

# THE FREETHINKER

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Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VIII.—No. 17.]

APRIL 22, 1888.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 241.



LONG-HAIRED ABSALOM.

But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty . . . And when he polled his head (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him therefore he polled it;) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight [seven pounds].—2 SAM. XIV., 25, 26

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE sudden death of Matthew Arnold leaves a decided gap in English literature. As poet, critic and essayist his place among men of letters was unique. His distinctive position in the realm of thought is not likely to be taken by any successor. He represents a transitional link "between two worlds—one dead, the other powerless to be born," as he himself expressed it before the age of evolution appeared. His aims, however, which were from first to last in the direction of "lucidity" and "sweet reasonableness," are in no danger of being lost, and his actual life-work deserves recognition from all lovers of culture and progress.

Matthew Arnold was born in 1822, and was educated, with his friend Arthur Hugh Clough, under the special tuition of his father, the well-known Master of Rugby. In Dr. Thomas Arnold, as in so many of the Broad Church school, there was a holding with the theological hare while running with the Freethought hounds, which smacked of Philistia, and gave point to Matthew's nickname as "David, Son of Goliath." The name "Jerubbaal (who is Gideon)" betrays the early belief of the Jews in Baal, and the name Arnold indicates the semi-Philistine training which displayed itself so curiously in the spectacle of a man without any theological dogmas, or even any belief in a personal God, upholding the Church of England as "an institution for the promotion of national goodness."

With Clough, Matthew Arnold went to Oxford, where he won the Newdigate prize for poetry. It was as a poet

he first made his mark, and some have wished he had never left a field wherein he displayed such gifts of grace and expression. Arnold's is not popular poetry. It is the poetry of culture. Thought is ever uppermost. Even in narrative poems reflection is prominent. We may read between the lines of *Thyrsis* and *The Gipsy Scholar* traces of conflicts of doubt and faith which Arnold and Clough fought together. The issue appears in the poems themselves. From *The Strayed Reveller* to *Geist's Grave* they all smack of Paganism. The Christian dogmas are absent. They are not assailed as by Shelley in his *Queen Mab*, by Byron in his *Cain*, and by Swinburne in his *Songs before Sunrise*, but they are silently dropped or treated only with the tender recollection accorded to fables of childhood.

The chant of his *Empedocles on Etna*, although founded on the remains of the sage, is really a vindication of the attitude of the Secularist sceptic. Since

"Nature with equal mind  
Sees all her sons at play,  
Sees man control the wind  
The wind sweep man away—"

the part of the wise man is to make the best of the world as it is, not fly to dreams, but moderate desire.

But Mr. Arnold is better known as a critic than as a poet. Criticism he defined as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." His essays on Heine, Joubert, Spinoza, Marcus Aurelius, Bishop Butler, Falkland, George Sand, etc., are conceived in the spirit of this high standard. His *Culture and Anarchy* was a severe blow to British Philistia. It is curiously illustrative of the man that setting out by recommending Hebraism tempered and directed by Hellenism, he ends by recommending the adoption of Hellenism to an extent inconsistent with the retention of Hebraism. He had himself far more of the polished Greek than of the devout Jew.

It was in his *Literature and Dogma* (1873) that Matthew Arnold first startled the orthodox with the extent of his heresy. That work was avowedly an essay for the better apprehension of the Bible. Utterly rejecting the supernatural as unverifiable, seeing in God only "the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being," he sought to read his own ideas into the Protestant fetish—the Bible. As against dogmatic theology, he was entirely right. The Bible should be treated like any other book. The language of its different writers must be judged by literary, not by dogmatic, canons. To make figures of speech the basis of scientific propositions is absurd. But it is also absurd to import modern conceptions into ancient documents, and make out that "the fear of the Lord, and to depart from evil, mean the same thing." To suppose that Abraham or David meant by God simply "the stream of tendency which makes for righteousness," is as far fetched as to make out they were very good Christians.

The gospel, according to Matthew Arnold, was one of "sweet reasonableness," by the simple process of ascribing to Jesus all that could be approved, and throwing all the weight of the rest, including hell-fire, devils, and the whole of the supernatural, on the shoulders of his very erring reporters. This method is on a par with the criticism which makes the gospel of St. John a more valuable authority than that of St. Matthew. Such a work could please neither rationalists nor supernaturalists. Dogmatists will never forgive the grave banter, or the passage about the three Lord Shaftesburys: the father, "a sort of magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury with a race of vile offenders to deal with . . . a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his father. . . . then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works

in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously nevertheless."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Arnold has always protested that he is no metaphysician, but in his *God and the Bible*, by a few adroit thrusts, he knocks the bottom out of the God of the metaphysicians no less than out of the God of miracles. In replying to his critics he shows more than ever his dislike of the narrowness, assumptions, and ignorance of the popular theologians.

Alike as poet and critic he deserves the honored name of Freethinker. His shortcomings are easily explained. They are survivals—the natural shrinkings of a mind educated in ecclesiasticism when brought face to face with the more bracing thought of the world outside. In his *Last Essays on Church and Religion* he says:

"The partisans of traditional religion in this country do not know, I think, how decisively the whole force of progressive and liberal opinion on the Continent has pronounced against the Christian religion. They do not know how surely the whole force of progressive and liberal opinion in this country tends to follow, so far as traditional religion is concerned, the opinion of the Continent. They dream of patching up things unmendable, of retaining what can never be retained, of stopping change at a point where it can never be stopped."

Matthew Arnold has, in this country, done more than any other man of his time to show the gulf which exists between culture and theology. In his rejection of the supernatural there was no novelty, but his parentage and position, above all his literary dexterity and distinction, made his views known to a wider circle than could be reached by bolder soldiers of progress. He too, from his exaggerated reverence for the Bible, is open to the charge of seeking to stop change where it can never be stopped. It is the fate of such men to find that the more they cry "hold fast" the more the world will let go. Arnold will be remembered as a man with a keen perception of truth and beauty, who did much for the diffusion of sweetness and light. His poetry will endure from its intrinsic beauty. His prose will long be worth attention for its fertility of ideas; not because he solves any of the deeper problems, but because he concerns himself with the materials of a solution. J. M. WHEELER.

