Wolverhampton. We are not astonished that where there is much excitement some persons fancy or pretend that they have been cured. What we should like to have is testimony as to their condition a week before and a week after the alleged cure. It has usually been found that when the nervous excitement has subsided there is a relapse, and the last state is worse than the first.

AN appalling railway accident has occurred in Canada. An excursion train ran into some petroleum cars, and the scattered oil was set on fire by sparks from the engine. People were burnt alive wholesale in the broken carriages. Couldn't God have helped the poor shrieking creatures, or is he fond of such sights as a foretaste of his Gehenna below? According to Christian journals and the Bible he does all manner of things in answer to prayer. Couldn't he do something in answer to a feeling of pity? Are the frantic shrieks of burning women and children no prayer in his ears because they are not couched in the orthodox forms of supplication? Couldn't he have sent some rescuing angels, or a waterspout or thunderstorm to extinguish the flames?

THE *Kansas City Star* reports a terrific drought in Western Illinois. Many wells have been pumped dry and water for family use has to be carried one or two miles. Public prayers have been offered for rain at Cambridge. Nearly all the business houses in the city were closed. The tanned and thirsty people fell upon their knees and during the supplication of the sky-pilots there was a constant fusillade of "Amen" and "Glory to God" from the faithful. But no rain came. The next day farmers came from miles around and fell upon their knees imploring God to send them rain. The report says: "Rain did not come, however, and the atmosphere is suffocating. Fires are burning in the woods, and pastures for miles around are scorched. The farmers have lost many cattle in these fires which seem to spring up in a dozen places at once. Section hands along the railroads are worn out from their persistent struggles against the flames during the past fortnight. To show to what straits the farmers are placed it was reported that the starving herds of cattle had been turned loose into the oat fields."

THE Bishop of Hereford, it is stated, has under consideration a case wherein a clergyman is charged with consecrating and giving to communicants a chalice containing nothing but water. Why should not water, however, contain or represent the blood of Christ as well as the juice of the grape? Surely the Lord could miraculously turn the water into wine if he so pleased.

THE *Church Times* is continually alarmed at possible desecration of the Eucharist by communicants crumbling the body of the Lord or wiping the blood off their lips. It gives the following as the best way of dealing with consecrated bread: "Take new bread, cut in slices about three-quarters of an inch thick, and roll them under a heavy glass roller upon a block of hard wood or stone till they are reduced about one-third in thickness. They can then be cut in small pieces without crumbling." The body of the Lord needs careful manipulation that it may not crumble to pieces. Only to think that after all this trouble it may have been kneaded together by an infidel baker!

WHEN the House of Laymen was instituted a year or so ago the Church papers were in raptures about this sign of revived interest in church affairs on the part of the laity. Now the *Church Times* confesses, "The House is still a new toy, but its members have grown sick of it. The largest division represented a House of only 32 members, and the number present rarely much exceeded a score. What such a body may have done last week can be of no possible interest or importance to any one."

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the banquet given to the bishops and clerical dignitaries at the Mansion House, glorified the Church of England as being foremost in fostering the spirit of federation manifested by the English race. When, however, the House of Convocation debated upon the new addition to the Catechism, a suggestion that the phrase "Anglican Church" might be more acceptable to colonists than the "Church of England" was promptly sat upon.

THE most important of the new additions to the Catechism was the last, which was adopted as follows:

"Q.—Why is it our duty to belong to the Church of England?"

"A.—Because the Church of England has inherited and retains the doctrine and ministry of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and is that part of the Church which has been settled from early times in our country."

If this is used in the colonies the answer manifestly will not be true. It is not even true in England. The Church of England does not, but the Church of Rome does, retain the doctrine and ministry of the Church, which settled in our country about the sixth century.

THE Rev. H. W. Perris has been lecturing at Park Street Church, Hull, on "Artisan Atheism." His experience on the subject must be somewhat limited, for he testified that "he had never met with a case of genuine Atheism." He did not think the rejection "of what partook of fable in the Bible" constituted ground for such a charge. Surely we are advancing when Christian ministers admit that their so-called "Word of God" partakes of fable. Mr. Perris says religion is not to be ruled out of the field "by the possibility or otherwise of Joshua's sun standing still and other matters which might well be left in the obscurity for which they were designed." So God gives a revelation designing to have certain portions in obscurity. Would not Mr. Perris be franker if he plainly said he wished to preach just whatever he pleased and pitch the rest overboard?

