

THE FREETHINKER

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

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BRADLAUGH AND SALISBURY:
OR, THE WICKED INFIDEL AND THE PIOUS CHRISTIAN.

THE BISHOPS AND SUNDAY.

SUNDAY is called the Lord's Day, though Jesus Christ never claimed it for himself; on the contrary he was rebuked for his laxity in keeping the Jewish Sabbath, and replied that man was not made for the Sabbath but the Sabbath for man. This remark was a great deal truer than he probably understood. We must not look for the origin of the Sabbath in the nomadic era of Jewish history, amid the lightnings and thunders of Sinai. Renan points out in his last work, the *Histoire du Peuple D'Israel*, that the Sabbath is an institution of advanced civilisation, and not a patriarchal usage. For the Bedouins—and such were the early Jews—who had no habit of regular labor, life is a perpetual Sabbath. But in countries where the public labors, executed by servile hands, had reached a high development, an interval of rest seemed necessary, in the interests alike of masters and slaves. It is to Babylon, therefore, with its comparatively high culture, and its profound veneration for the mystical number seven, that we look for the origin of the Jewish week. Six was the base of numeration at Babylon, and seven was one over; as with us twelve is a fixed number and thirteen one over. And just as the seventh was connected with superstition so is our thirteenth. Many persons, even in educated society, regard it as unlucky, and would sooner go without dinner than sit at table with twelve others.

Modern Jews are great lenders, the ancient Jews were great borrowers. They derived most of their cosmogony from Babylon, and from Babylon they derived their Sabbath. The primitive Christians followed the Jewish practice for some time, but gradually they adopted the first day of the week instead of the last. This was the Sun's Day, *dies solis*, and known as such through the Roman Empire. They associated it, however, with the fiction of the Resurrection, and hence they called it the Lord's Day; but the Pagan designation still survives in the popular term of Sunday.

Undoubtedly the Sabbath was made for man. Religion consecrated a useful social law. But as priestcraft developed the original idea was lost sight of; the sanction obscured the reason, and the day was declared to be divinely appointed for religious worship; or, in other words, for going to synagogue, church and chapel, to reverence the spiritual authority of rabbis, priests and parsons, and to listen to the supernatural wisdom that emanated from their holy lips.

Such is still the theory which Christian ministers put forward among the faithful. But the faithful are a diminishing body. Multitudes of people, while not hostile to religion, are indifferent to it; and Christian ministers have to resort to subterfuges in order to make these people observe the Sunday. Consequently we have a Lord's Day Rest Observance Society. The day is still the Lord's, of course; but its purpose is rest. If you will not come to a place of worship, you must nevertheless respect

the Lord's Day by abstaining from all unnecessary movement. Unless we do this, the clergy tell us we shall lose our Sunday altogether. Remove the religious sanction, and the seventh day will join the other six. We shall then have to work every day of every week, and our lives will be a dreary monotony of toil. A pretty plea, no doubt; but the truth is, the mystery-men did not make the day of rest, they only appropriated it. It was established for Secular reasons, and for Secular reasons it will be maintained though Christianity disappear, though preachers become as antiquated as astrologers, and churches as deserted as Tadmor.

We have all heard the dreadful warnings of our clerical Cassandras against tampering with the blessed day of rest. When we ask for the opening of museums, libraries, and art galleries on Sundays, they cry out that we are opening the flood-gates of Sunday labor. They forget that about a quarter of a million persons are already employed every Sunday in keeping open churches and chapels. Why do not these take a rest on the Lord's Day? Because ministers want them to look to their gospel-shops. Sky-pilots may trade on Sunday, but no one else must indulge in innocent recreation of mind and body. An army of workers must be employed about their "houses of God," but not half as many may be employed to make the day of leisure of some use to the wearied millions.

Men do not require rest on Sunday. All the rest we want should be had in bed. What is wanted on Sunday is change. Strictly speaking, the only way to observe Sunday on the "rest" principle is to go to bed on Saturday night and get up on Monday morning, and pay a Jew to roll you over when you change sides.

Change, and not rest, being the desideratum, it is not wonderful that thousands who have lost all taste for sermons should be guilty of Sunday desecration. Poor people are necessarily limited in the commission of this deadly sin, for railway companies do not run excursions, and public institutions are religiously closed. But wealthy people run riot in iniquity. Right at the top of the tree is the Prince of Wales, who goes to theatre on Sunday in Paris, and plays billiards in England when he ought to be reading the Bible or singing a hymn. Below him the "nobs" are equally guilty; indeed, their sin has become so heinous that the Lord's Day Rest Observance Society has presented a petition to Convocation against their "goings on." The Bishop of Exeter laid this precious document before his episcopal brethren with a face nearly as long as his salary. Profound silence fell upon the bishops, and the gravity of the occasion was so great that discussion was postponed till the following day, when the Bishop of London opened the debate. His lordship expressed himself judiciously. He talked round about the subject, the upshot being that he doubted the utility of a public protest against Sunday amusements. The Bishop of Exeter followed in a franker vein, calling upon their lordships to resist the Devil. The Bishop of Lincoln felt that there was "considerable danger in the present day of people not giving sufficient consideration and thought to the higher concerns of life;" by which he probably meant neglecting church service, omitting to pay for a pew, and giving nothing to the collection. The Bishop of Winchester rose to a high pitch of courage. He actually ventured, in the very presence of the Archbishop and the Bishops, to "believe that we derived great blessings" from Sunday observance; and he felt sure that any further desecration would "take away one of the means of grace that exist"; that is, we presume, it would shut up the gospel-shops, and the people neglecting "the means of grace," the bishops would lose their "hope of glory." Finally the ecclesiastical big-wigs went into committee, and concocted a resolution which will be as harmless as a boy's squib on Guy Fawkes' day. After bewailing the "increase of Sunday labor" (sly dogs), the right reverend fathers in God went on to call upon the clergy and all instructors of the young "not to suffer the Church and the country to lose the priceless benefits of the rest and sanctity of the Lord's Day," which so promotes "the physical and moral health of all ranks of the population," and to which "our national well-being has been largely due."