#### CHRIST'S PARABLES.—VI.

##### THE TALENTS (Matt. xxv., 14—30).

IN this parable we are told that the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country who delivered his goods—or rather his money—into his servants' hands. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ability. Then he took his departure, without apparently giving any instructions as to what was to be done with the money committed to his servants' care. On his return he finds that the two cleverer and more enterprising servants have ventured to trade with the money committed to their care, and have doubled the capital, for which he warmly praises and rewards them. But the servant with inferior abilities has been afraid to speculate with his austere master's money for fear of losing it, and has hidden it in the earth for safe custody. He now returns the talent to his master, who condemns him as a "wicked and slothful servant," and orders him to be cast forth into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What a contrast to the parable of the Prodigal Son! That type of the saved Christian had not merely one talent given him, but the half of his father's property. He wastes it all in vicious indulgence and drunken revelry, and is received with the festivities of friends on earth and angels in heaven. But the "unprofitable servant," who typifies the damned, did not waste a farthing of the money entrusted to him, but guarded it and restored it with the most scrupulous fidelity and honesty. Such a man is to be cast into the outer darkness of eternal despair, while the favorite sinner is welcomed by his heavenly Father into the glorious mansions of eternal bliss! Dissipation goes to heaven; honesty to hell. Wasting a treasure is the road to glory; faithful care of a treasure is the road to eternal ruin, because the treasure has not been put out at usury or

turned over in trade. If the unprofitable servant had only squandered his talent, like the prodigal son, how different would his fate have been!

It is difficult to see the justice of the punishment of the "unprofitable servant." He had not been commanded to employ the money in business, or to put it out at usury. The relative smallness of the sum given him shows that he was supposed to be of inferior business abilities. What he should do with the money committed to his care was left entirely to his own discretion. He acted honestly according to the best of his inferior judgment. He distrusted his own capacity for commerce, and did not care to risk the loss of his master's money by employing it in trade without his knowledge or special orders. Suppose the other servants had lost the money instead of doubling it—as they might easily have done. What would the lord have said to them then? Would he have cast them forth as fraudulent speculators, or as still more wicked than the too cautious servant, seeing that they would be able to show him nothing but losses or debts in return for his money?

The lord in the parable represents God. He owns that he is a hard and unjust man, reaping where he sowed not and gathering where he has not sowed. He also reproaches the servants for not having put the money out at usury. Such traits make God appear in a very unfavorable light. If the parable depicts God fairly, God is far from being a really good and estimable being. He punishes the servant for his inferior ability or judgment. The servant did not make himself—God made him, and the maker is morally the responsible person. Yet God's ideal of moral responsibility requires the severe punishment of those whom he has himself made faulty. He makes men unfit for a task, and then casts them into everlasting fire because they do not carry out the task for which he has unfitted them.

Christians like to forget the grave imperfections of Christ's parables. They say, with justice, that a parable cannot easily be perfect in all points. But it should be perfect in its main point, and it should avoid grave moral scandals in its subsidiary points. Otherwise the workmanship is seriously defective, and the moral lesson, if the central one be such, is accompanied by immoral lessons. Taking the main point of the parable of the Talents in conjunction with the main point of the parable of the Prodigal Son, the only conclusion one could logically arrive at would be that it is infinitely better to rush headlong into a spendthrift's career of self-indulgence and sin than to take a neutral or cautious course in which one neither lavishly wastes nor speculatively employs a treasure of which he is custodian, but only preserves it intact.

By a natural pun the "talents" of the parable are readily identified with human "talents" or abilities. Christians say that the parable teaches us that those who use and improve their talents are to be rewarded in heaven, and those who neglect them, or bury them in the earth, so to speak, are to be punished. This is the best aspect of the parable. But it is a perfect being who composes and utters this imperfect parable, and Christ is depicting the kingdom of heaven by the analogies he is putting forth. I have shown the injustice of which the "kingdom of heaven" will be guilty in acting as described; and even if secular industry and enterprise and benevolence are assumed to be the commendable lessons of the parable, it is evident that the motives called in are far from being of the highest order. The commonplace stimulus of profit, the continual appeal to self-interest, the desire of tangible rewards, the fear of fine and punishment and a master's wrath, are exactly representative, it is true, of religious feelings as set forth in the Gospels, but they are not as pure and unexceptionable symbols of moral or religious motives as might be desired in the perfect comparisons put forth by a perfect teacher.

The main lesson of the parable, moreover, is in direct conflict with the great Christian doctrine of Salvation by faith in Christ. If people who use their talents well go to heaven, the Mohammedan and the Atheist will enter paradise as readily as the Christian. Thus the parable is only moral in proportion as it is anti-Christian.

W. P. BALL.

<sup>1</sup> We believe that since attention was called to this passage by Mr. Foote, upon his trials for blasphemy, it has been omitted in subsequent editions, though the statement that the writer of Exodus "gives just as much countenance to the scientific assertion that God has hinder parts as to the scientific assertion of God's personality," is retained.

A clergyman whose greatness was certainly not in the direction of bodily stature married a fine, stalwart widow. His congregation now allude to him as the widow's mite.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Vicar of Farnmouth is suspended for three years for drunkenness on various occasions.

So zealous for Christ is the Rev. John Short, of Morris City, Illinois, that he baptised a man against his will. Subsequently, however, he was fined three dollars and costs for the offence. How the Lord's people are persecuted!

At a convention at Pittsburg, the Presbyterian ministers of the United States have passed a resolution that no preacher's license shall in future be issued to any candidate who uses tobacco. What does Mr. Spurgeon think of this, seeing that he boasts of smoking a good cigar to the glory of God? Mr. Labouchere holds that it is a very great mistake to put out the preacher's pipe. He says: "Parsons, whatever sect they may belong to, ought always to be smokers. Tobacco widens the sympathies, ripens the judgment, and softens the temper. It is, therefore, Nature's appointed antidote for all the worst clerical vices." All the worst crimes of Christianity were committed before the introduction of tobacco from America.

A YOUNG gentleman at Brussels, after going through the civil marriage, refused to go to church for the nuptial benediction, as was expected of him by his pious mother-in-law. She feels so scandalised that she has actually brought an action for the dissolution of the marriage on the sole ground of this neglect of religious nonsense; so powerfully does the clerical party set the "respectable" people against young men who do not care to submit to Holy Mother Church's constant interference in human affairs.

THE Rev. J. M. Lowther, rector of Bolton, being charged with a criminal offence, committed suicide—so little courage does Christianity impart to its ministers in trials and troubles. As the girl who preferred the charge has twice been convicted of felony, it is probable that her accusation was a false one.

THE London Diocesan Conference has been considering the advisability of permitting deacons to engage in secular employment. Notwithstanding it being urged that Paul carried on his tent-making business, the white-chokers were generally of opinion that to permit even the lower members of the clergy to engage in trade would degrade the clerical profession, and they rejected the proposition by a large majority.

GEORGE WILSON, the wife-murderer awaiting execution at Buffalo, N.Y., discourses thus: "The Lord is on my side, and if every person in Orleans county is against me my soul will be saved."