A CORRESPONDENT assures us that the following epitaph was placed on the tombstone of Margaret Richardson, who died in the parish of Easby, a township of Brampton, in 1813, aged eighty-four:

"Here rest my old bones; my vexation now ends.
I have lived far too long for myself and my friends,
As for churchyards and grounds which the parsons call holy,
'Tis a rank piece of priestcraft and founded on folly.
In short, I despise them; and as for my soul,
It may rise the last day with my bones from this hole.
But about the next world I ne'er troubled my pate.
If no better than this, I beseech thee, O Fate,
When millions of bodies rise up in a riot,
O pray let the bones of old Marg'ret be quiet!"

The record states that the then vicar of the parish sent a copy of the inscription to the chancellor of the diocese, who hastened to Brampton, and actually stood over the mason, one George Rowell, until he had erased the objectionable lines.

THE Rev. T. H. Candy, rector of Swanscombe, near Dartford, is a nice landlord. William Rixon, having been a tenant of his glebe land for twenty years, fell last year into difficulties and compounded with his creditors. The rector refused a composition, but seized the land on which crops to the value of £16 were planted, and then sued poor Rixon for the full rent. Judge Homersham Cox said the value of the crops could not be recovered by Rixon, as there was nothing in the lease which separated them from the freehold. He had no legal claim, though he had morally. The rector, however, wanted his full pound of flesh.

THE case against the Rev. T. C. Pengelly Manuel charged with obtaining money, goods and hire of a horse, by false pretences at Tirporley, Cheshire, has been hushed up. Two Manchester clergymen came forward and tendered themselves as bail to the extent of £100 each, and, being accepted, the prisoner was released on bail. On regaining his liberty he obtained £21 odd, the amount owing to the prosecutor Sheen, and paid the latter, and was afterwards discharged.

THE Rev. Peter Roberts, Congregationalist, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, is under arrest at the instance of his servant-girl, Anna Husaboe, who charges him with betrayal and conspiracy for criminal abortion.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC priest named Wormald, was charged at Aldershot with picking pockets. His hand was seized while in the pocket of a lad. In reply to the charge, he said, "I cannot say I did not do it, and I cannot say I did do it. I don't remember anything about it." For some reason the magistrates gave him the benefit of the doubt.

ANOTHER sectarian tragedy has taken place in New Jersey, the state where they fine a man fifty dollars for blasphemy. Policeman Burch is a Protestant, and his wife a Catholic. Owing to their religious differences they quarrelled frequently, until Burch fired three shots at his wife, fatally wounding her, and then shot himself in the heart.

AT a mineral spring in Central Park, New York, there is often a severe struggle to obtain the water just at sunrise, the superstition being that a glass of the water at this particular moment will heal diseases in a miraculous manner. The *Christian Herald* naively remarks that "it is quite natural that a sufferer who has no more sense than to believe in the virtue of drinking a particular kind of water at a particular time will make a struggle to be first, as was the case at the pool of Bethesda (John v., 7)." But the Christians themselves have "no more sense" than to believe in this kind of thing. The belief in the virtue of drinking a particular kind of water at a particular time is exactly what is described as genuine and efficacious at the pool of Bethesda, and it is clear that John himself had "no more sense" than to believe in the efficacy of such an absurd belief as the *Christian Herald* ridicules at New York and reveres in Judæa.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S OPEN-AIR LECTURES.

Sunday, July 24, Columbia Road, Hackney Road, at 11.15; Battersea Park Gates at 6.30, "God and the Queen."
July 31, Camberwell; August 7, Westminster Branch; August 14, Bethnal Green Branch.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

AUGUST 7 and 14, 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.—A. S., T. Stevenson, J. Polack.

W. CABELL.—We fancy the tract you allude to is issued by the Universalists. There is no such text. "We love God because he first loved us" is the nearest to it.

D. CHURCH.—We have dealt with the passage before. If asses are raised from the dead Talmage may be leader of the host. We do not know if any newsagent supplies the *Freethinker* in Jersey.

J. BUCKLER.—Jokes are always welcome.

A. POMEROY.—We are obliged. See "Sugar Plums."

A. O. PARRY.—Thanks for the paper. It is the organ of some offshoot of American Episcopalianism.

J. C. W.—Shall be glad if you will leave the volume for us in care of Mr. Forder. Goethe is not, as you say, pronounced *Gurty*. The German guttural runs nearly into the "r," but not quite.

W. HISCOCK.—Pleased to hear you collected £1 10s. on Clerkenwell Green for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. You would have collected still more if the Christian critic hadn't driven half the audience away before the box could reach them.

BROTHERHOOD.—We are not issuing a Summer Number. What with the Jubilee craze and the hot weather, the time is not favorable for a special edition. Our Christmas Number will be issued as usual.