Profane critics will wonder what the Bishops have to do with our *physical* health, and what the doctors will think of these episcopal poachers on their preserves. As for our *moral* health, do the bishops dare assert that a ride or a drive into the country for a breath of fresh air, or listening to a

cheerful song though at a smoking concert, or even laugh at a "comic recitation" will make us wicked? If such acts are sinful on Sunday, how can they be right on Monday; and if they are right on Monday, how can they be sinful on Sunday? The Bishops are simply canting. They are a well-paid ring of clerical Protectionists. They want to keep the Sunday for the clergy, and if they cannot do so, as they know they cannot, they must nevertheless make a professional protest against its "desecration," though they laugh in their sleeves all the while! Were they honest they would publicly rebuke the Prince of Wales. They dare not do this, and who then will believe in their sincerity or listen to their perfunctory warnings?

G. W. FOOTE.

PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

A GOOD deal has been written of late on the decay of preaching. It appears generally admitted that modern sermons are not characterised by the eloquence and fervor even of those of half a century ago. Music and ritual are found to be more attractive than sermonising, and the minister's importance is gradually being overshadowed by that of the choir and other church or chapel embellishments. Numerous explanations have been forthcoming. The obvious one is very simple. The decline of preaching is, like that of candle-making, only a sign of the greater diffusion of light. Preaching is not so effective, because audiences are not so ignorant. Even in the agricultural districts no minister could safely copy Swift, who, in preaching on pride, said: "My dear hearers, there are four kinds of pride: pride of birth, pride of fortune, pride of beauty, and pride of intellect. I will speak to you of the first three; as to the fourth, I shall say nothing of that, there being no one among you who can possibly be accused of this reprehensible fault."

The most effective sermons are naturally those which appeal to the feeling which lies at the root of religion—fear. The terrors of the day of judgment and the tortures of hell fire formed the subject of the most powerful sermons. It is related that when Jonathan Edwards delivered the passage on everlasting torments quoted in last week's *Freethinker*, men and women not only turned pale, but fainted and shrieked aloud for mercy. Such a scene could hardly be found at the present day, even in the Salvation Army. Preachers are ceasing to dwell upon the dogmatic elements of their creed, because aware they cannot do so without arousing the critical faculties of some of their congregation acquainted with the objections of unbelievers. So they mander their meaningless platitudes about the harmony of God's words and works, the divine grace manifest in the redemption of sinners, etc. All the orthodox dogmas of Christianity are dying or dead. The Bible cosmogony is dead; the doctrine of special creation is dead; the doctrine of eternal torment is dying; the incarnation is moribund, and the atonement is *in extremis*. Of all that was once the Christian religion we have but the preachers left.

Cheap literature is prominent among the causes leading to the decay of preaching. When for a few pence one can become acquainted with the master minds of all time, it is astonishing that so many should waste any portion of their time on Sunday listening to the droning of mediocrities upon well-worn subjects upon which their knowledge is a strictly negative quantity. Custom is on the side of church-going, but as the taste for reading spreads among the feminine population, it will be found to interfere yet more seriously with the business of the sky-pilot. There is something ignominious in sitting like a bucket to receive whatever the preacher chooses to pump into you from his coward's castle, and in proportion as people become more intelligent and critical they will be less inclined patiently to listen to "the old, old story, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever."

In the good old theological times preachers were supposed to expound the doctrine of Christianity. The fall of man in Adam, the redemption through the atoning blood of Christ, justification by faith, and life and death everlasting, formed the subject of each sermon. Now-a-days preachers cast about to find topics that will avoid anything more than a passing allusion to dogmas which they are aware are passing away. They fall back on what their forefathers stigmatized as "cold morality." Decorum is the great

thing in the pulpit. Try and say nothing to which even an Atheist can object, seems to be the prescription for a modern sermon. "Shake the pulpit, bang the Bible in a frenzied manner, say nothing to the purpose, and you will preach well" an English bishop of last century is reported to have said. Perhaps he was only satirising the methods of the Methodists and other dissenters. In the well-known Scotch tale it was a great recommendation to a bible-banger in the olden time that he had "knockit the pulpit to pieces and dang the guts o' twa bibles." Another energetic preacher was described as having "a great power o' watter, for he grat, and spat, and swat like mischief." We see no such exhibitions of energy in earnest: Mr. Spurgeon is the best instance of a survival, but his gout does not permit of his displaying that activity in the pulpit for which he was famous in his younger days. "Isn't it heavenly?" said a female member of the Tabernacle congregation when Spurgeon had got the steam up and was roaring like a bull of Bashan. "Yes," said a male auditor of modern tastes, "it is indeed heavenly; it reminds me of thunder." In our time sermons are not only decorous, they are usually written, often purchased ready lithographed, and not unfrequently, as an enquirer discovered, are really composed by females.

Dr. Thomas Guthrie of Edinburgh, remarked that a sermon was like the drop scene in a theatre, "You must lay the colour on thick," and the Scotch beadle who said, "a kirk without a hell is na' worth a damn," was quite of his opinion. But the distance between preacher and congregation is lessening, and the thick glaring colours of the old sermons will not bear close inspection. The race is dying out of those who, like the old Scotchman, "Liket thae sermons best that confoonds the sense and joombles the joodgment." In proportion, however, as there is a demand for more intellectual preachers it is found that the better class of educated men will not join a profession to belong to which argues that you are either dull or dishonest, and in which you have, as Carlyle said, to solemnly constitute yourself an impostor upon the threshold. With the advance of education the power of the pulpit decays, and with it that of religion.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

LAST Sunday morning Dr. Hoyle, the Dean of Rochester, preached at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall; and, according to a correspondent in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he expressed unshaken faith in the literal truth of the Adam and Eve story. The Bishop of Carlisle, on the other hand, describes the Genesis story as "childish." We should like to see the Bishop and the Dean settling this little matter together.

A FEW days ago a London magistrate sentenced an old woman of sixty to three months' imprisonment for fortune-telling by "cutting the cards." Yet priests are still allowed to take cash for what is in essence the very same thing. For our part, we do not believe that either class should be suppressed by law, but we contend that they should be treated impartially.

JOSH BILLINGS is a writer who has gained a reputation for wit by funny spelling, something in the phonetic style. Josh says, "I'd rather be an idiot than infidel." Indeed, Josh! Are you quite sure that nature has given you a choice in the matter?

THE Rev. J. Gawthrop (how does he pronounce it?) has been issuing tickets to admit to a discourse to "Men Only" in the Bolton Brow Wesleyan Chapel. This is suggestive enough in itself, but the worthy Gawthrop has improved on it by getting women to distribute the tickets in the streets and public-houses.

