

THE FREETHINKER

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

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No 233.



A FINE OLD FATHER.

And Noah was five hundred years old : and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.—GENESIS v., 32.

DOWN BELOW.

CENTURIES ago, when the earth was thought to be flat, hell was conceived as a lake of fire below its surface. This idea is still entertained by myriads of ignorant people, many of whom find a proof of their belief in the fact that the temperature rises as we dig deeper and deeper into the earth's crust. Volcanoes like Etna, Vesuvius, and Heckla were believed to be vent-holes or even mouths of hell. Sir John Mandeville, the legendary traveller of the Middle Ages, declares that he found a descent into hell "in a perilous vale" in the land of Prester John. Many a cavern in England still bears the name of Hell-hole. Another cavern on an island in one of the south Irish lakes is said to open down into hell. It is called St. Patrick's Purgatory. Crowds of pilgrims visited it for several centuries, and all who had the hardihood to venture in were pinched, beaten, and burned, probably by priests who played the part of devils in order to sustain the profitable delusion. Dr. Faber, so recently as 1851, taught that the interior of the earth would at least be the locality of hell during the millenium. When the saints had risen in the sky at the sound of the archangel's trumpet, the earth

would be accommodated for the new era. Gehenna would consist of a solid sphere of fire, two thousand miles in diameter ; outside this there would be an ocean of liquid fire two thousand miles deep, where the damned would be nicely cooked ; and beyond this a vast spherical arch, one thousand miles thick, upon which the saints would live in glory and felicity with Christ. This idea does credit to Faber's imagination, but the learned divine forgot to tell us how the saints could enjoy themselves while walking on the lid of the great pot in which their late fellow creatures were being boiled.

Such notions are nearly exploded nowadays, yet people still speak of hell as *down*, just as they speak of heaven as *up*. If a Christian refers to the paradise of his faith he still looks at the sky, while if he refers to Hades he casts his eyes upon the ground. Heaven is to-day as of old in the region of life and light, and hell in the region of death and darkness. We imitate our forefathers without knowing why, and what they did in consonance with their belief we do for no other reason than that it is the fashion.

It must not be supposed, however, that hell has been universally regarded as "down below." According to Macrobius, the Platonists regarded the infernal regions as ex-

tending from the earth to the moon. According also to the famous legend of St. Brandan's Voyage, that worthy saint set sail from Ireland and arrived at the moon, where he found that hell was situated, and saw Judas Iscariot in horrid tortures, his agony being mitigated by a regular "Sunday off." Martin Tupper, the poet of bathos, also sings:

"I knew thee well, O Moon, thou caverned realm,
Sad satellite, thou giant ash of death,
Blot on God's firmament, pale home of crime,
Scarr'd prison-house of sin, where damned souls
Feed upon punishment."

Poor Tupper must have fed upon bad sausages when he wrote this trash. He differs from Whiston, who thought hell was in a comet which caused a sensation in his day. Tupper also differs from the Rev. Mr. Swinden, who wrote a book to show that the sun is hell, its black spots being assemblies of the damned. Isaac Taylor, on the other hand, urges that the sun is probably the heaven of our planetary system. How wonderfully these gentlemen agree when they write on these abstruse questions! Each theological spider spins a web out of his own bowels, and, although no two are quite alike, every spider surveys his own production with paternal pride, and exclaims "How lovely, how divine!"

But let us leave the sun and moon and return to "down below." Will any of our Christian friends seriously maintain that hell *is* in that direction? If not they should cease speaking of "down to hell," and say "over to hell" or "up to hell," according to their belief as to its real locality. If, however, they do maintain that hell is "down below," they must of course admit that it is inside the earth, for "down below" from all parts of the surface of the globe cannot possibly be elsewhere. They are therefore bound to tell us how the souls of the dead, who are destined to go there, will bore their way through miles of solid earth and rock. Will their immaterial spirits wind through the actual or hypothetical interstices between the atoms of granite and basalt? Or will each infernal engineer bore his own tunnel to hell by means of special tools and dynamite supplied by Old Nick?

We have still another question to ask. If hell is not "down below," *where is it?* We pause for a reply. Surely some good Christian—say Mr. Spurgeon or the Archbishop of Canterbury—will vouchsafe us an answer. Father Pinamonti, in his *Hell Open to Christians*, states that hell is four thousand miles off, but he does not say in what direction, and we have neither the leisure nor the capacity to follow all the infinite radii of an infinite circle, whose centre is our earth and whose circumference is nowhere.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY IN ABYSSINIA.

PEOPLE are apt to think of Christianity only as the highly-developed religious system which they see around them. They forget that it has other manifestations, and that Mormon sensuality and the austerities of the Trappist monks are equally different existing phases of their divine religion. Finding Christianity in conjunction with a comparatively high state of civilisation and morality, they think those conditions inseparable, and ascribe all of worth in modern society to the influence of their religion. Such persons should have their attention drawn to Christianity in Abyssinia.

If we wish to determine what sort of being was early man, we derive valuable evidence from existing tribes whose isolation, whether in islands or in mountain fastnesses, has preserved them from the evolution which comes from competitive contact. It is so in regard to the study of early religion. In the customs of South Sea Islanders, the hill tribes of India, and the devil-worshippers of the mountain recesses of Asia Minor, we find survivals of ideas which were once general. Like the rude huts found in some deserted Highland glens, they are the remnants of a pre-existing state of things. So in the Christianity of Abyssinia, which, by sea, desert, and Nile cataracts, has been largely shut from the rest of the world, we can get some glimpse of Christianity as it existed in the days of Constantine.

An Ethiopian eunuch under Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, is one of the first recorded foreign converts to

Christianity (Acts viii., 36—38), and the present Abyssinian Church represents the Ethiopian Church of antiquity. During the reign of Constantine, A.D. 330, a regular Christian mission, under Bishop Frumentius, was established in Abyssinia. Frumentius became the first Abuna—*our father*, as they call the head of the Abyssinian Church, who is still subordinate to the patriarchate of Alexandria. The successor of Theodore, it may be said, like that king, boasts of being descended from the intercourse of Solomon with the Queen of Sheba. The latter, it is said, gave birth to a son, Menilek, who founded the Abyssinian dynasty. The custom of circumcision is kept up by all the Christians as well as by the Jews, who have long been settled there under the name of Falashees (query Pharisees).

Some other customs of the Abyssinian Church remind us of Judaism. The ark is the principal object in the church, and is *taboo*. Neither the deacons nor the laymen dare touch it. If they do so, the church and cemetery become unclean, and must be purified. Saturday and Sunday are both kept as holy days. There are numerous feast days, and fast days also; but although fasting is one of the greatest duties of Abyssinian Christianity, these latter are not kept by the laity, as a priest can always be found who will do the penance himself—for a small consideration.