F. BARLOW.—The numbers of *Progress* are in print. Order of R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

F. W. SMITH (Cape Town).—We have handed your order to Mr. Forder, who will attend to it. Thanks for your good wishes. The tender mercies of the Lord are over all his works, but we can do without them, as in our case they take the shape of arson and imprisonment.

B. DENT.—It is useless to write us on Wednesday for a notice in the next number, as we go to press on Wednesday morning. All letters, to be attended to, must reach us on Tuesday.

C. S.—We are obliged to you for your notes on the Song of Solomon, with references to Luther and the Vulgate. But the subject is rather scabrous. Both the authorised and new version are, in many parts, only polite paraphrases of the original, which is frequently *blue* and sometimes *purple*. A literal translation of many passages of God's Old Testament would shock a multitude of pious people, although another multitude of pious people would purchase it with great eagerness.

THE DIMEUS.—Rather far-fetched, although otherwise amusing. We are afraid it would not be quite intelligible to the majority. Perhaps a knowledge of some local circumstance is necessary for its appreciation.

A. E. F.—We have not the slightest idea on the matter. Probably you would find that with your avocation, as with others in London, there is an over-supply of ordinary labor and a good demand for skill.

G. P.—Perhaps Mr. Forder could find you a customer if you write to him.

H. B. (Great Yarmouth) writes: "Some time ago a Radical Club was started here. They asked me if I could send them a paper now and then. Thinking they would like the *Freethinker* I sent one down every Friday. But a sky-pilot objected to it, and proposed it should be removed from the table. A debate took place last Wednesday, and after two hours' hard talking the mover had to withdraw his resolution amidst deafening cheers. I am pleased to say I have greatly increased the sale of the *Freethinker*, which would sell better if it was better known."

AN unknown correspondent is thanked for sending us the Quaker tract on Thomas Paine, an infamous production which shall be dealt with in our next.

MR. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter Street, will be happy to supply his new catalogue of Freethought publications gratis on application.

GERMAN FREETHINKER.—We have placed your subscription to the credit of the open-air fund. Pleased with your sympathetic letter.

B. DAWSON.—Glad to hear one of your local sky-pilots has been advertising the *Freethinker* gratuitously, and hope he will continue the pastime.

H.—Has its good points, but is too long, and some verses are halting.

H. P. BOWDEN.—It is gratifying to hear that the Liberal candidate for Brixton was so straight on the Blasphemy question, though the Tories still keep the seat. It is an indication of the growth of public opinion. We are obliged to you for heckling both candidates.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Kansas City Star—Bath Argus—Freeman—Reformed Church Record—Pudsey Advertiser—Jus—Western Figaro—Christian World—Reading Observer—Echo—Sydney Evening News—Hull Express.

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.

THERE was a big crowd on Clerkenwell Green last Sunday morning to hear Mr. Foote's lecture. It grew larger and larger as he proceeded, and at the finish it was a vast concourse. Four or five policemen walked up and down to keep the pavement clear, but they gave up the job at last, and they seemed rather to relish the lecture. Heads were popped out of neighboring windows, one or two of the female gender actually sitting out on window-ledges to listen. The meeting was very enthusiastic, and broke up with three cheers for the lecturer. An excellent collection was made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

THE only opponent was a Mr. Picton, from Australia, who seems to have been imported for the job. He proved a rambling and tiresome speaker. At one moment he said "Mr. Foote mustn't ask me to prove a negative," which he was never asked to do; and the next moment he said "It isn't for me to prove that the miracles did happen, Mr. Foote must prove they didn't." Need we say that this antipodean champion of the faith concluded that the lecturer had no idea of reasoning?

AUSTRALIAN PICTON pretended a great acquaintance with science, and rolled off the names of several scientific men as though he knew them intimately. "Now," said he, "what do you think? Darwin says the whale is descended from the polar bear." In vain Mr. Foote asked Australian Picton where in all his writings Darwin made such a statement. Australian Picton couldn't tell, or at least he didn't. Probably he has heard some pulpit ninny talk this sort of thing, and he retails it second-hand with a few addle-headed additions.

MR. PICTON was accompanied by that *enfant terrible* of outdoor Christianity, the sour-faced, unmannerly Mitchell. This person interrupted so frequently that only the lecturer's good humor saved him from expulsion. Mitchell's castigation took another form. For five good minutes he was the laughing-stock of the audience, every fresh interruption being the signal for another cut of the satirical whip. Serious argument is lost on such a person. If he goes to heaven, he'll argue with Jesus in the middle of a sermon; if he goes to hell, he'll interrupt Old Nick in his speech from the throne.