WE wonder why the Rev. J. Gawthrop wants to address "men only?" Does he wish to treat a few Bible subjects that cannot be dealt with before a mixed audience? Has he a quantity of spicy reflections he yearns to get off his mind on Lot and his daughters, Abraham and Hagar, Rebekah and Isaac, Jacob's wedding night, Onan, Tamar and Judah, Ruth and Boaz, the Levite and his concubine, David and Bathsheba, Solomon's harem, and other spicy parts of Holy Writ?

THE Rev. G. Curryer told his congregation at Edmonton that "when a man became an Atheist he was unfit to be thrown to the dogs." Since then the reverend gentleman has, for certain pretty strong reasons, been called upon to resign his living.

CHRIST CHURCH, West Green, Tottenham, is running a building fund. By way of raising the wind, a "Grand Military Assault-at-arms" has been held, with a boxing match, in which

two light-weight champions appeared and gave an exhibition of pugilistic skill that would possibly have delighted J. C. and the apostles. We have not heard whether the proceedings opened with prayer.

THE Church of England Working Men's Society has been holding such disorderly meetings at Bath that the mayor has been obliged to refuse them the use of the Guildhall.

LET US all be unhappy on Sunday! Such is the burden of the Lord's Day Observance Society's petition, which the Bishop of Exeter has presented to the Church Convocation. Complaint is made that the upper and fashionable classes go in for all kinds of Sunday entertainments, thus setting a bad example to the lower orders, and helping forward "the anti-religious movements of our day by lending the influence of high places and great names to an irreligious contempt of the needful and healthful restraints of Christianity."

How shocking! And what is the remedy? The Lord's Day Observance Society proposes that "a remonstrance" be issued against the Sunday amusements of the rich, and that the poor be "restrained" more severely by the prohibition of Sunday excursions. Wouldn't they like to see it! England is still superstitious and stupid enough, God knows—if he knows anything; but we are past the time when innocent pleasures could be curtailed in order to please a few bilious bigots.

Why do the clergy wish to keep Sunday dull? Simply for trade reasons. They are all Protectionists, and want one day out of seven strictly devoted to their trade. If there is no competition they feel they have a better chance of doing business. All their mouthings about religion, morality, decency, etc., are nothing but hypocrisy. They pretend to have God's interests at heart, but that always means their own.

ARCHDEACON BURNEY moved in Convocation that a committee be appointed to "consider the question of an increase of the episcopate." The motion was seconded by the Dean of Windsor, who probably has an eye on one of these new bishoprics. For this reason also, perhaps, he scorned the idea of taking £25,000 a-year from the existing bishops in order to provide for fresh ones. Doubtless he would like to see the episcopate extended, not like gold into gold-leaf, but by simple multiplication on the old scale of magnificence.

THE Bishop of Dover supported the motion, which was carried unanimously. His lordship was witty, according to the Convocation standard, on the popular clamor against bishops. People talk as though such dignitaries rolled in wealth. "Come down, my lords, from your gilded carriages," exclaimed a Church Congress speaker some time ago; and the Bishop of Dover's repetition of this apostrophe evoked roars of laughter. Well, perhaps the bishops don't ride in gilded carriages; but as their incomes average about £6,000 a-year, they can well afford to do so, and probably that is what the speaker meant. Jesus Christ and the apostles had no carriages at all, and the Master had to haul up miraculous fish, with money in their mouths, to pay the tax-collector.

PIOUS Germans have been praying hard for the recovery of the Crown Prince, but his case gets more hopeless every day. Probably if he dies they will go on believing in the efficacy of prayer as firmly as ever. Facts count for nothing in theology.

OVER at New York the famous Central Park chimpanzee, "Master Crowley," has been suffering from a severe attack of pneumonia, and the *Herald* gives an account of his being visited by "a Christian scientist" who believed in faith-cures. Kneeling in front of the chimpanzee's cage, with his eyes shut, the Christian scientist prayed hard for several minutes. Master Crowley, however, saw no good in the performance, for he "turned his back sadly on the religious enthusiast, and lay down on a meal sack to have a snooze." Mr. Conkling, the superintendent, profanely remarked to the locomotive praying machine: "You would do a thriving business as a horse doctor." No doubt the Yankees could spare this faith-healer, and will listen kindly to our suggestion that he should be exported to San Remo. The Crown Prince's servants could supply him with some clean straw in the stable, where he might kneel and pray ten hours a day. This wouldn't do the Prince any harm, and if the Bible is true it might do him some good.

CONVOCATION goes through its farce of following Parliament. Above a year ago the latter body decided that marriages were legal up till three o'clock in the afternoon. Convocation, after deliberating a good deal about a matter upon which it has no option, has just passed two new canons in order to bring ecclesiastical law in harmony with the law of the realm. This is illustrative of the usual course. Secularism takes each step in advance, and when the Church finds it can no longer hold back without being laughed at, it tardily seeks to place itself in harmony with the victorious movement.

"DR. HUNTER ON Mr. Foote's Crimes." Such is the scoundrelly line on the placard of an anti-infidel paper. The reference

inside is to the *Weekly Dispatch* review of *Crimes of Christianity*. But "Crimes" is not put in quotation marks, and therefore the line is distinctly libellous. Still, we don't intend to take any action. Christian juries would not give a fair verdict in such a case, and we are indisposed to advertise the publication in question. We merely state the facts as a fresh proof of "Christian charity."

THE *Manchester City News* prints a long and eulogistic notice of Thomas Cooper, who now resides at Lincoln, being in his eighty-third year, and thinking life so well worth living that he is in no hurry to emigrate to heaven. The writer, Joseph Johnson, represents Thomas Cooper's change from Freethought to Christianity as due to the "absurdity" and "irrationality" of sceptics and scepticism. He forgets to say that Thomas Cooper was very hard-up before his conversion, and that immediately after it he was the recipient of a very handsome subscription from his kind Christian friends

A BOLTON traveller has bolted. He leaves behind him a deficiency of £500, a wife and five children. The runaway was a Sunday-school worker.

ANOTHER sudden disappearance of a minister, the Rev. W. Mules, pastor of Trinity Church, Eccles. The woman was a vocalist and teacher in Trinity Church Sunday School. The couple have been traced to Liverpool where they booked for New York as man and wife. The reverend gentleman has left behind him a wife and two young children in addition to debts amounting to upwards of £200.

THE *Church Times* informs all people who have old jewellery locked up and never used, what they should do with it. It should be made up into a chalice or some other ecclesiastical ornament and presented to the church.