The Canon of the Abyssinian Church is even larger than that of the Church of Rome, showing that it was in existence before the process of selection had winnowed away so much of the literary chaff of early Christianity. The canon consists of eighty-one books, and includes the Apocrypha, the Epistles of Clement, and the so-called decrees of the Council of Jerusalem. The Book of Enoch, which Jude cites as by "the seventh from Adam," and which throws much light on early Christianity, is much esteemed, and was first made known to Christian Europe by being translated from the Ethiopic, which is still the ecclesiastical language of Abyssinia. The Apostles' Creed is unknown, which confirms the evidence of that spurious document being the production of the Roman Church, where it was not known before 340 A.D., and even then did not contain the clause "he descended into hell."¹

In contradiction to the Catholic Church, which holds that Jesus Christ had two natures, the Abyssinian Christians hold that he had one only, namely, the divine. They do not admit the doctrine of transubstantiation. The priests receive the Lord's Supper every day, but the wine is mixed with water. The worship of the people consists mainly of prayers and prostration before the saints, and especially the Virgin Mary.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "Their reverence for a saint is often greater than for the Almighty, and a man who would not hesitate to invoke the name of his Maker in witness to a falsehood may decline so to use the name of St. Michael or St. George. Legends of saints and works of religious controversy form almost their entire literature." This was the case throughout Europe in the early, palmy days of Christianity.

"At present," says Bishop Gobat, the Protestant missionary before the war, "the Christians of Abyssinia are divided into three parties, so inimical to each other that they curse one another, and will no longer partake of the sacrament together. It is one single point of theology that disunites them—the unceasing dispute concerning the unction of Jesus Christ."

Réclus, in his *Universal Geography*, says: "Disregard for truth is another national vice, veracity being little respected in this country of theological quibbling, where each interpretation is based on a sacred text." If we come to think of it, there is very little inculcation of the virtue of truth in the Christian standards.

Christianity as seen in Abyssinia is a huge monastic system. There are over twelve thousand monks, not to mention nuns. A large part of the best land belongs to the monasteries, and the peasants are compelled to cultivate it in return for the spiritual benefit they derive from the existence of these holy people. The monks live solely by begging. "God has given us speech for the purpose of begging" is the most popular proverb in this Christian country. How much Christianity has done for it in other respects we shall see in our next number.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

¹ See *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 79.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Weekly Dispatch* reviewer is getting on. He has just penned a notice of the first volume of *Crimes of Christianity*, which was sent in last August. His notice is sandwiched between two others—one a laudatory review of Salvation Army sermons, the other a laudatory review of H. L. Hastings' "Anti-Infidel Library." These praises of extreme orthodoxy, with a censure of extreme heterodoxy, will help to establish the *Dispatch's* character for piety; and as the paper is owned by one reputed Freethinker and edited by another reputed Freethinker, this is most admirable.

THE *Dispatch* reviewer pays no heed to the title of the volume. "There is," he says, "no brighter side, no relief." Of course not; the very title of the volume precludes that. Forty or fifty thousand ministers are occupied in pointing out the "merits" of Christianity. They systematically hide from sight all its demerits. Yet when a couple of Freethinkers compile a chronicle of its crimes, the *Dispatch* cries out "How unfair!" Such sickening cant is enough to make one ashamed of one's kind.

"It is very elaborate," says the reviewer, "and we dare say accurate!" But all the terrible crimes against liberty and humanity recorded in the volume are, it appears, only connected with the profession of Christianity. What paltry nonsense, to be sure! Had the reviewer read the book, instead of smelling the pages, he would have seen that all those crimes have been ordered or sanctioned by the whole Church, and justified by reiterated appeals to Scripture.

"CHRISTIANITY," exclaims the reviewer, "has nothing to fear from this method of attack." But that is only his opinion. We have a different opinion, and time will show who is right. Meanwhile one might inquire of this sapient reviewer what kind of attack would injure Christianity. Ridicule its absurdities, and you are called a blasphemer; assail its dogmas, and you are called a brute; expose its crimes, and you are called unfair. The fact is, it is impossible for Freethinkers to satisfy the critical instincts of Christians and hireling reviewers, and they are simply fools if they try to. Fortunately the *Crimes of Christianity* is having a good steady sale, and it will do its intended work whether reviewers applaud or denounce. One thing they cannot do; they fear to give it justice; they dare not criticise the contents of the work in the light of its title.

JUST a word in conclusion. Dr. Hunter's editorship of the *Dispatch* has certainly put the paper straight on the Home Rule question; but in other respects the change has not been an improvement. Mr. Fox Bourne would never have allowed his underlings to treat Freethought and its publications as Dr. Hunter has done. Mr. Fox Bourne did not burke *Progress* and *Our Corner*. He did not refuse to acknowledge the books we sent him, and certainly if he reviewed one of them he would not have waited six months. Dr. Hunter's Radicalism is all very well, but it goes with a stream and shouts with a multitude. There is a deeper Radicalism than that—a Radicalism of thought and principle, which sees the causes of social evil and has the courage to point them out.

THE *Western Mail* says that the debts on Dissenting chapels in the Rhondda Valley are fast becoming a frightful scandal. A Mr. Cule, who seems to be cute, advertises a great sale of drapery in order to clear his responsibility in connection with one of these chapels.

ANOTHER clerical scandal has occurred at Cardiff. A dissenting minister, whose name is not yet given, has seduced a member of his congregation, whose age very nearly brings the reverend gay deceiver within the meshes of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Two Protestant Spaniards have been arrested in Madrid for not taking off their hats to a priest who was carrying the viaticum to a dying parishioner. The judge condemned them to six days' imprisonment and fined them as well. It was in vain that they pleaded that Article 11 of the Constitution guaranteed liberty of conscience. They have appealed against the judge's decision. The Liberal papers are up in arms. They say the case shows plainly enough how little religious toleration is understood even now in Spain.

GOVERNOR FORAKER, of Ohio, says in his last message: "Next after God it is our duty to take care of America." A Californian paper remarks that "the idea of the Governor of Ohio taking care of deity is a muscum idea that ought to be stuffed."

FORTY-TWO distraints for tithes were made in one day in the village of Halkyn alone. Thus the Church Defence Association wins the hearts of the Welsh people.

SPEAKING of Canon Liddon, Mr. Spurgeon says: "In these pestilential days of doubt we welcome a believer as a brother, even though our belief does not quite square with his convictions." If these days of doubt were over the fraternity would evidently

be at an end. Christians would then have full leisure to hang and burn each other again for the differences of opinion, which they now manage to overlook in the presence of a common danger.