SPURGEON is suffering from considerable bodily weakness, and says he feels so broken down that some rest is absolutely necessary for him. Prayer and rest will doubtless restore him, but why don't God keep such a vessel of salvation in good sailing order always. Does he make Spurgeon ill as his indirect method of damning a few shipwrecked souls, who would otherwise be saved by the rousing preacher of the Gospel message?

THERE is expected to be "ructions" at the annual meeting of the Baptist body on the 23rd. Both the supporters of Mr. Spurgeon and his opponents are accusing each other of trying to bribe partisans to attend by promising to pay their expenses or to find preaching engagements for them.

MR. SPURGEON, in the current number of the *Sword and Trowel*, calls a "progressive gospel" "a sort of cross-breed between nonsense and blasphemy." Mr. Spurgeon is disgusted with those who would presume to revise the revelation of the unchangeable, and alter the blessed promises of damnation for the non-elect.

SPURGEON is "astounded" to find that there is disbelief in the existence of the fundamental truths of Christianity, among the ministers of the Baptist Union, from which he has withdrawn. Spurgeon must have been asleep not to have seen this all along. Genuine, honest belief in the doctrines of the Bible is dying out among all sects of Christians in civilised lands. Spurgeon, however, is one of the faithful, and he boasts that he does "most firmly believe" in Calvinism. Calvinism is perfectly true according to the Bible, and yet modern Christians commonly repudiate Calvinism as an extinct barbarism of belief, for which they refuse to hold Christianity responsible. Thus they will repudiate the whole of the doctrines of the Bible by degrees, Christianity is casting off its bigotry and supernaturalism, and is approaching the Secularism which it professes to despise.

MRS. CANT is dead. The old lady was over a hundred, and she had been blind for some time past. But cant still survives and is likely to do so for a few thousand more years we are afraid.

PROTESTANTS in Spain are treated as Protestants treat Freethinkers in England, and all Protestants are agreed that it is horribly unjust that they should be served as they themselves

serve those whose protest in religious matters goes further than their own. Don José Vila, a Protestant clergyman, having issued a pamphlet defending Protestantism against a priest's attack, the latter at once put the criminal law in force against his rival. Don José was found guilty of criticising and attacking the State religion, and was sentenced to two years and four months' imprisonment for committing this crime. So powerful are the Catholics in the land of the Inquisition that only one paper dared to report the case, and then without comment. Defendant's counsel urged the Eleventh Article of the Spanish Constitution, which says that no Spaniard shall be molested for his religious belief. This was pooh-poohed, just as Christians in England pooh-pooh any claim that our boasted religious liberty includes the opponents of religion as well as its friends. The convicted clergyman will appeal to the Supreme Court, but it is very doubtful whether he will benefit by so doing, Spanish writers having often been punished with heavier sentences for the same kind of offence.

THE Rev. Louis Blenkins refused to pay threepence for the cab fare of a child under ten, so the cabman summoned him to Westminster police-court and made him pay the threepence together with 7s. costs.

THE *War Cry* mentions a pious lady who walks round her garden barefoot, in order to realise what the Indian branch of the Salvation Army goes through. What good does such a silly action do to any one?

CHRISTIANS read in their gospels of being possessed by devils. In parts of India the belief is still prevalent. A letter from a young planter, published in the *St. James's Gazette*, says: "Another unfortunate coolie on the estate is dying from a devil put on him by a fellow laborer. He was quite well on Saturday; but now nothing will save him, as they say, unless his enemy can be persuaded to remove the devil from him. . . . This estate, too, has a devil, which has to be driven out once a year; and the coolies belonging to it all took the opportunity to do so last Sunday evening." The method was to beat the tom-tom and make the most hideous noises. We wonder whether anything like this happened "down in Judee."

*Joyful News* inserts "requests for prayer," and has received one from a man who says he cannot be converted on account of the unworthy professors of religion around him. *Joyful News* asks that its readers will pray earnestly that God will "shake him over the pit of hell," that he may see his own desperate depravity and own himself "a wretched, guilty, hell-deserving, wilfully blind sinner." *Joyful News* evidently sounds the true notes of the blessed gospel of damnation.

At the close of the services at St. James's Church, Barnoldswick, on Sunday night, a disgraceful scene was enacted. The vicar, Mr. Woods, refused to give up the offertories to be counted. The churchwardens demanded a count in the vestry. The vicar stood against the door, and Mr. Briggs, a warden, in attempting to open it, was seized from behind. Briggs then seized the vicar, and tore the cape off his Inverness coat. The warden was then ejected with great violence. The vicar was hooted home, escorted by a body of supporters.—*Bradford Observer*.

"PROFESSOR" MALCOMSON, of Dallas, Texas, is defending the Bible against science. He says that the sneers of Atheists and the jeers of the scoffers at religion receive a certain force from our present astronomical theories, and the harm so done to Christianity is incalculable. To remedy this the professor proposes to prove, like John Hampden and other fervent believers, that God's view of the earth's flatness is perfectly correct. Mr. Malcomson will maintain in his lectures the following points:—1. That the earth is a plane surface; 2. That it is motionless, as regards rotating on an axis or revolving around the sun; 3. That the sun and moon are smaller than the earth; 4. That the moon has a light of her own and does not reflect that of the sun; 5. That eclipses of the moon are not caused by the shadow of the earth. It is refreshing to find a real Christian who believes in the Bible and proves science utterly wrong by means of God's Word.

THE Rev. A. A. Robinson is another Christian of the genuine type which is gradually becoming extinct. He shows his congregation that tornadoes and cyclones are evidently the work of the Devil. God made Satan prince of the powers of the air, and legions of devils are imprisoned with him in the air awaiting the Day of Judgment. The Bible narrates how Satan sent a great wind from the wilderness which smote the four corners of a house and killed Job's sons. Satan also sent the storm on the Sea of Galilee, expecting to drown the apostles while Jesus slept. Hence the Bible clearly shows that the Devil is the moving agent in tempests and hurricanes.

An old Scotch parson, asking where he could get his shoes mended, a brother parson, whom he was visiting, replied that "Jamie, at the foot of the hill, was a good Christian man;" and the parson broke in with, "It's not a good Christian man that I want, but a good cobbler."

GEORGE KING, the converted boxer, is singing and preaching for Jesus at Wimbledon. The most noticeable feature of his vilely ungrammatical placard is the announcement that "free-will offerings will be received to defray expenses." This is followed by the statement that "Christ is all." Clearly, however, Christ is *not* all. There must be a good collection as well.

THE Ynysybwll Congregationalists are down in the mouth. They sold a lot of tickets for their Easter "monster tea," the epilogue of which was to be a draw for prizes, including a harmonium worth £8 10s. But the police stopped the little game, and hence these tears.