MR. FOOTE did not lecture in Regent's Park in the afternoon. He got as far as Portland Road Station through the rain, and waited there half-an-hour. Then, seeing that the sky promised more rain, and concluding that the Park would be emptied of people, he returned home. If possible he will give Regent's Park another date before the summer is over.

ANOTHER meeting of the London Open-Air Committee was held at the Hall of Science on Monday evening. Mr. Foote presided, and there was a larger attendance than ever. Mr. G. Standing, the honorary secretary, was authorised to see what could be done at Islington to provide a series of Sunday evening lectures in reply to a course of apologetic sermons to be delivered at St. Peter's Church. Mr. W. Powell also undertook to re-open the old station on Mile End Waste, the Committee guaranteeing the expenses through August. Mr. Powell will be glad to see any Freethinkers in the neighborhood who are willing to assist him in this work. He will wait in this morning (July 24) to receive visitors. His address is 28 A Block, Peabody Buildings, Glasshouse Street, Leman Street, E. Finally arrangements were made for the August programme, Mr. Foote promising a fresh tract for the front. Branches must send in their lists by Friday, July 22, to Mr. Standing, 8 Finsbury Street, E.C.

WE have to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions:—G. B., 10s.; A. Pomeroy, 2s. 6d.; German Freethinker, 2s.; W. S. Pyatt, 2s. 6d.

LONDON Freethinkers are not supporting this Fund as they should. No doubt the friends of unpopular causes have many demands on their purses, but the good done by these open-air lectures is so out of proportion to the small cost that we venture to press it again upon their attention.

WE hoped to publish Ingersoll's speech in defence of Mr. Reynolds before this, but the Colonel has not issued it in America yet, and the manager of the *Truthseeker* Company cannot inform us when it will be ready.

Holy Moses is the title of the next instalment of Mr. Foote's "Bible Heroes." This hero will take two numbers to himself, as he lived a long and active life. Numbers 7 and 8 will be ready early in August.

THE Birmingham *Daily Post*, the most influential paper in the Midlands, has a trenchant and remarkably outspoken review of Backhouse and Tylor's *Witnesses for Christ*. After giving a long account of the credulity and quarrels of these "witnesses," from the fourth to the thirteenth century, the *Post* concludes as follows: "Judged by the evidence here accumulated by one who

has much admiration for his witnesses, we think the witnesses for Zeus, or Allah, or Brahma, may compare with them not unfavorably, either on the ground of intelligence or of morality."

The Italian Chamber of Deputies has voted in favor of the abolition of tithes in Venetia and Romagna, the only two provinces still subject to these mediæval burdens. This Bill provides that from and after the date of its enactment the land shall be discharged from liability to tithes, except in favor of incumbents then already entitled thereto. The successors of such incumbents are to receive, instead of tithes, such annual payments from the Public Worship Fund (Fondo del Culto) as shall in the case of bishoprics bring up their respective revenues (if below that figure) to £240. As regard ordinary cures of souls, the minimum benefice the State is to secure to the incumbent is fixed at £32 per annum.

MR. N. B. BILLANY has a capital letter in the *Hull Express* on Artisan Atheism in reply to a clergyman. His letter, indeed, is so plain-spoken—shall we say *blasphemous*?—that we are astonished at its insertion in a "respectable" journal. Evidently the world is moving, and pretty fast too.

At Sydney, New South Wales, the Mayor called a public meeting to consider how to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee. According to the report the loyalists were conspicuous by their absence, but "the Secularists mustered in strong force." An amendment declaring that to celebrate the Jubilee was out of harmony with the democratic spirit of the country was carried almost unanimously.

THE Hall of Science Children's Summer Excursion in brakes to the "Robin Hood," Epping Forest, will take place on Sunday, August 14. Tickets 2s. 6d. Parents wishing for children's tickets are requested to state the name of their Branch. Subscriptions received:—A Young Lady, 2s. 6d. Per Miss Reynolds:—Snow, 2s; Titbits, 1s.; Missing Link, 2s.; A. Reynolds, 1s.; Gipsy, 1s. Per R. O. Smith: Wm. Hunt, 5s. Per H. Smith:—Thurlow, 3d.;—Collins, 6d.; F. Henderson, 1s.;—Jackson, 1s.; Jason Gresswell, 3d.; R. Turner, 1s. Per Mr. Ramsey: Too T., 6d.;—Ellis, 6d.; R. T., 6d.; Friend, 1d.;—Arno, 6d.;—Hall, 1s.;—Athens, 2d.;—Darkoen, 6d. Per Mrs. Billot:—Stalder, 1s.; F. W. S., 1s.; L. T., 1s.;—Phillips, 3d.; E. P. H., 3d.; C. P. L., 1s.; Friend, 2d.; Little John, 4d.; Miss Fawcett, 1s. All applications for tickets should be sent to Wm. Cookney, Hon. Sec., 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

SAYS the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*: "We may be quite wrong, as we often are, but it is nevertheless our belief that there is no more distinguishing characteristic of the Victorian period than is presented by the capitulation of religion to science and to politics." The press has taken the place of the pulpit, and the sky-pilots are every year becoming more ready to teach evolution if only they may be left undisturbed in the possession of their livings.