EIGHT men were charged with taking part in the popular resistance to the tithe distrains at Llangwm. They pleaded guilty. Mr. Justice Willis took a lenient view and liberated them on their own recognisances to appear again in a month's time if called upon to do so.

THE *Church Reformer* for March contains the suggested draft of a Bill to separate Church and State in England and Wales. Such schemes are necessarily only tentative. The present one has some good suggestions, but is open to the fundamental objection, that by making tithes cease, it would hand over some five millions annually of national property to one section of the community, and that the landlords. Try again, O valiant little *Church Reformer*.

GOD has been pretty free with his avalanches lately. Six houses were buried in the Marobbia Valley, in Switzerland, seven persons being killed thereby and a large number of cattle perishing. The village of Selma is buried under a huge avalanche, but the inhabitants contrived to escape in time. Bugliaga, a village in Italy, has also been buried. Six dead bodies have been dug out, and four injured but living persons. At Corio thirteen persons are still believed to be under the snow, and at Sparone there are thirty. Many other places have suffered much hardship and loss of property. An avalanche in Spain has carried away a railway bridge, and another has killed eleven people. Snowstorms have been unusually severe in Europe and America. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

THE hamlet of Trasquera at the foot of the Alps, has also been completely overwhelmed by an avalanche, and in the Bini valley five persons have been thus killed. God has also drowned four thousand Chinese coolies who were on rafts for the purpose of repairing the mischief caused by the terrible floods along the Yellow River.

A WASHINGTON gentleman called on the Rev. E. H. Swem and declared that he was the Lord Jesus Christ. The minister, however, proved sceptical, and sent his lord and master to a lunatic asylum.

THE *Sunday School Times* recently said: "It sounds comical to hear an ordinary congregation singing, 'Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow thee!' Think of a woman, with a silk gown on, and a stuffed bird in her hat, standing up and singing, 'Naked, poor, despised, forsaken, Thou, from hence, my all shalt be!'"

A FAMOUS argument of Christian apologists, taken from Leslie's "Short and easy"—it should be "long and difficult"—"method with the Deists," is that certain events mentioned in the Bible must be true because they are commemorated by feasts or other celebrations which have come down from the time of the events commemorated. Well, the Jews have just been keeping their feast of Purim in memory of their deliverance in the days of Queen Esther. Yet Mr. Claude Montefiore writes in the *Jewish World* that the story of Esther is a curious tissue of improbabilities, written just before the rising of the Maccabees, several hundred years after the time of the mythical Ahasuerus.

The story was written to account for the custom of keeping the feast—not the feast founded on the story.

EXACTLY the same argument applies to the Passover and the Lord's Supper. Christians think the Jewish festival proves that the angel of the Lord smote in one night all the firstborn in Egypt where the blood of a lamb was not sprinkled on the door posts. The explanation is that the story was invented long after to explain the customs of the Passover. In the same way Christians would have us believe that because they take bread and wine in communion, Jesus was idiot enough to break bread at a table and say, "Take, eat, this is my body." Bread and wine were used as sun offerings, and were partaken of in the communion feasts of Mithras ages before Christianity.

THE Rev. T. Douzer has been sent to an asylum as a lunatic not under proper control. Of such are the kingdom of heaven.

THE Salvationists have had a split at Spennymoor owing to General Booth's refusal to permit any music except that purchased from headquarters.

WE presume one of our friends has been distributing back numbers of this journal in the neighborhood of Shepton-Mallet. Some indignant person has sent us back a copy, dated March 13, 1887, from that town. Inside is written "Blasphemous!!! Shame!!! See Matthew xxv, last verse." The only part of that verse which can have the faintest relation to us is the last clause, "and these (the uncharitable Christians) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous (the editor of the *Freethinker*) into life eternal." We shall see our irascible friend across the gulf.

A GRAND hallelujah wedding took place recently in America. "Captain" Polly Bryan married "Captain" Alexson. Since then "Captain" Polly has been expelled from the Salvation Army for wearing a bustle—which is held to be inconsistent with "sincere godliness."

MR. JAMES CLARKE, the editor and proprietor of the *Christian World* is dead. He made the paper the best and most liberal of all the Christian journals. His religious contemporaries regarded him as "dangerous," and as doing much harm by softening Christianity into a "subtle form of rationalism." The process, however, will continue, and Christianity will go on rationalizing itself by degrees till presently it becomes Unitarianism, and later on Secularism pure and simple.

THE *Rock* has an article on "England's Damnation." Such a title would be exceedingly blasphemous if used in the *Freethinker*.

THE "White Cap" Indians 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.

Some lugubrious religious crank has been plastering the rocks along the Hudson River with the words in white paint, "Prepare to meet thy God." And with an unconscious humor he has occasionally placed this statement after the name of some patent medicine, so that the traveller reads it as follows:—"Use Killen's Disease Annihilator—Prepare to meet thy God."

BISHOP MOORHOUSE SPEAKS.

"A GREAT deal of the science and the criticism, and even the morality of the Bible was of an imperfect sort. If the Bible had taught the science of the nineteenth century it would not have been understood. Unbelievers might say there was an uncertainty about the authorship of the books of the New Testament. Such statement was untrue."

There's much in the Bible we'd better resign,
In science it does not especially shine,
And some of its morals are not very fine:
Which nobody can deny.

You see, if the whole of the book had been good,
If it said iron axes could not swim like wood,
By the Jews it would never have been understood:
Which nobody can deny.

If you give up the Old you must stick to the New;
That Christ walked on water is certainly true,
And after his death up to heaven he flew:
Which nobody can deny.

'Tis true all the gospels are written in Greek,
A tongue Jesus Christ wasn't able to speak,
But you need not think therefore the evidence weak:
Which nobody can deny.

You must never doubt *Hebrews* was written by Paul,
Into question the word of a bishop to call
Is the unpardonable sin, the most awful of all:
Which nobody can deny.

LUCIANUS.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, March 11, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.; at 11.15 "The Atonement: a Reply to the Bishop of Peterborough"; at 7, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?"

MARCH 18, Darwen; 25, Manchester.

APRIL 1, South Place Institute, London; 8, Plymouth; 15, Huddersfield; April 22, Liverpool.

MAY 13 and 27, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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.

CROYDON—We cannot notice anonymous letters. No doubt you mean well, but that is our rule.