THAT was a nice little dispute between the Rev. Morgan Morgan, vicar of Rumney, and one of his churchwardens who is called Jenkins, and gets his living, like the parson, by dispensing spirit. After the exchange of several pretty incivilities, they came to the point. "I hope the day will come," said the vicar, "when your work is put a stop to." "The axe is laid to the root of your tree," retorted the publican, "disestablishment is coming fast." Capital!

A COMMON American Christian anecdote which, having been used by Talmage, has got repeated on this side the herring pond, is to the effect that Paine showed his manuscript of the *Age of Reason* to Benjamin Franklin, whereupon the latter advised him not to "unchain the tiger." If Franklin ever did use such a phrase there can be little doubt that by the tiger he meant Christian bigotry. But the story bears strong marks of its Christian origin. There is no evidence that Paine had written a line upon the subject of religion up till after the date of Franklin's death, in 1790. Paine says himself, in the Preface to the second part of his famous work that he had intended to reserve the publication of his thoughts on religion till late in life, but that the circumstances in which he found himself in France in 1793 determined him to delay no longer. The second part was not concluded till 1795.

STEPHEN WALTER FAY, a Scripture reader, was charged on Monday last at Greenwich with uttering forged cheques. He was to have left Gravesend for America on the very morning of his arrest.

FLAVIUS LITTLEJOHN recently died in the poorhouse at Paw-Paw, Michigan. He was entered as a drunkard and pauper, and was killed by falling or jumping from his window in the night. Not many years ago he was the most noted revivalist in the United States.

ACCORDING to the *Manchester Sunday Chronicle*, the vicar of Christ Church, Blackpool, is a remarkably nice man. The sum of forty pounds was collected in his church on behalf of the widows and orphans of some brave fellows who lost their lives in a lifeboat disaster. But the sum has never been paid over. The vicar and his vestry are of opinion that the widows and orphans have got enough, and it has been decided to devote the forty pounds to the reduction of the church debt. Should there be a Day of Judgment we should like to see the interview between those drowned heroes and the vicar of Christchurch. Probably if they went to hell they wouldn't go for nothing.

TWO little girls (sisters) attend a Board School not a hundred miles from Clerkenwell Green. At home, talking over their scriptural lessons, the birth of Jesus was the cause of a little heated altercation. One maintained that Joseph was his father; the other stoutly denied this, and said that God was his father. "My teacher says so," each argued, etc. A short time previous to this, in studying the lives of Saul and David for examination, Josephus was referred to (*Antiquities of the Jews*, book vi., chap. x.) He says Saul required from David 600 heads of the Philistines for the hand of his daughter. "No," says the little girl naively, "the Bible says foreskins" (1 Sam. xviii, 25). We think the above incidents show there should be a hard and fast line for Board School teachers to follow, or abolish religious teaching altogether.

PROF. DE GOEJE, a Dutch rationalist, has started a theory of the identity of the myth of Queen Esther with that of the Sultana Scheherazade, of the *Arabian Nights*. It appears that the Persian version makes Scheherazade the consort of Abasuerus. In both stories the sultan gets rid of his queen, and takes a fresh wife every night until he finds the heroine. See Esther ii., 14. Professor De Goeje considers that the book of Esther was written in Persia not earlier than the third century, B.C.

"MODERN Scepticism and How to Meet It" was the subject discussed at a surideaconal conference at Birkenhead. Mr. Gregory, who read a paper on the subject, wished the teaching of Church schools to be plain and unflinching. "The clergyman who omitted the Athanasian Creed had half opened the gate to the enemy." No doubt if children are once made to swallow the Trinity, all the rest is easy. Mr. Lee displayed his ability to deal with the question by the proposition that unbelievers "were of two classes—those who desired to believe and those who did not desire to believe. The Rev. W. L. Paige Cox said they must remember that the Bible never claimed for itself historical and

scientific accuracy. Mr. Cox evidently forgets that this claim has been made for it, as the very minimum of what might be expected from the Word of God. The Rev. F. Millard indulged in an awful jeremiad on "the openly avowed infidelity of women in high and cultured circles. He was informed that an open propaganda of infidelity of the most unpleasant type was being conducted by ladies of high standing and social position." When the ladies do get emancipated from theological nonsense, Mr. Millard feels that they will make it very unpleasant for the sky-pilot fraternity.

THE oath which a Chinaman took in a murder case the other day at San Francisco was of a singular character. It recited in substance that the party taking it called upon the king of the sky and the queen of the earth to witness that he was about to tell the truth with regard to the matter in dispute, and that if he swerved from it so much as a single word, knowingly, he hoped that the great ocean would swallow him, that his body might be consumed by frightful fish, and that his offspring might never prosper. The witness, after carefully reading the oath, signed it, and then, holding it up before the jury, ignited it, and held it till it entirely vanished, which act was symbolical of his belief that his soul would cease to exist after death if he swore falsely.

URGED on by the local bigots and sky pilots, the Swansea corporation has decided to enforce the provisions of the Act of Charles II., against Sunday trading. All the tobacconist shops are to be closed, and no one is to be allowed to purchase a bottle of "pop." We are glad to see the *South Wales Daily News* protests against this reactionary policy. "Heaven knows," it says, "we have enough espionage already in this country, and if much more is introduced the people will revolt against it."

A SWANSEA barber defends himself by the use of satire. Mr. Camden, of Oxford Street, has posted the following notice in his shop:—"To my customers.—Take notice that this establishment will be closed on Sundays. The proprietor has bought a high Ally Sloper hat and a white choker, and means to be goody goody for evermore.—By order of the Watch Committee."

THE Bangs have been arrested at Chicago. They are in the medium business, and are charged with obtaining money under false pretences. Detectives attended one of their séances and captured the spirit of a Russian princess, who turned out to be May Bangs—Good God, what a name! The Bangs and their friends showed fight, and the officers had to draw their six shooters.

THE Russian Government are clearing the Jews out of Odessa. It is reckoned that forty-five thousand will have to be expelled. They only get twenty-four hours notice to quit, and the result is that the wealthiest of them are reduced to beggary. Truly the Jews have reason to be thankful for the advent of "the Savior."

RUSSIA is probably the most bigoted and intolerant country in the world. The names of Christ and the saints are on everybody's lips, and the slightest dissent from orthodoxy is severely punished.