THE *Pudsey District Advertiser* contains an able letter from Mr. John Grange, jun., in reply to the Rev. E. H. Sugden, B.A., of Bradford. Freethinkers do a real service to the cause by availing themselves of any opportunities of ventilating their opinions in the local press.

THE Ball's Pond Branch starts a new open-air station this evening (July 24) at Mildmay Grove, opposite Mildmay Park Station. Mr. A. B. Moss delivers the first lecture on "Triumphs of Freethought." Chair taken at 7.30.

REPEALING THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

(Continued from p. 231.)

AT the Smithfield police-court *John Slaughterman*, butcher, was prosecuted by Baboo Nandi, for horribly wounding his religious feelings as a Brahmin and a Hindoo. Prisoner exposed scores of bloody corpses of animals that he had brutally murdered with pole-axes. The sacred cow even was not exempt from this most impious treatment. Nothing could be more abhorrent to the religious feelings of pious and humane men who like himself, were adherents of the great religion of Brahminism, which numbered hundreds of millions of British subjects, the huge majority in fact of her Majesty's people. One of the most fundamental principles of their religion and of their morality was the sacredness of all life. Shumboo Chundra, a Buddhist, gave similar evidence. To him and to his fellow Buddhists in London this public glorification of the systematic murder of our fellow creatures was a fiendish insult that outraged their religious feelings beyond expression. The solemn and divine fact of the transmigration of souls also rendered such murders even more unspeakably odious to his imagination than to his friend Baboo Nandi. Prisoner laughed at the charge, and by his counsel's advice demanded to be sent for

trial. The magistrate said that the law was impartial, and was intended to protect a minority as well as the majority. To send such cases for trial by ordinary Christians would nullify the law, and would enable a majority to wound the religious feelings of the minority with impunity. The case to his mind was as thoroughly proved as a case could be. He should therefore convict the prisoner summarily, and should refuse application for appeal. Prisoner was sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

The butchers are organising an agitation for the total repeal of the Act under which the prisoner has been convicted. They prefer safety under the toothless old blasphemy laws to imprisonment and ruin under a repealing statute.

A curious case occurred at a Metropolitan police-court the other day. A Christian applied for a summons against a Jew for hurting his feelings, by publicly working on a Sunday. The Jew appeared at the same time, and demanded a cross summons against the Christian for wounding his religious feelings by working on a Saturday. The magistrate asked them what they would do if a Mohammedan summoned them both for working on a Friday. He recommended them to withdraw their applications, as if they succeeded the only result would be that both would equally be punished.

Edwin Long, R.A., was charged with exposing a picture of the burning of Jephthah's daughter as a sacrifice to the Lord in fulfilment of a vow made under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Several Christians having described how excessively their feelings were hurt by such pictures, the magistrate decided to commit the delinquent for trial. It is feared that a number of celebrated pictures of historical scenes affecting religious susceptibilities, such as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew or the mutual martyrdoms of Christians, will have to be withdrawn from public galleries. Some fervid Evangelicals are even demanding that certain pictures deifying the Virgin Mary shall be prosecuted, as such idolatrous and blasphemous representations of the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, etc., are intolerably offensive to Christian feeling. Lord Fairweather has already closed his picture gallery, not wishing to be the object of an attack that might be followed by the indignity of a fine, or even the suffering of imprisonment. The Turkish ambassador has been heard to boast that as all pictures and alcoholic liquors are stringently forbidden by his religion, he could send picture-dealers and publicans to prison by thousands for wounding his religious feelings.