MR. SMITH narrates, in the Faith-healing column of the *Christian Herald*, how he stopped the measles. He says: "About a fortnight ago I went home from work and found that the youngest child had a cold, high fever, and looked as though going to have the measles. . . . I said: 'The measles have no business here. Disease is not for the righteous.' I went on my knees and asked the Lord to rebuke the disease, and he did it in a moment, and the child a few minutes afterwards ate a hearty meal." How foolish all this seems in the nineteenth century. Yet it is only the faithful echo of biblical times and biblical language.

"MISSIONARY FAILURE" is the title of a leading article in the *Christian Commonwealth*. This journal owns that it despises the criticism of enemies of Christianity, but it is compelled to listen to sincere Christians who lament the failure of missionary enterprise. It says: "Mr. Caine agrees with Canon Taylor that it would have been better for many of these Pagans if they had never known 'Christianity' at all. He says that there are 7,000 illegitimate children in the Straits Settlements who are the offspring of 'Christian' fathers. It is not surprising that such a result of English Christianity should fail to recommend it to the natives. Moreover, the 'Christian' Government encourages vices of the worst kind among these heathen for the sake of raising revenue. What wonder that the poor people scout with contempt the Christianity in whose name these things are done?"

ANOTHER distressing feature is the disunion and bickering among the missionaries of various religions, who are often "fiercely opposed to each other and irreconcilable." In face of this "confusion and strife" the *Christian Commonwealth* declares that "It is no marvel that 'Christianity' has been paralysed; it would have been a still greater marvel had it been otherwise."

THE *Christian Million* for last week gives a diagram depicting the religious condition of the world in a very dark light. The estimated population of the world is given as 1424 millions. Above in a light shade are squares representing Protestants 116 millions; then, darker, Greek Church 84 millions; darker still the Roman Catholic 190 millions; very dark, 8 millions of Jews; very very dark, 170 million Mohammedan. The great mass of heathens, 856 millions, are represented in solid black, with three squares white to represent three million converts among them. Underneath is a quotation from the Rev. Daniel Wilson, declaring "it is a solemn fact that taking the world at large, of every three persons walking on this vast globe two have never heard of the Savior, have never seen the Bible, know nothing of heaven and nothing of hell!" Yes, dear friends, this is one of those solemn facts that knock the bottom out of the pretensions of Christianity.

THE Bishop of Llandaff, rightly enough, refused to impose a certain clergyman on Welsh parishioners until he had learnt to speak Welsh. The Archbishop of Canterbury overruled this sensible decision, but the Welsh Bishop refuses to obey, and is now fighting his Archbishop in the law courts.

A COMPOSITOR at Messrs. Cassell and Co's. named Agnew, has shot himself. He leaves a letter in which he says: "Please excuse my leaving without the usual fortnight's notice, but I have received a peremptory message to go to heaven to set the title-page of 'The Book of Life.'" Evidently he was religious.

THE Rev. Miblock Stuart of De Crespigny Park, Denmark Hill, has got off easily with a fine of £5 for mutilating a volume of newspapers at the British Museum and stealing the cuttings. A more contemptible offence or one more deserving to be severely dealt with it would be difficult to imagine.

"MAD JULIA," "Hot Pepper," "Drunken Snob," and other lights of the Salvation Army assisted at a "Slum Review" in a hall near Edgware Road. According to the report, "Colonel" Nicol stated that "3,312 public-houses had been visited; 717 had been converted; 2,120 had been relieved." We should like to know the names of those converted public-houses.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL Teacher writes in the *Christian Commonwealth* on "Mr. Spurgeon as a Theological Acrobat." He went to hear Mr. Spurgeon preach, and was perplexed and disappointed with the wandering and totally unpractical sermon. He says: "The contradictory nature of most of the statements seemed peculiarly remarkable, to say the least of it. In one breath the people were told that they could only get a knowledge of God from God himself, and in the next they were urged to seek after this knowledge as if it were a thing they themselves had power to attain. The metaphysical distinctions which were drawn so carefully by the preacher may have had a meaning for a vast number, but I confess they seemed almost ridiculous to my mind. And then it was somewhat strange to hear the preacher ask the Lord to 'make use of the elect to find out the elect.'"

A CARDIGANSHIRE local preacher was declaiming one of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons—unknown, of course, to his hearers—in

Bethel of miniature dimensions, which did not even possess a gallery. Towards the close he electrified the little congregation with the sentence, "And now I turn to you, *the hundreds in the gallery.*"

THE *Christian Commonwealth* says of Buddhism that "it is false and blighting wherever it prevail. Its arrogant exclusiveness prevents all progress. It hinders learning. It oppresses the people by its exactions for a lazy priesthood. The whole system is based on deception, and the temples are great centres of wickedness and hotbeds of vice." The *Christian Commonwealth* has no respect for the ninth commandment when it slanders another religion in this outrageous fashion. Among religions, Buddhism stands almost alone in never persecuting or shedding blood. It is a mild and virtuous religion, and will always compare most favorably with Christianity in its effects on morals and learning. That its temples are great centres of wickedness and hotbeds of vice, is one of the vile and unmitigated falsehoods which pious Christians think themselves entitled to employ against rival religions.

PRAYERS for the sick are sometimes sent up to heaven by letter in China. A European, recently passing through the streets of a riverside town above Shanghai, noticed a house hung with blue lanterns—denoting half-mourning—while in the doorway were priests chanting and sounding gongs, and a man behind a large table busy folding letters. The owner of the house was dangerously ill, so a number of long letters were written to heaven circumstantially describing his sad case, and placed in elaborate official envelopes, duly stamped, and beautifully directed. These letters are then burnt—a sure method of reaching their address. All this seems very foolish; but in what respect is it any more foolish than our prayers for the sick? If spoken words reach heaven, why not written words too?

TALMAGE, instead of offering the Gospel "without money and without price," works the Brooklyn Jabbernacle on the cutest business principles. He presides while the seats are put up to auction. Competitors for the privilege of sitting under while he pumps out his gospel slush pay not only heavy prices for their seats, but heavy premiums for the right of choosing them. We read in the *New York Herald* that seven hundred dollars were given for the first choice, five hundred and seventy-five dollars for the second choice, and so on. Altogether the premiums and rental of the Jabbernacle realise over twenty-four thousand dollars, irrespective of collections. No doubt the millionaires, merchants and hotel keepers who pay these heavy prices, are not quite so idiotic as they look. They contrive to get a good advertisement in the papers as well as a seat in the pews.

"WANTED, AN ASS CURATE," is the singular demand of a London vicar, according to an advertisement in the latest issue of a High Church weekly journal. We should think the vicar will have no difficulty in getting what he wants; and we hope the pair will work well in harness together.