MISS WESTON, "the sailor's friend," is nothing if not pious. She prints a monthly letter to the blue jackets and marines, and she doses them with goody-goody twaddle, as though they were a lot of Sunday-school children. Sometimes she gets quite out of her depth and floats about the wrong end upwards, though all the time she fancies she is swimming as gracefully as Miss Beckwith. Her April letter is on "Mistakes of the Gospels." She writes in a "don't ye know" sort of style, which is infinitely silly; and, at the finish, she confesses that she has borrowed her crushing arguments against infidel cavillers from "Mr. G. Picton of Australia," a person who is, if anything, below the level of the ordinary Christian Evidence open-air lecturer.

WE cannot follow Miss Weston through all her "points," but we will take one as a sample. She says the inscription on the Cross was written in *three* languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and "everyone knows you cannot translate from one language into another word for word." But what need was there for any translation. Our Gospels are in Greek, and they had simply to give the Greek inscription. Yet the four "inspired" writers gave it, not in three, but in four different ways. Miss Weston may be a very good and amiable lady, but logic is not her strong point.

In this enlightened age the reply of every schoolboy to the query, "Who first doubled the Cape?" would be, "Why, Vasco di Gama, to be sure." In Portugal, however, a much more ancient navigator has been given the credit. Vicyra, an old preacher of great renown at Lisbon, said in one of his sermons: "One man only passed the Cape of Good Hope before the Portuguese. And who was he?—and how? It was Jonah, in the whale's belly. The whale went out of the Mediterranean, because he had no other course; he kept the coast of Africa on the left, scoured along Ethiopia, passed by Arabia, took port in the Euphrates on the shores of Nineveh, and, making his tongue serve as a plank, landed the prophet there."

**MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.**

Sunday, April 22, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool: At 11, "Paul on Love, Courtship, and Matrimony." At 3, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" At 7, "After Death—What?"  
Monday, April 23, Mechanics' Institute, Hauley, at 8, "Darwin on God."

APRIL 28, Chester-le-Street; 29, South Shields; 30, Middlesboro'.  
MAY 6, Camberwell; 13, Hall of Science, London; 20, N. S. S. Conference; 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.

SANCHO PANZA.—Thanks for the batch of jokes and your interesting letter. The new volume of *Crimes of Christianity* will be issued in the autumn. All the works you mention will be consulted for the chapter on the Inquisition, as well as the fine work by H. C. Lea which is now publishing in America. We shall be glad to see Rigaudiere's book if, as you kindly offer, you will send it. Voltaire's figures are far from exact. The number put to death *pour l'amour de Dieu* can never be estimated with any approach to accuracy. Certainly it amounts to millions, but how many millions will never be known, unless the recording angel publishes the figures at the Judgment Day.

W. J. B.—Hardly up to the mark for publication. Writing requires long practice, like joinering, tailoring, or any other trade.

C. S. BAXTER.—Strauss's *Old Faith and the New* is published at 7s. 6d. Elijah will be included in *Bible Heroes*.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—J. Goodenough, S. Shires, A. J. White. W. WILLING.—Cuttings received with thanks.

T. WILLIAMS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We are always glad to receive cuttings.

J. A. FLEMING.—The date is booked. See "Sugar Plums." Send copy of the bill.

G. HARGREAVES.—The parcel did not arrive. How was it addressed, and by what line was it despatched?

G. WEIR, the active Freethought propagandist at Edinburgh, is desirous of obtaining some regular occupation during the day. We should be glad if any of our Edinburgh friends could assist Mr. Weir in this matter. Mr. Weir has resumed his open-air lecturing at the Mound, and is pushing the sale of Freethought literature in his shop.

G. ORROCK reports that the bigots are going round in Hackney for signatures to a petition in favor of prohibiting the Freethought lectures in Victoria Park. These worthies generally call when the husband is out, and get the petition signed by the women. Such is Christian fair play in the East End! Our correspondent became a Freethinker through hearing a Secular lecture in Victoria Park, and is anxious for the Freethought lectures to continue. He may rely on it that they will continue, unless all other meetings are prohibited likewise.

ICH.—You might dispose of your old *Freethinkers* by giving them away. If you cannot do this yourself, no doubt the Liverpool Branch would assist you. We hope Mr. Schweitzer will note your suggestion that Freethought lectures should be delivered at the Haymarket, Birkenhead, where the artisans assemble for discussion. Our readers do us a service by sending us newspapers and cuttings, besides helping to make the *Freethinker* more interesting and useful.

W. E. GARDINER.—We are not surprised that you do not find our answers "satisfactory." We never expected you would. You are talking the wildest nonsense when you speak of "infidel leaders," known to yourself, who have recanted. There seems to be an astonishing number of infidel leaders. See our article in the *Freethinker* for April 1.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—La Vespa—Lucifer—Freethought—Freidenker—Menschentum—Glasgow Evening Times—Truthseeker—Birkenhead News—New York World—Open Court—Boston Investigator—St. James's Gazette—Inter-Ocean—Ironclad Age—Liberator—Spiritual Reformer—Western Figaro—Liberty—Neues Freireligioses-Sonntags Blatt—Northampton Daily Reporter.

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.**

"SULTAN SOLOMON" and "POOR JOB" are the two new numbers of *Bible Heroes*. Nothing of any importance has been neglected, and the reader will find instruction as well as amusement. "Saint David" is selling rapidly. Mr. Foote hopes to complete the work in about three months.

MR. WHEELER'S "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers" will not be issued till September. It has been resolved to include living names as well as dead ones, and this necessitates a great deal of fresh labor.

We intend to advertise the *Freethinker* in fresh directions. After several years' experience we have come to the settled conclusion

that a weekly contents-sheet is a waste of money. Not one newsagent in a hundred dares to exhibit it, even among those who sell the paper. We have, therefore, decided to drop it, and to spend the money in other ways, by which the public can be reached.

JOSEPH SYMES has been waking up the people of Brisbane. The religious journals gave him the usual dose of Christian charity. *Joy Bells* described him as "tall, dark, and gentlemanly," but said his blasphemy was a gospel for all the blackguards in Australia. Joseph reprints a column of such abuse in the *Liberator*. Evidently he isn't afraid of it.

THE *Liberator* commences a new Radical and Freethought story, entitled "Job Stoner." The author is said to be Jesse Myphos, but cannot we discern beneath the garb of Jesse the hand of Joseph?

THE sixth congress of the German Freethinkers' Union will take place at Cologne on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, May 26, 27 and 28. Communications should be addressed to Dr. August Specht, Gotha.

WE regret to notice that Mr. Rensburg has had to give up the lecturing field in America through loss of voice. He is a bold Freethought advocate, and can ill be spared.

THE *Freethinkers' Magazine* opens with an article by B. F. Underwood, eulogising the scientific work of Dr. S. V. Clavenger, of Chicago. There are also papers on Burns as a Freethought poet, and on "Progressive Despotism." Portraits of B. F. Underwood and Dr. J. L. York, two prominent Freethought advocates in America, are given.