A rural case under the new Act, curiously described as the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Act, occurred yesterday in Loamshire. Mrs. Proudie charged a rustic named *Giles Bull* with persistently wounding the religious feelings of herself and others. On Sundays, as they left God's church, the prisoner would meet the worshippers in his shirt-sleeves, whistling as he strolled along, and setting his little terrier dog rat-catching along the hedge. He appeared to take a delight in thus shocking the religious feelings of his superiors. The accused, who seemed to consider himself a bit of a wag, said he liked to see the nobs coming out of church. Their stuck-up ways and finery amused him. *His* religion was to take life easy and let other people do the same. He liked to be jolly and happy himself, and he liked to see others so too. Them was his religious sentiments. It was bad temper and pride and spiteful ways that wounded his religious feelings on Sundays or any other days. Sending him to prison would hurt his feelings more than whistling on a Sunday could hurt Mrs. Proudie's. Squire Jollyface, who, fortunately for the defendant, happened to hear the case, said the man bore a good character as an honest, merry fellow, who worked hard all the week for his wife and children, and he didn't want to see him ruined by being sent to prison; so he should dismiss the case. Mrs. Proudie denounced this decision as contrary to law and as a deliberate insult to herself and her fellow Christians. She understood, of course, that the magistrate was a Dissenter, and had no sympathy with Church-goers, so she was not surprised at his decision. Doubtless he preferred village ruffians and blasphemers, and enjoyed helping them to insult a lady and desecrate the sacred day. Justice Jollyface, on leaving the bench, was heard to make the apparently irrelevant remark that he thanked God he was a bachelor.

A month or two ago the *Protestant Standard* was exulting over the twelvemonth's imprisonment of the editor of the Catholic *Universe* for wounding Protestant feelings. Yesterday it appeared in mourning, its editor having been sent to Newgate for nine months for wounding Catholic feelings. It now denounces the new law as shameful and wicked in the extreme. The editor of the *Rock* has also been sentenced to three months' hard labor. The religious press is in a state of panic. The ultra-Protestant papers complain bitterly of the way in which the new law is abused to their detriment. They protest that it was never intended as a means of enabling the "fiendish ingenuity" of the myrmidons of the Beast to persecute them.

John Hampden and the editor of the *Witness for God in Christ* jointly applied for summonses against the Astronomer Royal, Professor Huxley, and others, for wounding their religious feelings, and wilfully and persistently defying God's Word. These scientific men, falsely so called, blasphemously asserted that the earth was round whereas God said it was flat; and they said that the creation took many thousands, if not millions, of years, whereas God said it took only six days. This impious contradiction of God's personal statement was painful and irritating beyond measure to the religious feelings of true believers in the Bible, like themselves. Summonses granted.

Brigham Smith, a Latter-day Saint, engaged in recruiting female saints for Utah, applied for a summons against John Husband and Edward Paterfamilias. Polygamy was a part of his religion and was in the Bible. Husband and Paterfamilias had publicly and vehemently stigmatised this part of his religion as infamous filth, degrading lust, beastliness, and so forth. Such attacks on his religion were exceedingly revolting to his religious sense. The magistrate said he was afraid he must grant a summons. In fact, by the terms of the Act, if a Thug, whose religion was murder and robbery, was to prosecute an escaped victim for hurting his religious feelings by denouncing his religious practices he should have to hear the case. Such denunciation would obviously be very hurtful and obnoxious to the Thug's peculiar form of religious feeling.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

TRIBUTE TO HENRY WARD BEECHER.

(Concluded from page 131.)

DAY by day the wrath and vengeance faded from the sky—the Jewish God grew vague and dim—the threats of torture and eternal pain grew vulgar and absurd, and all the miracles seemed strangely out of place. They clad the infinite in motley garb, and gave to aureoled heads the cap and bells.

Touched by the pathos of all human life, knowing the shadows that fall on every heart—the thorns in every path, the sighs, the sorrows, and the tears that lie between a mother's arms and death's embrace—this great and gifted man denounced, denied, and damned with all his heart the fanged and frightful dogma that souls were made to feed the eternal hunger—ravenous as famine—of a God's revenge.

Take out this fearful, fiendish, heartless lie, compared with which all other lies are true, and the great arch of orthodox religion crumbling falls.

To the average man the Christian hell and heaven are only words. He has no scope of thought. He lives but in a dim, impoverished now. To him the past is dead—the future still unborn. He occupies with downcast eyes that narrow line of barren shifting sand that lies between the flowing seas. But Genius knows all time. For him the dead all live and breathe, and act their countless parts again. All human life is in his now, and every moment feels the thrill of all to be.

No one can over estimate the good accomplished by this marvellous, many-sided man. He helped to slay the heart-devouring monster of the Christian world. He tried to civilise the Church, to humanise the creeds, to soften pious breasts of stone, to take the fear from mothers' hearts, the chains of creed from every brain, to put the star of hope in every sky and over every grave.

Attacked on every side, malignd by those who preached the law of love, he wavered not, but fought whole-hearted to the end.