THE *Christian Herald* glories in "A murderer converted by Mr. Spurgeon's sermon," a copy of which found its way to his cell. Spurgeon, it would appear, stated that if Palmer, the notorious poisoner, had committed many other murders, he would nevertheless be forgiven if he repented and sought God's pardoning love in Christ. Then the murderer felt that he was saved. "I am pardoned, I am free," he cried. "I am a sinner saved by grace. Though a murderer, I have not yet sinned beyond 'the uttermost,' blessed be His holy name." Christ is thus the murderer's friend. He gives the murderer a prospect of eternal bliss which the dead victim has no further chance of obtaining. Yet if we call him the murderer's friend, Christians who teach that he is such will resent the expression as a blasphemous insult unless it should happen to be uttered admiringly by a Christian.

SIX Salvationist bandmen were fined one shilling for obstinately obstructing the thoroughfare at Belfast on Sunday. They refused to pay and were sent to gaol for four-and-twenty hours instead.

AMELIA SOAMES, 18, who appeared at the Thames Police-court charged with stealing underclothing worth £1, from a lady who employed her as domestic servant, was wearing the stolen articles when arrested. She came from Northampton a few months ago, and entered a Salvation Army home, and in a recent letter to a captain said: "I am still nicely saved." She signed it "One of your lasses in the Lord,—AMELIA SOAMES."

THE "White Cap" Indians have little reverence. They recently went to the house of Wesley Meeks, a Baptist minister, at Shelbyville, Indiana, dragged him from his bed, and whipped him unmercifully. They told him he was not providing for his family well enough.

R. SOMERVILLE, a five years' member of the Christian Institute, Bothwell Street, Glasgow, was caught stealing money from the office of the Institute. He pleaded guilty and promised that if let off he would henceforward be "an active worker in the Lord's vineyard." Bailie Gray sent him up for ten days.

A GIRL has committed suicide in Wolverhampton, leaving behind her the statement "I am going to heaven spotless."

A TELEGRAM from Constantinople announces fresh rows between Christians and Mussulmans at Beyrout. The Christians were accused of having defiled a Mussulman edifice, whereupon they were attacked with stones, to which they replied with firearms. There are thirteen victims, dead or wounded, among the followers of Mohammed, who were without arms. Another fulfilment of prophecy: Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword.

THE Bishop of Manchester, speaking at Bacup, admitted that a great deal of "the morality of the Bible was of an imperfect sort," and that "the science of the Bible was the science of ignorant ages." But Bishop Moorhouse urges that the Bible was written to teach men their relation to God, and that if the Almighty had not written down to the ignorance of the Jews his revelation would have been useless. This amounts to a statement that God made the Jews and was afterwards foiled by the "cussedness" of his handiwork. Bishop Moorhouse worships a small sort of a God after all.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE goes on to say, in spite of the assertions of unbelievers, that there is absolutely "no uncertainty about the authorship of the books of the New Testament." We defy the Bishop to make such a statement at a *private* meeting of *his own clergy*. Either Bishop Moorhouse is incredibly ignorant or incredibly impudent. If he does not know better he is unfit to be a Bishop, and if he does know better—well, in that case perhaps he is fit to be a Bishop.

THE Rev. B. Wood died suddenly in his chapel at Bradford while conducting a prayer-meeting there. He was giving out a hymn when he suddenly staggered and fell. Death was instantaneous.

THE *Utica Herald* reports, "Very interesting revival meetings still continue at the State Road and Adam's Centre Baptist churches. Ten more converts were baptised last week in O. D. Green's pond, with the thermometer at 15° below zero." These converts must have been very anxious to escape from a warmer region.

THE collector at Bombay has among his curiosities a Chinese god marked "Heathen idol," and next to it a sovereign marked "Christian God."

PARSONS CUNNINGHAM and Miles, of Newcastle-under-Lyne, have issued a public invitation to their Lent services. These gentlemen get up and worship their deity, with as many other people as like to share in the performance, at eight o'clock in the morning. They have a second entertainment in the evening, and they announce that "The clergy may be seen after any of these services." Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen, and see the show. Two sky-pilots now on view, both warranted genuine; but please don't touch, as the articles are very brittle. Admission free; only a collection to defray expenses.

"PERHAPS you scoff at religion," exclaim this brace of parsons; "it is the mark of a fool to do that." Ah, Messrs. Cunningham and Miles, *your* mark of the fool is indelible. It is a birth-mark.

ON the old Stockton and Darlington Railway, in the days when that company took the preachers of the Gospel at half price like children, one of the ticket-clerks when asked for a minister's ticket by a somewhat unclerical looking man, expressed a doubt as to his profession. "I'll read you one of my sermons if you doubt my word," said the minister. "No, thank you," said the ticket-clerk with a gloomy smile, and handed the ticket over without any further proof.

SERIOUS disturbances have occurred at Guayaquil, in Ecuador, owing to a priest having excommunicated the judges of the Supreme Court. A large crowd threw stones at the Bishop's palace, whereupon the police fired upon the people, several of whom were killed. The mob set fire to the palace, which was completely destroyed amid shouts of "Death to the Priests!"

THE ORIGINAL BLUE RIBBONITES.

TEETOTALLERS who wear a blue ribbon are by no means original in the badge they select. The "law of fringes" among the semi-savage Jews included the wearing of a blue ribbon.

Here is God's order on the subject:—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them."—Numbers xv., 37—39.

OBITUARY.—Died, on the 1st Feb., Mr. H. Markhall, aged 39, formerly Secretary of Kilburn Branch N. S. S. He leaves a large family totally unprovided for. His employer, who attended the funeral, spoke very highly of our departed friend.—C. DURRANT.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, Feb. 19, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; at 11, "Which is the Safe Side?" at 3, "The Cooling of Hell"; at 7, "Darwin on God."

Thursday, Feb. 23, Chatham, "Do Infidels Recant?"

FEB. 26, Rochdale.

MARCH 4 and 11, Hall of Science, London; 18, Leeds; 25, Manchester.

APRIL 8, Plymouth; 15, Huddersfield.

MAY 13 and 27, 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.

A. A.—Stocker, 27 Vauxhall Road, Liverpool, supplies this journal and all Freethought literature.

S. E.—Thanks for the Italian Annual. Signor Manzoni's article on *Il Prete nella Storia dell' Umanità* is, however, too long for translation into our columns, although it is powerful and interesting.

D. PROVAN.—Cuttings are always welcome.

R. FOX.—Received with thanks.

R. K.—We are glad to see the *Sydney Bulletin*. It is a lively paper, always worth glancing over.

G. DIXON.—You really should not waste your time in refuting men who argue that the world is flat. Asking us to assist you in the matter is like asking us to give you good arguments to defend the multiplication table. Mr. Elam, the lecturer, must have been brought up before the era of Board Schools. Leave him severely alone, and study a good book like Huxley's *Physiography*.