ANENT a scientific paper on "The Disadvantages of the Upright Position" by Dr. Clavenger, the Philadelphia *Policlinic* says, "If we are to believe that for our original sin the pangs of labor were increased, the logical inference is inevitable that man's original sin consisted in getting upon his hind legs."

EVERY good Christian is supposed to partake of the body and blood of Jesus Christ at the time of the Christian Passover. Someone has been at the trouble of finding out from this practice how far the Church of England in Liverpool can count on *bona fide* devotees. The number of churches giving returns were 46, and the total number of communicants reported was 7,355, out of a population of 363,000. St. Thomas's, Park Lane, with a population of 6,300, reports 16. St. Stephen's, Crown Street (7,287), 33. Holy Trinity, St. Anne's Street (9,500), 20. At St. George's where the Rev. T. Kelly, best known by his matrimonial squabbles, officiates, there were only 11. He might have made up a dozen but refused the cup to his wife.

SIGNOR BONGHI, a bigoted professor in the University of Rome, having virulently opposed the granting of a site for the erection of the proposed monument to Bruno at Rome, a hundred and fifty students hissed him for an hour when he entered the class-room, so that he was unable to deliver his lecture. There the matter would probably have ended, only the professor wrote a letter stating that he was only hissed by a handful of roughs who had gained admission for that purpose. The students therefore gave him a second edition of the hissing. The students of other universities sent them addresses of sympathy and support.

TORLONIA, Syndic of Rome, was also bitter against granting a site for Bruno's statue. He has since been dismissed by the Government for presenting his homage to the Pope. The Government and the townspeople know well that the clericals are implacable enemies to the State, and would welcome rebellion at any moment. Hence the Pope is denounced as Italy's worst foe, and the priests are regarded as disloyal to the core. They are accused of being against the Government, against education, against civil liberty, and against all the rights as men and citizens which Italy has fought and bled on many a battle-field to secure.

SCHOOL-BOOKS written by priests were not allowed to be used as text-books in the public schools, but the priests were in the habit of giving them as prizes. A Government circular has been sent out to the municipalities and the principal libraries warning them that the Ministry cannot any longer permit such books to be used. Any attempt to infringe the new regulations is to be punished.

VOL. XXIII. of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* has a pretty good notice of the late James Thomson. It mentions his contributions to the *National Reformer* and *Secularist*, and in assigning his literary place, calls him "a younger brother of De Quincey." It concludes by the observation that "time will reduce his noteworthy work within a narrow compass, but within that limit it will be found as remarkable as it is unique." A note gives the correct explanation of B.V., i.e., Bysshe Vanolis, which signature Thomson used to some contributions in the *Investigator*. Bysshe as the name of Shelley, and Vanolis an anagram of Novalis, the pseudonym of F. von Hardenberg, another favorite

of Thomson's. By the way, a new edition of Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* has just been issued by Messrs. Reeves and Turner.

JAMES LICK, the infidel who left so much money for the Observatory on Mount Hamilton, California, also left a considerable sum for free baths for San Francisco. The trustees are now about to carry out the project. Among the bequests of Mr. Lick not yet carried out, is one of five hundred thousand dollars for the founding of a Californian School of Mechanical Arts.

THE Chicago Secular Union is putting up a new hall of its own, in the place of a revivalist church.

#### MRS. BESANT ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

MRS. BESANT'S "Daybreak," in last week's *National Reformer*, contains an attack on the critics of certain amendments to Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill. Among these the *Freethinker* is included; and included, as I think, in a very unfair manner. Mrs. Besant might have known, and it was her business to know, that my article, from which she quoted, was written immediately on the second reading of the Bill, and before any amendments were placed upon the paper in the House of Commons. The article, in fact, appeared in the *Freethinker* of March 25, and Mr. Bradlaugh printed the amendments in the *National Reformer* of April 8, a fortnight afterwards. My observations, therefore, referred to "one Tory suggestion," thrown out in the debate; yet anyone reading Mrs. Besant's remarks, without further knowledge, would imagine that I had accused Mr. Bradlaugh of trying to make Freethinkers the objects of Christian bigotry.

Having put myself right on this point, I will not pause to repel such epithets as "idle," "foolish" and "hot-headed." I will simply remind Mrs. Besant, in the interest of fair-play as well as common sense, that she does not answer an objection by calling it "cavilling." The Freethought party is composed of all sorts and conditions of people. Only a few of us are writers and speakers, but all the rest have an equal right to their opinions; and, for my part, I think their opinions are as likely to be right as those of orators, editors, and contributors.

Rushing in to defend Mr. Bradlaugh, who is not attacked, Mrs. Besant goes a little too far. Why should Mr. Bradlaugh do this? she asks, and why should Mr. Bradlaugh do that? when all these things were implied in the Bill, which delighted every Freethinker. It is all very well to defend alterations, but rather injudicious to do so at the cost of reflections on the original project. Nor is it prudent to expect a victory by begging the question. Mrs. Besant says it is foolish to work against "any alleviation on the line of cure"; she herself has only opposed alleviations *not* on the line of cure. But this is the very point in dispute! Is the alleviation on the line of cure? Many Freethinkers say, No. They may be right or wrong, but clearly it is useless to upbraid them for not accepting your conclusion when they deny your premises.

Personally I do think Mr. Bradlaugh's amendment will still leave his Bill "an alleviation on the line of cure," although I regret that, in my opinion, it turns a splendid Bill into something far less valuable. I see a great difference between merely "objecting to being sworn" and assigning reasons. The former plan merges the Atheist in the general body of objectors for all sorts of causes; the latter plan brings the Atheist into bold relief. The former plan has also this immense advantage in principle, that it makes no inquisition of any kind, leaving a man's reasons and motives private while securing his right to act upon them; and that, as I understand it, is the essence of freedom in all such matters. Mrs. Besant wastes her time in declaring that Oaths cannot yet be abolished. Everybody knows it. But, short of that, there are different ways of relieving Atheists, Theists who do not believe in future punishments, and Christians who desire to obey Christ, from ostracism and insult.

Let it not, however, be supposed that I cherish any censure of Mr. Bradlaugh. He is bound to act along the line of least resistance or postpone his Bill. He is naturally averse to the latter course, and on the former course he is the best judge. I presume he has given notice of amendment to his own Bill because he fears it cannot be carried through Committee without it, or because his own amendment is less dangerous than others that might be carried in his absence.

Sir Edward Clarke's amendment looks *really* dangerous. After a little experience of courts, I see no limit to what judges might consider the "binding effect on conscience" clause entitled them to say. Besides, the "binding effect" of the Oath, taken altogether, is not repudiated by Atheists. Rightly or wrongly, I fancy Mr. Bradlaugh has worded his amendment to meet this point and circumvent the clever Solicitor-General.