J. A. WATERS.—The matter shall be noticed on the man's conviction if you will send us a report of the trial.

G. F. MARGETSON.—Mr. Forder could doubtless put you in communication with some Freethinkers about Edmonton. Glad to hear you act on Mr. Moss's advice and stir up the local sky-pilots.

READER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

D. P.—H. L. Hastings has as much idea of truth as a kangaroo has of painting. He dare not say in America that Colonel Ingersoll "managed swindling whiskey rings." He comes over here, where he is safe, and vents his slanders like a true Christian.

A. JOHNSON.—The late Dr. Hitchman, of Liverpool, was not 66 at his death, but we believe 86. The *Liverpool Post*, in its obituary notice, remarked that he was magnificently handsome, and that few men have met death more serenely. Dr. Hitchman was a pronounced Freethinker, and he lost by his out-spokenness. Many years ago he was a popular figure in Liverpool, but his Freethought afterwards consigned him to comparative neglect.

H. MARKHAM.—Dr. McCann is to deliver the whole course of four Christian Evidence lectures at the Hall of Science this year. Mr. Foote will try to be present on each Thursday evening.

J. T.—Cuttings and good wishes received with thanks.

J. E. D.—If your boy is at a private school you have simply to intimate to the principal that you wish him to have no religious instruction. Glad to hear Mr. Parris had good audiences at Liverpool. We have not the address by us.

Z. B. WOFFENDALE.—Paper received. Nothing more to add. We are too old to be caught by chaff. When you want a public debate you can have it.

G. WEIR.—Mr. Foote will be happy to meet the Rev. Dr. Adamson in discussion at Edinburgh. Let us know if the reverend gentleman accepts the challenge. Good luck to you—and the cause—in your new shop.

C. K. LAPORTE.—You say "Leo Taxil" (Maurice Jogand) was bought over by the French clergy, and that you have this "on the authority of distinguished litterateurs." If there is any truth in the report, the French clergy have made a bad bargain. Anyhow, "Leo Taxil" did not rat till he had cleared out the cash of his anti-clerical supporters, to the tune, we have heard, of several thousand pounds. His wife, who ought to know him, declares he is a scoundrel if he is not mad. She remains a Freethinker, and will not live with a husband for whom she has lost all respect.

BLUEJACKET (Portsmouth) writes: "I noticed with pleasure your correction of 'Mother Weston,' which I read in church this morning, attendance at 'divine service' being compulsory on us. Our 'Holy Joe' led off with such a tirade against Freethought publications that I listened to his yarn. It appears he had witnessed the atrocity of a bluejacket reading the *Freethinker*, and therefore he fervently exhorted us to beware how we threw up our religion for the principles of that paper."

M. L. B. reports that some pious ladies have withdrawn their custom from Mr. Thomas, newsagent, 21 Bedford Place, because he sold "that dreadful paper" the *Freethinker*. Not satisfied with this, they have induced some of their friends to follow suit. This is boycotting. When done by poor Irish peasants, to protect themselves against tyrannous and grasping landlords, it is a crime; but when done by pious ladies, to ruin a poor shopkeeper for not asking them what papers he should sell, it is a Christian virtue.

H. (Nottingham)—We cannot give any definite promise just yet.

T. DOBSON.—Delighted with your bright, cheerful letter. You will have seen that the *Rochdale Observer* gives a good report of our lecture on Ireland, which you say "is the best you ever heard on the subject." You are doing a good work by keeping open the Freethought stall in the market-place.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—L'Union Démocratique—Le Journal du Peuple—Freidenker—L'Union des Libres-Penseurs—Jus—New York World—Liberty—Menschentum—American Idea—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Salford Reporter—Qui Vive—La Revolte—Le Radical—Pudsey District Advertiser—Sheffield Independent—Western Figaro—Chatham and Rochester News—Women's Suffrage Journal—Ironclad Age—Coventry Herald—La Vespa—Earth and its Evidences—Sunday Chronicle.

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.

ENGLISH Freethinkers have a glorious treat offered them Colonel Ingersoll's splendid speech in defence of Mr. Reynolds in the last American blasphemy case has been revised by him and published in a thick pamphlet of 84 pages. We have no hesitation in pronouncing it the very finest of Ingersoll's orations. An extract, which appears in another column, will enable our readers to judge of its quality. We have pushed our reprint through the press in a few days. The American edition is priced at 25 cents (1s). Our reprint is now on sale at sixpence. We have prefixed a brief account of Mr. Reynolds's prosecution, trial, and sentence.

SEVERAL "blasphemous" sentences in Mr. Reynolds's indictment were taken from Mr. Foote's article on "God in a Cradle" in our 1884 Christmas Number. Ingersoll boldly defends every one of them. He does not merely contend for Mr. Reynolds's right to express his thought, but justifies his "blasphemy" by proving its truth from the Bible. There is evidently no trimming with "Our Bob." He is a great sincere man who, as the Yankees say, goes the whole hog, including the bristles.

THERE was a marked improvement in the morning audience at the London Hall of Science last Sunday, when Mr. Foote replied to the Bishop of Carlisle on Creation. The evening lecture on Shelley was also well attended. This morning (March 11) Mr. Foote lectures on "The Atonement" in reply to the Bishop of Peterborough. In the evening he answers the question "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" The subject is a novel one and should bring a large audience.

THE Christian Evidence Society annually beards the infidels in their den. But it must be admitted that the experiment is not very dangerous, for a more quiet, courteous hearing than the C. E. S. lecturers get at the Hall of Science could not be obtained anywhere, not even in heaven. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" on one occasion, as may be seen in chapter eight, verse one, of St. John's Nightmare. That seems to have been as long a spell as "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse" could manage. But at the Hall of Science the "blatant infidels" and "rowdy Atheists" preserved the most exemplary decorum for a full hour on Thursday evening, March 1, while the Rev. Dr. McCann lectured on "Man's Origin." More civilised and polite than the holy angels, those descendants of ape-like progenitors sat like ladies and gentlemen till the lecturer had done. When the Christians applauded his pious bits they refrained from all marks of dissent; and whenever he uttered a sentiment that rose above creeds, and appealed to the human heart, they applauded him themselves. But save for those cheerful manifestations, you might almost, while Dr. McCann was speaking, have thought yourself in a church, if it were not for the bright, intelligent, and attentive faces upturned to the platform.