J. SPEIRS.—We are obliged. See "Acid Drops."

SANCHO PANZA.—We are obliged to you for sending us the Spanish Freethought and Republican journal *Las Dominicales Del Libre Pensamiento*. But we have only a superficial knowledge of the Spanish language. There is, we believe, a good notice of Rivarol in Sainte Beuve's *Causeries de Lundi*. We know of no cheap edition of Rivarol's works. Thanks for the batch of jokes.

H. HUHN.—The *Freidenker* is published at 470 East Water Street, Milwaukee (U.S.). Your only way of getting it would be to order it direct from the publishing office. Pleased to hear that Part IV. of the *Bible Handbook* has already enabled you to "shut up" several Christians. Lending Freethought works to orthodox friends is an excellent method of spreading the cause.

J. S.—A doctor of experience among the negroes in America says that their children, when born, are a reddish tawny color. We have no personal acquaintance with the subject.

R. REED.—Your only chance of reading the *Chissuk Emunah*, is to procure it from some Jew. The translation was not published for sale.

D. LEWIS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. S. (Hull).—We have altered the joke because there are no such texts in the Bible.

R. SHAW.—Thanks for the cuttings. Always glad to receive useful bits from our readers.

W. B. THOMPSON.—We have corrected the omission.

G. WEIR.—Delighted to hear you have once more defeated the Edinburgh bigots, who seem perfectly infatuated. You ought to be grateful for their constant advertisement. We trust you will soon obtain another shop for the open sale of Freethought literature.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—L'Union Démocratique—Le Journal du Peuple—Freidenker—L'Union des Libres-Penseurs—Jus—New York World—Liberty—Menschentum—American Idea—Star—Ironclad Age—Open Court—Women's Suffrage Journal—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Southport Guardian—New York Sun—Sheffield Independent—Truthseeker—Le Radical—Truthseeker—Sydney Bulletin—Manchester Evening News.

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.

THE reception of Lord Mayor Sullivan and the other released Irish M.P.s. last Monday was really magnificent. The street processions were a fine sight, and the sea of faces in Hyde Park was a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle. Mr. Bradlaugh could not attend the banquet in the evening, but he sent a letter which was read amidst applause. Mr. Foote was among the speakers, and the *Star* says that his speech was "fine though too terse." We can only observe that it was a pity some of the other speakers did not share that fault. Diffuseness is the prevailing vice among our public men, and some who hardly know where to begin, know as little where to end.

MOST of the Irish M.P.'s are Catholics, and they would be surprised to learn what a large part of the work was done by Radicals who are also Freethinkers. We refrain from mentioning names, but the fact is well known to those behind the scenes.

"TOBY" KING, of Hastings, was conspicuous in the crowd at Euston Square. His stature and his famous hat made him visible from afar. "Toby" brought up fifty or sixty Radicals from Hastings. Mr. Robert Forder was also of great service in dealing with the crowd around Mr. Bunting's house, where Mr. Sullivan and the reception committee took lunch.

BAILIE TURNBULL has dismissed the charge against Mr. George Weir. This is the fourth time Mr. Weir has been brought before the bailies for "acting in a disorderly manner and causing obstruction." Each time he has been acquitted or discharged, and it is difficult to see what the authorities expect to gain by prosecuting him so frequently. The *Edinburgh Evening News* maintains that Secularists "have as good a right as Christians to claim freedom of speech on Sunday. Unless therefore the authorities are prepared to deal impartially all round, it would be much better not to interfere at all with Sunday gatherings."

WE notice in *Las Dominicales*, of Madrid, that Giordano Bruno's *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* is being translated into Spanish.

THE Salford Town Council has had a whole day's discussion on the proposal to open the free libraries and reading-rooms on Sunday. Finally, a resolution was carried by 30 to 20 that, as public opinion was so divided, nothing should be done till "the sense of the burgesses has been taken." We trust that sense will be common sense.

MR. RUSKIN has presented two precious stones, a diamond and a ruby, to the Natural History Museum. The former is to be labelled thus:—"The Colenso Diamond, presented in 1877 by John Ruskin in honor of his friend the loyal and patiently adamantine First Bishop of Natal."

RENAN, speaking at a banquet of the Alliance Française recently, said he receives a large number of letters informing him that he is condemned to eternal damnation. He added that he had ended by accepting the prospect with composure; in fact, he preferred "hell to chaos." And, continuing in the same strain, he jestingly remarked that, when unable to sleep of a night, he amused himself with drawing up petitions to the Deity, in which he pictured himself as addressing the Almighty from the lowest depths of "enfer."

PROFESSOR BLAKE, lecturing in Nottingham on the Origin of Man, showed that the difference between the brain and skull of man and of the ape was less than the difference in the highest and lowest types of men. He referred to a fossil ape—sometimes supposed to be the "missing link"—which had been found in a cave in Greece, and which resembled man more closely than the ordinary ape. He believed evolution of species was far more probable than special creation. Thus Professor Blake has had to succumb to Darwinianism, although he is religious and believes that a soul or mind has somehow been superadded to the animal structure in man. According to the report he also said that "man was the only animal that looked after the well-being of his fellow-men, and tried to benefit them, and that began about A.D. 30"—at the commencement of Christian teaching. The Professor thus holds that there was no human benevolence before Christ's appearance, and that no animal but man has benevolent or social instincts. Truly religion makes a fool of a man with the greatest ease. Literally, of course, the first part of his statement is as correct as it is irrelevant, for it is impossible for any other animal to help its fellow-men.

A GOOD discussion on the Sunday opening of Art Galleries and Museums, took place at the Bermondsey Institute recently. Mr. Moss appears to have spoken with some effect. We are pleased to notice that Sir Henry E. Roscoe, M.P., has undertaken to bring the subject once more before the House of Commons.

THE JERUSALEM PONY.

(Concluded from page 51.)

IN quoting the prophecy which the Jerusalem pony and its rider fulfilled, John renders it thus:

"As it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt" (John xii., 14, 15).

Comparing this slovenly statement of Zechariah's prediction with the actual prophecy (which I have already quoted at the commencement of this article), one wonders why the Holy Ghost could not quote his own words more carefully and completely. Matthew, quoting the prophecy a little nearer the original, writes thus:

"All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass'" (Matt. xxi., 4, 5).

But the Holy Ghost is still incorrigibly inaccurate. Why does he change the word "just" into the word "meek"—

a meekness, too, which is immediately displayed by kicking over the tables of money-changers and driving people from the Temple with a knotted scourge? Why does he entirely omit Zechariah's inconvenient description of him as "saved"?¹ Was it for the same reason, too, that our modern translators changed the Hebrew expression into the more Christian one of "having salvation"?