But, on Mrs. Besant's principles, I do not see how she could object to Mr. De Lisle's amendment, except for the unnecessary and hideous phrase "unlawful by law." This may sound extravagant, but let us see.

Christians, says Mrs. Besant, are in the majority, and therefore they have a right to decide "the ordinary form." Now I deny this, and every Freethinker I ever met with denies it. Religious *Equality* demands the absolute separation of religion from law. That is impossible at present, but such is the principle. Mrs. Besant, however, forgets religious equality. She stands up for religious *Liberty*, which is a bastard compromise. I quite agree with her that "All that can be claimed in the name of religious liberty is that it [the ordinary form] should not be imposed on anyone who objects to it." That is what "religious liberty" says, though "religious equality" says much more. But I utterly dissent from Mrs. Besant when she adds "from conscientious motives." What right have you to question my motives? How did your legal dignitaries acquire the moral superiority which enables them to decide whether my motives are *conscientious*? They are mine, and that is enough. If I give false witness, punish me for perjury; if I violate my oath of allegiance, let me bear the legal penalty. All beyond that is *private*, or between myself and God. Your inquisition is only an impertinence.

But the impertinence is not all. Your inquisition may be dangerous. Mrs. Besant says that "it is one of the disadvantages of being in the minority that one may be persecuted, and anyone who desires to escape persecution can always take refuge in concealment; but members of the National Secular Society carry their flag openly, and are not likely to be any more ashamed of it in the witness-box than elsewhere." Well then, why not vote for Mr. De Lisle's amendment? He proposes to allow "a simple affirmation" to "persons of the persuasion called Atheists and Agnostics." This is explicit enough, and that is apparently what Mrs. Besant desires. This would make every Atheist and Agnostic avow himself, or "take refuge in concealment," and that is what Mrs. Besant is proud to welcome.

I must confess, however, that Mrs. Besant is a little hasty, and a trifle inconsiderate. The word "witness-box" shows a disregard of the scope of Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill. The boast as to the "open flag" is still worse, for it shows a disregard of the Rules of the National Secular Society, of which Mrs. Besant is a Vice-President. There are "passive members," whose names are kept secret, as well as "active members" who face publicity. Many Freethinkers, indeed, are not members of the N.S.S. at all; yet Mrs. Besant knows very well that subscriptions in aid of our cause have often come from such persons. They assist the movement in *their* way, and no one has the right to demand more. So bigoted is Christianity, so mercilessly and unscrupulously does it "boycott" Freethinkers, that in some cases the public avowal of Atheism would involve absolute ruin. Who shall say that persons who stand in such peril, and who hesitate to plunge their wives and families into poverty and misery, are entitled to no consideration? Mrs. Besant and I can be brave at a smaller cost. Persecution advertises us, and, as public advocates, however we may suffer, there are compensations. What right, then, have we to flout others who are more unhappily situated, and who, if bigotry assails them, may be ruined in obscurity and compelled to suffer in silence?

Would Mrs. Besant have written thus three years ago? I doubt it. The Socialism she adopts is based upon the right of the majority to do what it likes, and the logic of this mischievous principle is not without its effect on her mind. All thought is personal, and therefore Freethought must be personal. My brain is my castle, my conscience is my sanctuary. No one has a right there but I. This involves religious *equality*. But deny this principle, and you have no standpoint. Your religious *liberty* is a pretence. It is not a treaty but a truce. It merely marks the line of present conflict. It only shows what the majority is weak

enough to concede and the minority is strong enough to exact.

Mrs. Besant says that this brutal usurpation of the majority is "in accordance with the principles of Democracy." Not as I understand them. If Democracy meant that, I should be against Democracy. I regard Freethought as primary, above all forms of government and all social institutions. Whoever asserts the contrary is substituting will (that is, appetite) for reason, and power for principle; he says to the brain "Descend from thy throne," and to the stomach "Be thou lord of all."

G. W. FOOTE.

### A NEW CREED.

I BELIEVE in the *Power of Goodness*,  
Which is Almighty,  
And maketh a Heaven on Earth;  
And in Happiness, its only end, our aim,  
Which is conceived in the *Love of Man*,  
Born of the Human Heart,  
Suffered during the Ages of Faith,  
Was crucified, dead, and buried;  
Descended into the *Hell of Priestcraft*,  
In our day, rose again from the *Dead Superstitions*,  
Aseed into the *Heaven of Knowledge*,  
And abideth at the right hand of *Truth*,  
*The Ever Almighty*,  
From whence it shall judge the good, and the bad.

I believe in the Human Family,  
The *Holy Brotherhood of Man*,  
The Communion of Minds,  
The *Punishment of Sins*,  
The Resurrection of the Truth,  
And the Life of the *World that is!* Amen!

C. J. F.

### FURTHER DESPATCHES FROM THE PLANET "LUNA." [From our own Special Aerial Correspondent.]

As promised in my last I now forward you an account of the religious observances etc. of this singularly confiding people, and find the rites and ceremonies are very similar to those you have on earth, being instituted in commemoration of the visit paid to "Luna," many years ago, by the Sons of God, as recorded in their sacred book (*Generooshuns*, chap. 6).

The young man Jesus Christ, now in hospital with severe injuries to his head, caused by his late attempt at ascension, tells me they were his elder brothers—a wild lot he terms them—who made repeated visits to this planet and saw the daughters of men were fair, the offspring of this connection being giants and mighty men, until big men were so numerous in "Luna" that every petty travelling show had its giant. For many years these giants were almost as common as Sons of God. One benefit accrued from the visits to "Luna" of these young men, and that was the lesson learned in progressive civilisation by contact with this planet helped gradually to influence the behavior of their father and make him more refined in his tastes—for it may seem strange, but as the Lunites emerged from barbarism, Jehovah certainly improved—a clear case of heavenly evolution. In fact he got virtually cured of his gross taste for burnt meat, called sacrificial rites, although the priests no doubt helped it on by persistently boiling the sacrificial lamb and offering it up with turnips, and you on earth know how Jehovah dislikes roots and vegetables (*vide* Cain's offering in Genesis). For a long time it was noted by his younger son that if a butcher's shop was on fire in "Luna," the old man was down on his knees on the floor of heaven searching for a crevice to apply his nasal organ thereto, as the sizzling flesh was still a sweet savor to his nostrils. Also it was noticed of a night after blowing out his bedroom candle he'd hang lovingly around the smoke of the wick. The elder brethren of Jesus paid the penalty for their youthful excesses and became martyrs to the goat, their feet having the appearance of brown paper parcels.