Obstruction is but virtue's foil. From thwarted light leaps color's flame—the stream impeded has a song.

He passed from harsh and cruel creeds to that serene philosophy that has no place for pride or hate, that threatens no revenge, that looks on sin as stumblings of the blind, and pities those who fall, knowing that in the souls of all there is a sacred yearning for the light. He ceased to think of man as something thrust upon the world, an exile from some other sphere. He felt at last that man are part of nature's self, kindred of all life, the gradual growth of countless years; that all the sacred books were helps until outgrown, and all religions rough and devious paths that man has worn with weary feet in sad and painful search for truth and peace. To him these paths were wrong, and yet all gave promise of success. He knew that all the streams, no matter how they wander, turn, and curve amid the

hills or rocks, or linger in the lakes and pools, must some time reach the sea.

These views enlarged his soul and made him patient with the world, and while the wintry snows of age were falling on his head, spring, with all her wealth of bloom, was in his heart.

The memory of this ample man is now a part of nature's wealth. He battled for the rights of men. His heart was with the slave. He stood against the selfish greed of millions banded to protect the pirate's trade. His voice was for the right when freedom's friends were few. He taught the Church to think and doubt. He did not fear to stand alone. His brain took counsel of his heart. To every foe he offered reconciliation's hand. He loved this land of ours, and added to its glory through the world. He was the greatest orator that stood within the pulpit's narrow curve. He loved the liberty of speech. There was no trace of bigot in his blood. He was a brave and generous man, and so, with reverent hands, I place this tribute on his tomb.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIAN LEARNING.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—There is a certain lecturer of the Christian Evidence Society who rejoices in the name of Dunn. A peculiar personage is this Dunn. Judging from the style of his lectures one would suppose that he hunted up as many jaw-breaking scientific terms as his not over-capacious cranium could hold, committed them to memory, and then fired them off at his audience, with the view, not of enlightening their understandings as to the truths of Christianity, but to impress them with a sense of his abnormal scientific attainments; at least this is the opinion which has often been expressed to me by Christians. The insufferable egotism of this man has frequently been known to have produced a condition of physical nausea in certain members of his audience. Ignorant to a degree, his presumption is unbounded. Haranguing a crowd the other evening in Hyde Park, he delivered himself in the following style: "Wot did Huxley want to use the term biology for, instead of zoology, when zoology was so more comprehensive in its happlication?" pronouncing the first two syllables of the word zoology as one, giving the same sound to "zool" as is given to the "ool" in "school"! But the choicest part is to come. Challenged by one of the audience as to his pronunciation, he actually had the temerity to assert that the word was derived from the Greek "zoon," pronouncing this also as one syllable, as indeed it would be pronounced as I have put it. "'Ear! 'ear!' exclaimed the Christian members of his audience. "Clever bloke, that 'ere Dunn, ain't he? Knows such a lot, specially about languages." No doubt poor Mr. Dunn had tried to discover the derivation of the word, but not knowing the significance of the first "o" in "zoon," thought that it was pronounced as one syllable, and so, with the rashness born of ignorance, publicly perpetrated a most ludicrous blunder in the full confidence that he was adding to his reputation as being not only an authority on science, but also on etymology. But it is difficult always to regard the man with feelings of pity or even of contempt. When he libels in the grossest possible fashion some of the grandest of modern scientists and thinkers, knowing what we do of the ignorance of the man, it is almost impossible to control our anger. What do your readers think of the following as coming from a man of the calibre above illustrated? Speaking the other evening on the Bible he said that "the unblushing impudence and *egregious* mistakes of Hæckel were patent to everyone," etc. Here is a man who is actually so ignorant as to call the word "*egregious*" *egregrious*, having the sublime audacity to speak of the *mistakes* and *impudence* of one of the grandest scientific investigators who have ever adorned the annals of science! Now sir, is not this enough to make e'en the angels weep? But sir, I cannot go on any further, not because I could not give numberless other instances of the man's ignorance and conceit, but because I do not wish to render your readers "sick unto death."—Yours truly,
STOOMFIELD BLEVENS.

REVIEWS.

The Socialist Movement. By ANNIE BESANT. Reprinted from the *Westminster Review*. Freethought Publishing Co. (3d.) Fluent and interesting, but, in our opinion, full of rash statement and wild argument. The way in which Mrs. Besant urges that Mr. Bradlaugh is a Socialist without knowing it, is perhaps intended as a compliment, (p. 12) but it is a very left-handed one.