Popular tradition alleges that the animal that thus bore Jesus to his short and dangerous triumph, and so to his speedy and ignominious death, was marked with a cross in memory of the event, and that this despised and rejected species has borne the significant marking ever since. Science, however, shows that the dark shoulder-stripes, which, together with the central stripe or ridge along the back, are supposed to form the cross, are only signs of the ass's relationship to the zebra and other strongly-marked equine species.

The tendency among modern Christians to explain away Bible events as allegorical and full of meaning suggests a very feasible explanation of the story of the Jerusalem pony. As Christians will regard the explanation as an insult, I am glad to say that I am not the author of it. The suggestion proceeds from their own side, and from no less an authority than Justin Martyr. The ass—or the asses, for Justin adopts the mistakes of Matthew just as he does those of Moses—must evidently mean Christians generally. Christ rides in triumph on the back of the ass—that is, of the credulous Christian. Justin, in his "Dialogue with Trypho" (chap. liii.), explains this prophetic type pretty fully. He says that the nations "were like an unharnessed foal, which was not bearing a yoke on its neck until this Christ came, and sent his disciples to instruct them; and they love the yoke of his word, and yielded the neck to endure all hardships for the sake of the good things promised by himself, and expected by them." Justin, moreover, explains why the spirit of prophecy made Zechariah mention that "both an ass and its foal" would be used by Christ, and why Christ accordingly "requested his disciples to bring both beasts." "This fact," he tells Trypho, "was a prediction that you of the synagogue, along with the Gentiles, would believe in him. For as the unharnessed colt was a symbol of the Gentiles, even so the harnessed ass was a symbol of your nation." As this symbol of the true Christian was divinely chosen, it was of course a fitting one, and neither Christian nor Freethinker need dispute the sober accuracy and truthfulness of the prophetic symbolisation thus employed by Deity as a forecast of the type which would be presented by his worshippers. Justin promptly shows how correct the divine forecast was by declaring that Jesus's riding into Jerusalem on asses as prophesied is "a clear proof that he was the Christ."

Justin also sees the same prophecy in Gen. xlix., 11, which, after the gathering of the people unto Shiloh (or Christ, as Christians maintain), describes Judah (or Shiloh?) as "binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine." Justin argues that the demons stole all the Christian mysteries beforehand and so, among the thefts, they imitated beforehand this famous and all-important ride into Jerusalem. He says:

"And because in the prophecy of Moses it had not been expressly intimated whether He who was to come was the Son of God, and whether He would, riding on the foal, remain on earth or ascend into heaven, and because the name of 'foal' would mean either the foal of an ass or the foal of a horse, they, not knowing whether He who was foretold would bring the foal of an ass or of a horse as the sign of his coming, nor whether He was the Son of God, as we said above, or of man, gave out that Bellerophon, a man born of man, himself ascended to heaven on his horse Pegasus." (*First Apology*, chap. liv.)

So the actual or symbolical ass is the Christian Pegasus, it appears; and we need only commend Justin for his excellent judgment and bid farewell to the highly appropriate Christian Pegasus he has selected for himself and his fellow-believers, in the long-eared and commonplace animal which I have euphemistically denominated the Jerusalem Pony, but which I must henceforth designate by the more honorable title of the Christian Pegasus. If Justin is right in holding that the story of Pegasus flying to heaven with Bellerophon is indeed a true *ante-plagiarism* of the Christian story of the ass, it will follow that Christ's ascent must have taken place on the Christian Pegasus (or Pegasi) although the Evangelists neglected to record the circum-

stance. Cannot some artist give us a painting or a statue duly representing Christ's apotheosis under these glorious circumstances?² Let us hope the Christian Pegasus is duly stabled in heaven as some recompense for his sufferings on earth, and that Justin and all other Christians will have the pleasure of greeting their divinely-selected antetype in a pious and brotherly spirit. The elective affinities displayed by Justin and his friends, indeed, should make such a meeting of long-eared inhabitants of heaven a truly happy and congenial one.

W. P. BALL.

DARWIN ON RELIGION.

Letter from the Rev. G. Street (Manchester.)

SIR,—I propose in this letter offering a few remarks on your article entitled "Pooh-poohing Darwin." Towards the end of it you are good enough to give me a little advice. I will give you a little at the beginning of what I have to say. This is it: Be fair, be civil, and if you can believe it, believe that at present, at any rate, I have no unkindly feelings towards you at all. That is all. I will number the following paragraphs, and then if you wish to refer to them again it will be all the easier for you.

(1.) You say; "Answering him [Darwin] is difficult." Yes, the difficulty lies in the fact that at present there is nothing to answer. And seeing that the good man is dead that difficulty is not likely soon to pass away. If you will kindly produce a few of Darwin's arguments—arguments mind you—for the edification and delectation of your readers, I have no doubt that someone will arise to "answer" them. After the word "arguments" in that last sentence I should have added, against religion.

(2.) You are surprised "that a Christian Minister finds 'the great-man argument' so fallacious when it no longer serves his turn." Who told you that it had ever served *my* turn? In whatever other sense you may be an Agnostic you are certainly an Agnostic on that point. You don't know that. As a matter of fact it never has served my turn, though I should not hesitate to use it if I thought it would serve my turn. The argument is by no means dead though it may have been trotted out too much. Yet if it were dead you would not have us keep to it, would you? Is not truth before consistency? You seem to think that consistency and honesty are the same. If "Christian Godites," as you call them, discover that an argument is fallacious (I am not admitting that in this case they have done so) and on that account give it up, does that argue their dishonesty? Don't you think a small lecture on the elements of morality would be helpful to you? But as touching Darwin's greatness in particular, even in his own department, are you aware "that the Geological Society is likely to be broken up into two parties, owing to the new controversy over the evolution hypothesis which has been occasioned by the anti-Darwinian views expressed recently by Mr. Murray, of the *Challenger*, to which the Duke of Argyll has directed public attention in the magazines?" You see all people are not Darwinian yet even as to evolution.

(3.) Now for your "two impregnable objections," anent Butler. First, Butler knew no more about "the mystery of the universe" than any other educated and intelligent man; nor can a rational being hand over his judgment to the author of the "Analogy," etc. What do you mean by "the mystery of the universe"? And whatever you mean by it, what do you want to make out of it? Did Butler ever attempt a solution of "the mystery of the universe"? Did Darwin know more about it than Butler? And if so, what then? Has Darwin unravelled it? If, according to your quotation from Burns, we are all "equally in the dark," that does not argue very forcibly for Darwin's superior knowledge as to that, at any rate. But the truth is, I don't see why you introduced the expression at all. And the second part of your first "impregnable objection" seems to me to be equally meaningless. Do you mean to insinuate by it that you don't hand over *your* judgment to any authority? Now I gather from the tone of your article that nature has not bestowed upon you less than the ordinary amount of "cheek," but surely, even the Editor of such an ably-conducted paper as the *Freethinker*, has hardly impudence enough to set himself up as a critic on Darwin in Darwin's own line. Do you mean to tell me that you don't give up your judgment to Darwin on Darwinism? Can you follow him through all the intricacies of his researches? Can you look at nature with his eyes? You would be another Darwin if you could. You will say that Darwin has convinced your judgment. And quite right too. He has convinced mine on evolution, but not on religion. Butler has convinced it on religion.