DR. MCCANN lectured from eight to nine. He got to the subject about 8.15 and left it about 8.50. The rest of his lecture dealt with evolution in general, gaps between species, imperfections of the geological records, spontaneous generation, and design. Nobody gained the faintest idea of what Dr. McCann's own views were on the subject. Evidently he is, as Mr. Foote remarked, an old hand at the business.

"CHANCE" played a large part in Dr. McCann's lecture. He seemed to fancy "chance" the chief thing in the philosophy of materialism. He even spoke of it as though it were a force. "Produced by chance" popped out of his mouth again and again; and, so strong is the force of habit, that he repeated the phrase after admitting in discussion that chance meant only a want of prevision in the human mind.

TWO speakers tackled Dr. McCann on behalf of the London Secular Federation. Mr. A. B. Moss had a quarter of an hour's innings first. His speech was clear, pointed, and vigorous, and he sat down amidst hearty cheers. Mr. Foote, who was received with enthusiasm, occupied the second quarter of an hour. Dr. McCann's replies did not elucidate the subject, though they showed considerable dexterity. The Chairman, whose name we did not catch, was a wholesome-looking elderly gentleman. He followed the debate with close interest, and (what on earth will happen next?) he himself proposed a vote of thanks, not only to the lecturer, but also to "the two gentlemen who had kindly come to discuss with him." Yes, Dr. McCann, there is evolution though you doubt it. Your own party is evolving. Twenty years ago it would hardly listen to a Freethinker, but on March 1, your Christian friends listened almost as quietly to Messrs. Moss and Foote as the Freethinkers listened to you.

OUR lively American contemporary, Monroe's *Ironclad Age*, utters a wail that excites our sympathy. Some time ago it reviewed *Infidel Death Beds*, and the office seems to have been inundated with orders for copies. "That notice," says Dr. Monroe, "has cost us a good deal of trouble and some money." He has returned all orders with remittances up to date, but swears he won't return any more. He winds up a half a column by saying that "*Infidel Death-Beds* isn't for sale here. Positively

it isn't." Perhaps it will be by-and-bye. We have written to the *Ironclad Age* office with a view to sending over a good supply, if not the "shipload" Dr. Monroe suggests. The work ought to have a big circulation in America. Dr. Monroe says that "everybody who can read ought to have a copy." If "everybody who can read" takes the same view the author and publisher are in for a good thing.

COLENSO'S *Life*, by the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, is appreciatively reviewed in the *Athenæum*. Some parts of the review are very outspoken. "Most of the bishops in England," it says, "intrigued and wrote against him, though none of his opponents could fairly answer the arguments he used, for he was a better Hebrew scholar than any of them." They "heaped upon him opprobrious names and injurious epithets." The only substantial result of the agitation against him was the "Speaker's Commentary," and this is marked by "superficiality and evasion."

OF Colenso as a man the *Athenæum* says, "He was ever on the side of justice and humanity. It is saddening to peruse the record of almost superhuman efforts on behalf of the aboriginal races—his endeavors to prevent them from being oppressed, robbed, and murdered by those who, though professedly civilised, behaved to their fellow creatures in a cruel and unchristian way."—*Cruel, yes; but why unchristian?*

MR. DOUGHTY, of London, who has been presented with a fine gold watch and chain by the people of Clonmel as "the first Englishman who has been sentenced to the plank bed by 'Bloody Balfour,'" is a Freethinker. Another Freethinker, a member of the Executive of the National Secular Society, is now doing a month in an Irish gaol. We are not quite sure that these gentlemen have acted prudently, but we admire their courage. They show that Freethinkers are always forward to do and suffer in the cause of liberty.

THE *Rochdale Observer* gives a long report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture on "The Tory Hell in Ireland." It does not scruple to add "editor of the *Freethinker*."

THE *Boston Investigator* gives the report of a good discourse by the Ex-Rev. C. H. Sims, who has discovered that "Religion is the greatest nightmare that ever stupefied the brain of man."

Menschenium celebrates the centenary of Schopenhauer by giving its readers an account of the life and philosophy of the great pessimist.

MR. W. H. RICHARDSON, J.P., vice-chairman of the Jarrow School Board, has been lecturing in that town on "Mohammedanism." He took the novel method of showing what Jarrow would be like if Mohammedanism were introduced. According to the report in the *Tyneside Echo*, it would effect a very considerable improvement, especially in the drinking habits of the community.

MR. G. WEIR, the enterprising Freethought bookseller and newsagent at Edinburgh, has obtained another shop at 39 Rose Street, for the vending of his "blasphemous" literature. It is bigger, more central, and cheaper than the old shop from which a bigoted landlord ousted him.

A "GRAND Concert and Dance" in aid of the London Secular Federation's funds, will take place on Wednesday, March 21st, at the Hall of the Camberwell branch, 61 New Church Road, S.E. Concert 8.30 to 10.30; dancing from 10.30 till 1. Tickets 6d. each. The re-union is intended for Secularists and their friends. Mr. Foote hopes to be present.

THE *Chatham and Rochester News* gives a long and very excellent report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture at the Public Hall, New Brompton, on "Do Infidels Recant?" After the report, which would fill more than two of our columns, there appears a letter from the Rev. S. D. Scammell declining the invitation to attend and defend his position. Mr. Scammell wrote that he was engaged that evening at his own church; but, even if he came, he could not think of speaking unless he had equal time with the lecturer and the last word in the discussion. Mr. Scammell is evidently a very modest man. However, if he is willing to take part in a public discussion on this subject Mr. Foote is quite as willing, at least, to give him an opportunity.

CHRIST'S PARABLES.

CHRISTIANS point to the Parables of Christ as wonderfully beautiful productions, and as teaching an unimpeachable morality which is a sign, if not a proof, of their divine origin. I propose to examine them, and show that they are often exceedingly faulty, so that Christ's popular teaching by parables is in no way superior to the moral

teachings of fallible men. I will commence with the parable of

THE UNJUST JUDGE (Luke xviii., 1-8).

In this story, the Unjust Judge, who cares nothing for the interests of his fellow-men, is so worried by a widow's continual importunities that at last he grants her prayer in order to secure a little peace and quietness for himself. The story is improbable, for such a judge would take readier means of stopping the annoyance at an early stage, and he would hardly be so foolish as to encourage future troubles by putting a premium upon persistent annoyance. But the improbability or absurdity of the story is of little consequence. It is the morality or immorality of its lessons that concerns us most. The moral teaching of the parable is imperfect in three points.