All these observances of the Lunites are not mere show—they make them serve some purpose as I witnessed in the sacramental rite, which instead of being like yours on earth, is here very satisfying and filling, being a good thumb-piece of bread and cheese and a fair draught of good foaming porter. Baptism again is utilised for teaching the art of swimming, the minister being compelled by law to swim once round the baptismal tank with the neophyte, showing the pupil the proper method of kicking out the legs and arms. Confirmation is made use of by the Bishop, who must be a phrenologist, and this rite certainly tends to a feeling of veneration as the Bishop meditatively feels the bumps on the communicants' heads, delivering a paper to them at the end of the ceremony describing their chief characteristics for life guidance, which no doubt are as true as the fortunes you receive from the birds with the Italian women in your streets.

The observance of Sunday struck me as being rather lax, so I interviewed some of the shopkeepers, who told me it was gradually sinking into abeyance, they having hoodwinked the old man—as they called Jehovah—by gradually getting the day shifted from the seventh to the first day of the week, unnoticed by him, and now the shops are being opened on the Sabbath, but have two or three shutters up, so that if the old gentleman passes he may think the place closed and attribute the lack of shutters to forgetfulness; or even if he storms, these shopkeepers think their punishment will be halved as their places are only half opened.

The most solemn and sacred rite—the collection I mean—is still in all its pristine splendor and is a very solemn observance, rather tending to melancholia as you observe the absent looks of the devotees searching for the smallest possible coin, and the tendency to soft and sweet repose as the man with the plate appears. The heat of the candles on the altar is even not wasted, but is made to produce motive power to blow the organ. So you see these people are very utilitarian with their observances, and bring every religious exercise into use. The very commandments painted up behind the altar rails are used as a medium for advertisement, although it may seem strange for you earthmen to read "Thou shalt not steal, but go at once to Slumker's Loan Office and be provided with an honest fiver—no inquiry fees." Still there is some utility in our aerial machine, even this having been put in thorough order. Hope to leave here next week and trust we may be as fortunate in getting our dispatches forwarded from the next planet we touch at as we have from Luna.

The young man Jesus is gradually getting better and seems to have a wish to throw up his precarious livelihood and go into business with his mother. The Lunites are subscribing to present him with an ice-cream barrow, perhaps not a dignified calling, but one that will just suit his temperament.

### THE TITHE WAR IN WALES.

A SERIES of extraordinary scenes characterised the seizure of cattle and stock for arrears of tithes at Hope, Flintshire. Mr. Peterson left Chester by an early train, and at Hope a large crowd speedily gathered who greeted his arrival by means of horns, tin pots and pans, and other unmusical instruments and implements. A black cow, belonging to a widow named Braithewaite, had been seized, and the lady demonstrated her aversion to the proceedings by rigging up alongside her front door two ludicrous impersonations of the parson and the tithe collector. Under the effigy of the clergyman were the following lines:—

"Dearly beloved brethren,—  
It's money I want; I must have it now;  
If I cannot get it I'll sell the black cow."

Mr. Peterson was apostrophised as a Shylock determined to have his pound of flesh. The cow was grazing in a field, and two emergency men seized it by the horns and ran it up towards the gate. Immediately a shout was raised, "Shut the gate." Mr. Peterson was, however too sharp, and there was a heavy rapping of knuckles with stout cudgels to prevent the success of the manoeuvre, and the animal was eventually got out into the road. Here a scene of much excitement arose, Mr. Peterson being surrounded by an angry crowd who shouted and vociferated that he was robbing the poor widow to endow a rich institution. Offers were made to buy the cow, but Mr. Peterson, seeing the intense feeling prevailing, ordered it to be driven to Chester. At Mr. Swotonham's farm a haystack was seized for £23, and the owner paid under protest. The effigies were then carried about shoulder high, and were ultimately beaten to pieces by the people.—*Daily News*.

### REVIEW.

*Christ's Temptation*. By "HUMANITAS." Freethought Publishing Company. (6d)—A careful, thorough, and pointed criticism of a Christian fairy tale. "Humanitas" always writes with freshness and originality, and, being humorous also, he may always be read with interest as well as profit.

### PROFANE JOKES.

Lord Donnywocks: "I want extra steam heat, weather-strips on the windows, a special hall-boy, private dining rooms, eider-down quilts, and —. Hotel clerk: "Hold on, my dear sir, I think you've made a mistake. This isn't heaven."

Rev. Dr. Chasuble (to only member present): "I am thankful that one member of the Church is not afraid to come out in rain as well as in sunshine." Mrs. Christian: "Well, if it hadn't have rained I couldn't have come; for my new bonnet isn't ready."

A lady asked one of the children in her Sunday-school class, "What was the sin of the Pharisees?" "Eating camels, ma'am," was the reply. The little girl had read that the Pharisees "strained at gnats and swallowed camels."

"I fear," said a country curate to his flock, "when I explained to you in my last charity sermon that philanthropy was the love of our species you must have misunderstood me to say specie, which may account for the smallness of the collection. You will prove, I hope, by your present contributions, that you are no longer laboring under the same mistake."

Little Dot: "I don't like to stay in the house this way. What makes it rain so hard?" Omaha mamma: "So the grass can grow and the flowers come out, dear." "Does the angels send down all this wet just for the grass and flowers?" "I suppose so." "Well, what do they slosh it all over everything for? There isn't any flowers in the streets." "It can't be helped, I guess." "I guess, maybe, they are hired angels and is used to washing windows."

MIRACLES.—Epiphanius tells us that at each anniversary of the miracle of Cana, the water of the springs of Cibra, in Caria, and Gerasa, in Arabia, was changed into wine; that he himself had drunk of the transformed water of Cibra, and his brother that of Gerasa. Fifty years ago, a plain Englishman would have had no difficulty in thinking that the Cana miracle was true, and the other two miracles were fables. He is now irresistibly led to class all these occurrences in one category as unsubstantial tales of marvel.—*Matthew Arnold, God and the Bible*, p. 385, 1875.

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No. 17.—SULTAN SOLOMON.

No. 18.—POOR JOB.

"Wittily written."—*Truthseeker* (New York)

**MR. HENRY ARTHUR KEMP** has the honor to announce his **Third Annual Smoking Concert** at the Old Cogers Hall, 135 Salisbury Court, Fleet Street, on Friday, April 27. The chair will be taken at 8.30 sharp. The Programme includes several well-known Professional Vocalists and Elocutionists.—Tickets may be obtained of Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C., or of Mr. J. Anderson, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, City Road, E.C.

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## Art and Morality.

A New Pamphlet

BY

Colonel R. G. Ingersoll  
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