And now as to the second "impregnable objection"—"Butler did not write his 'Analogy' in opposition to Atheists or Agnostics . . . it is devoid of all force against Atheists or

¹ See Revised Version, marginal note.

² In the *Daily News* an account of the recent proceedings in honor of St. Antonio at Naples says that "this year two large asses also appeared to be blessed, each having tied to its ears with thin cord a couple of red and blue balloons, which floated in the air." Is this in honor of such a divine ascent and apotheosis as is suggested by Justin Martyr's remarks?

Agnostics." Well, of course, you mean by the first part of that that Butler did not make any formal attempt to prove the existence of God, which is quite true; but does the second part of what you say follow from that? Did Darwin ever make any attempt to prove Agnosticism? Yet a casual saying of his, in a letter, unsupported by any argument or illustration whatever, in favor of Agnosticism, has a deal of force with you. You attach a great deal of importance to his doubts. If I attach equal importance to Butler's faith, is not my position as sound and intelligent as yours at the least? You say yourself that "his argument was absolutely conclusive" as to what it referred to. What it referred to was the truth of Christianity. I think the existence of God is a part of Christianity. Has an "absolutely conclusive argument" in favor of Christianity, which includes necessarily the existence of God, no force with regard to Atheism or Agnosticism? It seems to me that it should have some. At any rate, I am quite prepared to trust a man who gave the whole of his life to thinking about God, and to things appertaining to God, and who believed in God from the beginning to the end. That may have no force with Agnostics, but it has some with me. I am sorry that a few, unauthorised (as to their publication), hurriedly expressed, and altogether unsupported doubts should have so much "force" for Agnostics, when the unwavering faith of a whole life-time has none. Darwin said, "I am induced to defer to a certain extent to the judgment of the many able men who have fully believed in God." In his *Descent of Man* he speaks of "the ennobling belief in the existence of an omnipotent God." And he says that the question "whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the universe has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever lived." I am inclined to think that you are not nearly so good a Darwinian as you would have us believe you are; and that, in particular, you are altogether at sea in claiming Darwin as an Agnostic.

(4.) As to that point let me say another word or two. At the beginning of your article you say that Darwin was a "complete unbeliever." But on what do you base that assertion? As I come to examine your article more minutely I find that it is nearly all assertion, and very little fact and argument. Of course as I said to Mr. Shaw, we cannot expect all men to interpret facts in just the same way. If it will be of any service to you I don't mind making you a present of the position that Darwin "arrived slowly and painfully at conclusions adverse to every form of orthodoxy." That is pretty evident I think, but if you think the necessary outcome of that is that he was a "complete unbeliever," I don't understand your reasoning. I can find you loads of men any day who do not accept any form of orthodoxy in its entirety who are yet believers in, and teachers of religion. That Darwin was a Theist and not an Agnostic is far more abundantly proved, I think, from his writings than the opposite. I don't know Mr. Grant Allen, but from the general tone of two articles that he has written to the *Pall Mall Gazette* quite recently, I should say he has not any overpowering predilection in favor of "orthodoxy." Yet in the first of his articles, which is a very short one, he distinctly states, three times over, that Darwin was a Theist. You see he does not read Darwin as you do. But let me give you a passage or two from the man himself. "Darwin hearing of their success, which he termed wonderful, sent a donation to the South American Missionary Society." "He found reason to speak well of the influence of the Christian Missionaries on the natives." So "complete unbelievers" support Missionary Societies, and speak well of Christian missionaries? These are some of his own words: "I thank God I shall never again visit a slave country. Thank God we are not destined here to see the end of it, but hope then to be in the Pacific where a blue sky tells us there is a heaven—a something beyond the sky above our heads." "The grand idea of God hating sin and loving righteousness." "That grand sequence of events which our minds refuse to accept as the result of blind chance. The understanding revolts at such a conclusion." "The impossibility of conceiving that this grand universe with our conscious selves, arose through chance seems to me our chief argument for the existence of God." "It makes the works of God a mere mockery and deception." "To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the Creator." "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one." I do not want to make too much of these passages, but I submit that they are not the language of a "complete unbeliever." I say that they are far more easily interpreted in the supposition that Darwin was a Theist rather than that he was an Agnostic. I certainly think with Grant Allen on that point, and that you are wrong.

But I find I have written a good deal more than I meant to write already, and perhaps more than you will care to print, but I must say that I don't think you give your readers too good a pennyworth, even as to quantity, so if you give them a little bit extra for one week I don't think they will grumble much; and if you care to hear from me again I will complete my criticism on your article next week.—I am, yours truly,

GEO. STREET.

MR. FOOTE'S REPLY.

TO THE REV. G. STREET.

SIR,—Your answer, which you say is incomplete, is already longer than my article; yet I print it in full, including several

passages that were better omitted. The size and price of the *Freethinker*, for instance, has nothing to do with our discussion, nor can it possibly be any concern of yours. I believe one of my readers presented you with a copy of the number containing my article.

Will you allow me to say that it hardly becomes you to speak of Darwin in the style you affect? "The good man is dead" is an expression which I hope you will regret. Ministers may adopt this tone in the pulpit, but when they descend from that elevation and address the outer world, they should not be presumptuous to their superiors.

You are good enough to ask whether I should like a small lecture on the elements of morality. No doubt you could supply me with a small lecture, but I have no necessity for it while I keep my well-thumbed copies of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Spinoza.

Your answer raises a good many fresh points, but it deals with none which I raised in criticising your sermon. You first stated that "Darwin did not study religion." I showed that he did. You also stated that Darwin expressed no doubts on religion till he was old and feeble. I showed that statement to be false by references to his *Life and Letters*. Yet on both these points, which were the vital points of your sermon, your reply is absolutely silent.

I ventured to doubt whether you had read the *Life and Letters*. Your reply shows you have not; at least I judge so, for I would rather think you negligent than dishonest. You quote Darwin as saying, "I am induced to defer to a certain extent to the judgment of the many able men who have fully believed in God." There you pause with a full stop. Darwin put a semicolon there, and added "but here again I see how poor an argument this is."

Your "thank God's" from Darwin's letters are unworthy of notice. They are as much conventional exclamations as "By Jove!" You might prove me a Theist, or even a Christian, by such an "argument."