1. It encourages selfish importunity as its model of efficacious prayer. The moral given is "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." The obvious lesson conveyed by the analogy is that men are to persist in thrusting their selfish prayers on God's attention till he grants their wishes. Men are to pray "always," and to take no notice of God's continued rejection of their petitions. Surely the higher-minded kind of Christians must see that this is a very mean and pitiful ideal. Is not a respectful submission to the unerring will of Omnipotent Wisdom far more becoming than never-ceasing attempts to harass the All-wise with one's impertinent requests for innumerable alterations in his perfect decisions?

2. The Secularist finds still graver fault with the practice of prayer, as useless, and as positively mischievous on the hugest scale by diverting thought and effort from true paths of beneficial activity. Prayer is based on a falsehood, and is a sheer delusion, except so far as its emotional reaction on the person who prays may be concerned. That reaction may be a comfort, or it may send its victim to the lunatic asylum through the despondency and despair caused by disappointment or by the cultivation of superstitious fears. The idea that prayer does no harm if it does no good is a fallacious one. The harm to individuals in thus employing their spare time may seem small, but the harm to society collectively is immense, because in proportion as delusion is cultivated and honored truth and right-doing are necessarily discouraged and discredited.

3. The obvious analogy of the story makes the Unjust Judge represent God. As the Unjust Judge yielded a request because pertinaciously urged, so—or much more so—will God grant the petitions of his worshippers, however unreasonable, if repeated with sufficient obstinacy. Christians may plead, fairly enough, that the *intended* meaning is, that if the *Unjust Judge* gives way to repeated requests, how much more will the *Just Judge* of the Universe fulfil the pious desires of those who pray long enough. But a parable to be popularly instructive should not need the addition of an explanation to correct its obvious and direct analogy. So far as its unfortunate construction necessitates such a caution or change of direct similitude, it becomes weak or faulty as a fable or parable. Christ, moreover, entirely omitted this all-important explanation—the most necessary point of all, if the parable is not to be condemned as both immoral and derogatory to the dignity of religion. Christ draws a straight, simple parallel between the conduct of the Unjust Judge and the similar conduct of God. The Unjust Judge is made to say, "Because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, less by her continued coming she weary me." Christ then exclaims, "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear with them long? I tell you he will avenge them speedily." The whole parable depends on some similarity between God and an Unjust Judge under similar circumstances. Otherwise the sense would be: Because the two persons compared are different, therefore their actions will be similar. There is a difference in power, however, and God, of course, as the more powerful, will more readily avenge importunate friends who bore him than the earthly Judge will avenge an importunate stranger. But Christ evidently lays the stress entirely on some *likeness* or analogy of nature and motive and conduct in God and the Unjust Judge, and he has absolutely nothing whatever to say concerning any *moral* difference between the two, though Christians of course assume that such a difference is implied. Modern Christians, however, forget that the earlier believers cared more for God's *power* and assistance and vengeance than for his justice or truth or moral attri-

butes. Just as Christ himself spoke falsely in promising that God should "speedily" avenge his elect, although he "bear with them long," so God is not set forth as a Just God either in the parable or in the Christian scheme generally. In the parable he avenges his saints if they trouble him (or please him) sufficiently by continual importunities; and in the scheme of salvation God condemns all men to eternal agony, except the few who happen to believe in his Son. Those who teach the Christian theory certainly teach that God is an Unjust Judge of far worse character than the Unjust Judge of the parable. If the Bible is true, God is the Unjust Judge *par excellence*.

4. Nothing is said of the justice or injustice of the requests granted by the Unjust Judge and the God who imitates him. The widow asks to be avenged of her adversaries, and the saints make a similarly modest and kindly request. The saints are thus taught that God will gratify their desires for vengeance. They are led to believe that he approves of such malicious feelings, that he will grant their criminal requests if sufficiently reiterated, and that the saints themselves are so perfect and good that when they seek vengeance such vengeance must cease to be wrong. Where are the peace and good will to all, and the love towards enemies, of which Christ elsewhere speaks? Apparently the saints are to love their enemies by crying aloud for revenge upon them until God satisfies their affectionate and importunate cravings. Christian love thus appears identical with a passion which is generally called hatred. Is it in this Christian sense that Christians are to love their enemies?

W. P. BALL.

LONDON INFIDELS AND CATHOLIC M.P.'S.

"We raised a warning voice last week, and begged Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P., the Editor of the *Star*, to beware of sully the fair fame of Catholic Ireland by gaining the support of dangerous friends. This day our words must be plainer. A serious danger has arisen—the Catholics of England and Ireland must awake—*Cardinal Manning must use his powerful influence.*

A most deadly enemy of Jesus Christ in London stood on the platform in Hyde Park last Monday *side by side with Catholic Ex-Lord Mayor Sullivan!* That man is G. W. Foote, the infidel Editor of the *Freethinker*. Mr. O'Connor, a few days back, sat at a banquet at which Foote was in the chair, and at which *no grace was said*, as his paper remarks, and no Queen's health was drunk. That was Mr. T. P. O'Connor's own affair, but is Mr. Sullivan of opinion, is Cardinal Manning of opinion, are the Catholics of England and Ireland of opinion, that the man who heaps ridicule on Almighty God, on Jesus Christ, on *all Catholics hold dear*, should be given the right hand of friendship as a champion of Catholic Ireland?

A horrible sketch in the *Freethinker* is before us for January 29th. The terrible struggle of evil with good is caricatured by a figure of the Devil, and our Good God is drawn as a fat sort of Ally Sloper, and underneath is written: 'The Great Prize Fight: G. Hovah v. B. L. Zebub.'

Another ghastly thing some weeks back, caricatured Jesus Our Lord as the Lamb slain, and the Blood of the Lamb. It is too awful for us to give.

Foote himself writes in the *Freethinker* for February 19th (this week): 'Most of the Irish M.P.'s are Catholics and they would be surprised to learn what a large part of the work (the Hyde Park Meeting on Monday) was done by Radicals who were also Freethinkers.'

Yes, but please God, ignorance shall not now be pleaded. We appeal to every Christian, and especially Catholics, by their love for Jesus Christ to sever the alliance between Freethinkers and Home Rulers. Catholics, awake, awake!"

(The Tory-Democratic Gazette.)

[Proof-slips of this interesting document have apparently been sent by the *T. D. G.* editor to every journal in Great Britain except the *Freethinker*.]

BLASPHEMY AND WORSHIP.

FROM INGERSOLL'S "DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT."