Socialism: For and Against. By C. BRADLAUGH and ANNIE BESANT. Freethought Publishing Co. (4d.) This is a reprint from *Our Corner*. It is hardly a discussion on the whole question, but a few thoughts upon it by a friend and a foe. Mrs. Besant has a stern statement about Robert Owen on p. 31. If she will read Owen's *Autobiography* carefully she will see that he did not make his fortune in the way she alleges.

Radicalism and Socialism. By ANNIE BESANT. Freethought Publishing Co. (3d.)—Also a reprint. Eighteen pages of matter for threepence! This doesn't look as though Socialism had or expected to have much hold on the people. We are sorry to see Mrs. Besant pouring her enthusiastic nature into this questionable channel, while Freethought is so much in need of the services of all its leaders.

Anti-Statist, Communist Manifesto. By JOSEPH LANE. Published by the Author, 38 Ainsley Street, Bethnal Green, E. (1d.)—A manifesto is supposed to be issued by a party. Mr. Lane does not tell us for whom and by what authority he speaks. He is an Anarchist, a Communist and a Free Lover, and he amiably proposes that everybody's children should be maintained by the Community. Phrenologically we should say that Mr. Lane must have amativeness large and philoprogenitiveness small. His scientific accuracy may be judged by his stating in all seriousness that, since the war in Paraguay, "the male births have been eight times as numerous as the female."

AN ADDRESS TO GOD'S OWN. The Lord has made all things for himself.—Solomon Let him have the vermin.—Symes.

Bugs and lice, and fleas and flies! Go away to paradise: On your wings and crawlers rise To the very topmost skies, To the throne of the I Am, To the New Jerusalem. Go and plague the Blessed Lamb Till you make him cry, "Oh! Damn!"— At the Great Creator go, As you went for Old Pharaoh, Fly, you nasty little flies, All about his nose and eyes; O'er his bread, and cheese, and butter, After dabbling through a gutter, In his soup, and in his coffee, O'er his sugar, o'er his toffee. Go in swarms, in troops, in showers, Fill his gardens, fill his bowers! Fill his rooms, and soil his plaster, Fly, you laggards—quicker, faster! Spot and spoil his great white throne, Till you make him squirm and groan!— O'er his nose, his cheeks, his chin, Tittilate his wrinkled skin; Sting him, vex him, make him fret! Go it hotter! faster yet! Should he try to snooze or snore, Go it hotter than before! Slack not in your impish torture, Give him never peace nor quarter.

And you horrid little bugs, Go and crawl about his "lugs;" O'er his legs and arms, his bedding, All about him ever treading; Most unmercifully bite! Make his skin a shocking sight; From his heels to o'er his brains Cover him with boils and blains; Swell his cheek, and blind his eye, Make him feel he'd like to die!

And you hopping, skipping fleas, Do your level best to tease; Make him itch from crown to heel, Let him feel what mortals feel, When you work in mighty legions, As you do in sandy regions.

And thou most disgusting louse— Worst of vermin in a house— Go to thy Creator's noddle, Off, as fast as thou canst toddle; All about his body go, Multiply, and work him woe!

All you parasites internal, Bless your God with pangs infernal, Fill his substance, fat and lean, Fill his liver, fill his spleen, Midriff, stomach, duodenum— Get within and get between 'em— Leave no organ uninfested; Leave no fibre unmolested; Suck him, bore him, gripe him, pin him— Make him think the devil's in him!

Thus you nasty things of Nature, Go and plague your own Creator; Leave all other prey alone, And give your Maker back his own. JOS. SYMES.

Prisoner for Blasphemy.

By G. W. FOOTE. A Full History of the Author's Trials and Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

"Altogether apart from the theological opinions of its author, it is an interesting record of prison life, and will make many who do not sympathise with his views regret the scandal caused by their own injudicious partisans."—Weekly Times. "An important Preface."—National Reformer. "The book is valuable just now, but will be much more valuable by-and-by."—Mr. Foote writes in a quiet, manly way, without any sensational or hysterical shrieking, how he was subjected to gross injustice and indignity."—Secular Review. "Well written....The book must have a certain value as associated with a case that will be historical."—Western Daily Mercury. "This interesting, and in some parts very humorous description of a prisoner's life in Holloway Gaol."—Reynolds' Newspaper. "Seeing what ample excuse Mr. Foote has for being angry, his narrative is very temperately written, and should be not only interesting to readers now, but also, as he says, 'of service to the future historian of our time.'"—Weekly Dispatch. "Among the books which have a value for many a long year after the author has passed away."—Our Corner. Cheap Edition, in Paper Covers, 1s. 6d. Superior Edition, in Cloth, 2s. 6d.

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