The word *Creator* occurs twice on the last two pages of the *Origin of Species*. You quote both, and underline them. Had you read the *Life and Letters* with any attention you would have known that Darwin was still a Theist when he wrote that great work. You would also have known (indeed, I pointed it out in my article) that four years after its publication he expressed his regret for having used the term you make so much of (Letter to Dr. Hooker, March 29, 1863).

I am "altogether at sea in claiming Darwin as an Agnostic." Then I am at sea with Darwin himself. Writing to Mr. J. Fordyce in 1879 he says, "an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind." Again, in a passage of his Autobiography, he says, "I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic."

You string together a number of sentences from Darwin without the slightest regard to date. Surely you must see the futility of this on reflection. Darwin was once a Christian; when he relinquished Christianity he still retained Theism; but Theism also gradually melted away from his mind. Quoting from Darwin as you do is like appealing to Mr. Gladstone's earlier writings as the standard of his political opinions.

Undoubtedly Darwin did speak in the *Descent of Man* of "the ennobling belief in the existence of an omnipotent God." But if you refer to the whole passage you will see that he spoke relatively. Such a belief is ennobling to polytheistic savages. Hence the elevating effect of Mohammedanism on its African converts; while the converts to Christianity which is not monotheistic—having three Deities, besides the Devil, the Virgin Mary, and a multitude of Saints—are composed, according to Mr. Thompson the traveller, of all the drunkards, liars, thieves, and unclean livers of the continent.

But you misquote Darwin in the very next sentence. He does not say that the question whether there is a Creator and Ruler of the universe has been answered in the affirmative by "the highest intellects that have ever lived," but by "some of the highest intellects that have ever lived," which is a very different thing.

Similarly you misrepresent Mr. Grant Allen's articles in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He does not "distinctly state, three times over, that Darwin was a Theist." What he says is simply this—"Once or twice, indeed, in a single passing phrase, he half avowed himself some sort of a Theist." You should not speak as loosely in discussion as you may venture to do in church. Allow me to add that you are grievously misinformed as to what is going on in the Geological Society. But we need not discuss what "is likely" to happen. When it does happen we shall know it. Meanwhile prophecy is not argument.

When I said that Darwin was a "complete unbeliever" it was in relation to Christianity. "Complete" is the very word he uses himself (vol. i., p. 309). Your comments, therefore, are based on a misconception, and call for no reply.

That Darwin subscribed to the South American Missionary Society is true. What Atheist denies that Christianity is superior to absolute savagery? Did Darwin subscribe for the preaching of Christianity in England? No, he thought it a very good thing for savages, and so do I.

You ask whether I have followed Darwin through all his researches. I answer, Yes, as far as I am able. I am not a specialist in biology, but I know enough to see that evolution is the only tenable theory. Special Creation was taught by the

priests from the Bible. It was an ignorant fancy, and it held the field by an act of usurpation. Darwin paid the Genesiac account so little respect that he never once mentioned Adam and Eve in his *Origin of Species* or in his *Descent of Man*. He regarded them as one of the world's fictions, with which, as a naturalist, he had no more concern than with the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

Darwin's arguments against the current theologies are partly open and partly inferential. The inferential ones are involved in his theory. Evolution contradicts the Adam and Eve story and the Fall; and when these are gone the Atonement is meaningless. It explains morality as a natural growth, and "sin" as the survival of brute instincts in civilised people. Grant the truth of all this, and Christian teaching becomes a farce. Darwin's open arguments may be found in the eighth chapter of the *Life and Letters*, and in passages of various letters scattered over the three volumes. He rejected miracles, and therefore prayer. He found the Design Argument fail (vol. i, p. 309) in the light of Natural Selection. He saw that there is too much suffering in the world, and that this was "a strong" (p. 311) argument against "an intelligent First Cause." He could not reconcile torturing parasites with the belief in "a beneficent and omnipotent God" (ii, 315). He saw no more purpose in man than in a gnat (i, 315). He saw that when we posit a First Cause "the mind still craves to know whence it came, and how it arose" (i., 306-307). And with respect to a future life he said that "every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities" (i., 307).

These may not be arguments, as you understand the word, but they are excellent reasons for not professing Theism. It will not do to say their publication was "unauthorised." That is merely your opinion. They are published, and by Darwin's family. To say they were "hurriedly expressed" is nonsense. Every word is clear, deliberate, and exact.

Let me ask you, if you return to this subject, to be as exact as Darwin was when he "hurriedly expressed" himself. Your misquotations are appalling. I have corrected some. Here is another. You quote him (par. iv.) as saying "our chief argument for the existence of God." The very word you underline is your own invention. The original word (i., p. 306) is "the." You also forget to note with respect to this "chief argument," that Darwin said he was "never able to decide" whether it was "an argument of real value."

You blunder also with regard to Butler. Look at my article again, and you will see that my "two impregnable objections" were "to Mr. Street's position," not to Butler's. Most of your long paragraph is therefore wasted.

Butler, you say, has "convinced" you on religion, yet you also say that he does not "make any formal attempt to prove the existence of God." Of what then did he convince you?

You represent me as saying that Butler's argument was "absolutely conclusive" in favor of Christianity. I said nothing of the kind. What I said was that his argument was "absolutely conclusive" against the Deists.

Certainly Butler argued for the truth of Christianity. But he argued with those who acknowledged the existence of God, though they rejected revelation. His argument was "absolutely conclusive" against them, by showing that their difficulties were similar to and as great as his own. He argued with them on their own platform, using their premises to prove his own conclusions. But the Atheist does not admit the premises, and therefore he can only be attacked from another platform. You allow that Butler assumes the existence of God, yet you say that his argument has some force against Atheism. Is this not arguing in a circle? I had almost said, is it not playing with the question? I fancy you must have read the *Analogy* a long time ago. Pray open it again and read the Introduction, and satisfy yourself that Butler only addresses himself to those who admit that God is the author of Nature.

What do I mean by "the mystery of the universe"? Did you not see that I printed the phrase with quotation marks? It belongs to your party and not to mine. I believe all "mysteries" are of man's own making. Priests tell us certain things, and when we see they are contradicted by facts, they tell us those things are mysteries.

Darwin, however, saw further into Nature than Butler. You say he has convinced you of evolution. Do you not know that evolution operates chiefly through natural selection? Do you not know that natural selection involves a struggle for existence? Do you not know that the survival of the fittest implies the extermination of the unfit by slaughter, disease, and starvation? Do you not see that evolution shows evil to be deeper than the surface? Can you not see that pain is mixed with the very essence of life? Do you not recognise that if you

Trust that God is love indeed

And love creation's final law,

you do so in a spirit of faith, and in spite of the fact that

Nature, red in tooth and claw,

With ravin shrieks against the creed.

Personally I see no mystery in evil. The mystery begins when it is said to be caused or sanctioned by an omnipotent being who is all-wise and all-good.—Yours truly,

(G. W. FOOTE.

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