(See Advertisement.)

WHAT is blasphemy? I will give you a definition; I will give you my thought upon this subject. What is real blasphemy?

To live on the unpaid labor of other men—that is blasphemy.

To enslave your fellow-man, to put chains upon his body—that is blasphemy.

To enslave the minds of men, to put manacles upon the brain, padlocks upon the lips—that is blasphemy.

To deny what you believe to be true, to admit to be true what you believe to be a lie—that is blasphemy.

To strike the weak and unprotected, in order that you may gain the applause of the ignorant and superstitious mob—that is blasphemy.

To persecute the intelligent few, at the command of the ignorant many—that is blasphemy.

To forge chains, to build dungeons, for your honest fellow-men—that is blasphemy.

To pollute the souls of children with the dogma of eternal pain—that is blasphemy.

To violate your conscience—that is blasphemy.

The jury that gives an unjust verdict, and the judge that pronounces an unjust sentence, are blasphemers.

The man who bows to public opinion against his better judgment and against his honest conviction, is a blasphemer.

Why should we fear our fellow-men? Why should not each human being have the right, so far as thought and its expression are concerned, of all the world? What harm can come from an honest interchange of thought?

I have given you my definition of blasphemy, and now the question arises, What is worship? Who is a worshipper? What is prayer? What is real religion? Let me answer these questions.

Good, honest, faithful work is worship. The man who ploughs the fields and fells the forests; the man who works in mines, the man who battles with the winds and waves out on the wide sea, controlling the commerce of the world, these men are worshippers. The man who goes into the forest, leading his wife by the hand, who builds him a cabin, who makes a home in the wilderness, who helps to people and civilise and cultivate a continent, is a worshipper.

Labor is the only prayer that nature answers; it is the only prayer that deserves an answer—good, honest, noble work.

A woman whose husband has gone down to the gutter, gone down to degradation and filth; the woman who follows him and lifts him out of the mire and presses him to her noble heart, until he becomes a man once more, this woman is a worshipper. Her act is worship.

The poor man and the poor woman who work night and day, in order that they may give education to their children, so that they may have a better life than their father and mother had; the parents who deny themselves the comforts of life, that they may lay up something to help their children to a higher place, they are worshippers; and the children who, after they reap the benefit of this worship, become ashamed of their parents, are blasphemers.

The man who sits by the bed of his invalid wife, a wife prematurely old and grey, the husband who sits by her bed and holds her thin, wan hand in his as lovingly, and kisses it as rapturously, as passionately, as when it was dimpled, that is worship; that man is a worshipper; that is real religion.

Whoever increases the sum of human joy is a worshipper.

He who adds to the sum of human misery is a blasphemer.

Gentlemen, you can never make me believe, no statute can ever convince me, that there is any infinite being in this universe who hates an honest man. It is impossible to satisfy me that there is any God, or can be any God, who holds in abhorrence a soul that has the courage to express its thought. Neither can the whole world convince me that any man should be punished, either in this world or the next, for being candid with his fellow-men. If you send men to the penitentiary for speaking their thoughts, for endeavoring to enlighten their fellows, then the penitentiary will become a place of honor, and the victim will step from it—not stained, not disgraced, but clad in robes of glory.

Let us take one more step.

What is holy? What is sacred? I reply that human happiness is holy, human rights are holy. The body and soul of man—these are sacred. The liberty of man is of far more importance than any book—the rights of man more sacred than any religion, than any scriptures, whether inspired or not.

What we want is the truth, and does anyone suppose that all of the truth is confined in one book—that the mysteries of the whole world are explained by one volume?

All that is—all that conveys information to man—all that has been produced by the past—all that now exists—should be considered by an intelligent man. All the known truths of this world—all the philosophy, all the poems, all the pictures, all the statues, all the entrancing music—the prattle of babes, the lullaby of mothers, the words of honest men, the trumpet calls to duty—all these make up the Bible of the world—everything that is noble and true and free you will find in this great book.

If we wish to be true to ourselves—if we wish to benefit our fellow-men—if we wish to live honorable lives—we will give to every other human being every right that we claim for ourselves.

REVIEW.

Bible Bestiality and Filth from the Fathers. By CELSUS. With an Introduction by LUCIANUS. London: R. Forder. (6d.)—The title scarcely tallies with the contents. Most of the *brochure* is devoted to showing how the Fathers, or some of them, allegorised the "blue" parts of Scripture. Many of these fantastic interpretations are curious enough, and their remarkable plain-spokenness shows how little chastity there was in the Fathers' language, whatever there might have been in their lives.

OBITUARY.—Dr. William Hitchman, of Liverpool, who some years ago often occupied the Secular platform in that city, died on Feb. 12, at a good age. Some dozen years or so ago Dr. Hitchman established a short-lived magazine called *Freelight*. One of his latest pamphlets was entitled *Fifty Years of Freethought*, in which he recalled his younger days, spent in Germany during the time when Hegel was considered king in philosophy.

We regret also to have to record the death of Mr. Joseph William Corfield, stationer, of St. Bride Street, at the advanced age of 79. Mr. Corfield was a disciple of Robert Owen, and was treasurer for the erection of a monument to that philanthropist. At his own cost Mr. Corfield erected a Reformers' Memorial, commemorating the names of the most eminent political and social reformers, in Kensal Green Cemetery, adjacent to the monument to Robert Owen.

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By Col. Robert G. Ingersoll.

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These Tracts are numbered, but the old heading, "Freethinker Tracts," has been omitted, so as not to frighten people. Number 5 consists of a selection from *Bible Contradictions*. The circulation of such leaflets wholesale will be very beneficial to the Freethought Movement, as they are all specially designed for the common reader.**THE BIRTH OF THE CROSS.** By G. Wackerbarth. Price One Penny. Third Edition. To be had of R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C., or of Ireton and Co., 94 Gracechurch Street, E.C. Opinions of the Press:—An exceptionally useful pamphlet.—*Secular Review*. A terse and trenchant impeachment of Christianity.—*Freethinker*. Shows a considerable knowledge of our Eastern symbolism.—*Lakshinapahana* (Ceylon). Valuable book for reference.—*Victoria Jubilee Household Journal* (Manchester).**READ "THE WIFE'S HANDBOOK,"**

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DR. PANKHURST on "The Abolition of the House of Lords." See the *Radical* for March (1). Portrait and Biography of Thomas Burt, M.P.—28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.**GOD AND MAN**

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