

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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BIBLE SKETCH.—No 266.



IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE? OR, WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR GIRLS?

“King Solomon . . . had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.”—1 KINGS XI, 1, 3. “For he was wiser than all men.”—1 KINGS IV., 31.

THE CIVIC CHRIST.

GENERAL GORDON'S statue was unveiled on Tuesday morning in Trafalgar Square. Never was there such a higger-mugger proceeding. Mr. Plunket pulled a string, the canvas covering fell away, and the Christian Hero stood revealed. Speechifying was impossible, for “I, Sir Charles Warren,” has prohibited all public addresses on that sacred spot, and what is sauce for the Radical gander is sauce for the Tory goose.

According to Mr. Stead's paper, Gordon's presentment stands in “somewhat incongruous company—between Nelson on his column and the fourth George on his horse.” The fourth George may be dismissed, though that royal voluptuary, when eaten out with vanity and perhaps other disorders, did cherish the delusion that he led a British charge at Waterloo. But Nelson! Why, the little admiral, with all his faults, is a shining name in English history. He shattered the naval power of England's enemies when his victory or defeat was fraught with incalculable results. It was more the Nile and Trafalgar than Waterloo that foiled the insane ambition of Bonaparte. What has Gordon to compare with such achievements? From another point of view the two “heroes” are as widely different. Some hysterical books have been written on Gordon, but Southey wrote the life of Nelson in beautiful and perfect prose. Nelson inspired Campbell's

glorious “Battle of the Baltic,” and Gordon has inspired the pious platitudes of Mr. Stead.

So much for the “incongruous company.” We have now to consider the rest of the *Pall Mall Gazette* article. Gordon was full of piety, and the sculptor has justly put a Bible into his left hand. His piety, however, was distinctly oriental. Nourished on Calvinism, like a true Scot, he appropriated the religion of the Old Testament and the predestinarianism of St. Paul. This it was that enabled him to get on so well with Mohammedans. Their Kismet and his Providence were the same thing under different names. With the true Mohammedan everything is fated; Allah regulates all things from a mountain to a pimple, from a thunderstorm to a sneeze. With the true Calvinist, everything is regulated by Jehovah, who is also a Semitic deity. Gordon went up and down in the world, like a certain gentleman in Job, believing his every step was directed by Providence; and in doubtful emergencies he was known to toss up and leave the decision with the Almighty; a form of judgment, by the way, which is again and again countenanced in the Bible. Yet it is difficult to see how Gordon can be regarded as a Christian in the light of the most characteristic sentences of the Sermon on the Mount. Instead of turning the other cheek he was always smiting, and his meekness was displayed in the most stubborn self-will. Still, he may have been as meek as his waster, who cursed people very vigorously

when they differed from him, and bitterly denounced those he could not convince.

We scarcely suppose, however, it was this similarity which led Mr. Stead to style Gordon "a Civic Christ." Nor do we quite comprehend the meaning of this phrase. A Civic Christ suggests a round square or a bitter sweet. The two ideas will not combine. Fancy Jesus Christ a citizen, paying rates and taxes, going to public meetings, reading or writing in newspapers, voting for Members of Parliament and Town Councillors, sending his children to the Board School, and going out on Saturday evening with "the missis" to buy the meat and vegetables! But this is not Mr. Stead's view of the Civic Christ. He means that Gordon "more than any other modern man, flashed before the eyes of this generation the light and the radiance [both the same, Mr. Stead] that shone from the Cross of Him who said, 'Resist not evil,' and who declared, 'My Kingdom is not of this world. Else would my servants fight.'"

We hope Mr. Stead will pardon us for throwing the "light and radiance" of common sense on this rhetoric. Suppose Jesus Christ did utter those last words, was it not the veriest clap-trap? How could his servants fight, when the whole dozen of them, save Judas, who had ratted, took to their heels at the moment of his arrest? On the other hand, did not Jesus, whose "kingdom was not of this world," plainly tell his disciples that when he came into his own, they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Did he not say he came not to send peace but a sword? Did he not order those who had no sword to sell their Sunday clothes and buy one? Waiving these questions, however, we wonder how Gordon carried out the gospel of "resist not evil," and "else would my servants fight." He was a man of war from his youth up, and was irresistibly fascinated by danger, turmoil, and the fierce excitement of battle. Half his time he was fighting for other countries than his own. We admit his aptitude for dealing with semi-civilised people, and had he lived seven or eight centuries ago, his career might have been celebrated by a Tasso or an Ariosto. But we fail to see what such a career has in common with the soft submissiveness of the Sermon on the Mount.

Mr. Stead is fond of railing at the "mean and sordid souls" of this materialistic age, with its "scepticism" and its mistrust of quixotic Christian heroes, whose chief business seems knocking out people's brains for the good of their souls. He therefore gladly sings his psalm over Gordon who "renewed our faith, and taught us all once more that there is no age which may not be ennobled by the heroism of man, no duty which may not be sanctified by the conscious presence of the Eternal." Gordon may have renewed Mr. Stead's faith, but for our part we wish he had increased Mr. Stead's respect for the English language. "Conscious presence" is worthy of "light and radiance." We are materialistic enough to imagine that duty needs no sanctification, least of all from metaphysical abstractions "ennobled" with capitals. Nor do we believe the "heroism of man" would have languished if Gordon had never been born, and we say this without wishing to conceal our opinion that Gordon in his loneliness at Khartoum was a more heroic figure than the Christian government which used him as a pawn in the game of party politics, or our "only general" who was so precious careful of his base of operations, and who dashed towards the beleaguered garrison with the rapidity of a carthorse. To our mind there is something very shallow in the sentimentalism which admires heroism at a distance, and, above all, when it is displayed in warfare. Greater and more useful heroism is exhibited every day in our "prosaic" civilisation. The policeman who tackles armed burglars with no weapon but his staff, the fireman who forges his way through heat and smoke to save women and children, the lifeboat men who row through darkness and storm to rescue the shipwrecked, the unknown thousands whose life is a daily sacrifice for beloved ones, the sufferers who hide their pain to spare relatives and friends, the martyrs of unpopular causes who face odium, obloquy, poverty, imprisonment, and sometimes death for their convictions; these display "the heroism of man," and though they talk very little about "faith" and "sanctification" and the "Eternal," attract no public attention like the heroes of battle-fields, and have no statues in Trafalgar Square, they sweeten in silence and obscurity the life-blood of our race.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE GREAT MISSIONARY FAILURE.

(Continued from p. 333.)

CANON TAYLOR does not mince matters. He declares in regard to the attempts to convert the Moslems—"To extort from Sunday School children their hoarded pence for the ostensible object of converting 'the poor heathen,' and to spend nearly £12,000 a year in fruitless missions to lands where there are no heathen, seems to me to be almost a crime, the crime of obtaining money under false pretences." He points out that last year when he called attention to this waste of resources, "Dr. Bruce, the chief offender, answered me by a cry for larger sums to be expended in his resultless enterprise." No doubt Canon Taylor will be answered in exactly the same way again. The more the futility of Christian missions is pointed out the more clamorous are the societies for funds, the indispensable requisite for enlightening the poor benighted heathen.

But what is the quality of the converts? The native Christians of India are drawn almost entirely from the degraded aboriginal races—the Kols, the Bhils, the Santals, and the Shanars. Those who already believe in bloody sacrifices and in possession by devils receive with meekness the story of the Atonement and the miracles of Jesus. Not so the Hindus. These dogmas are hindrances in their way, while they have a Trinity and incarnations of their own. Mr. James Routledge, editor of the *Star of India* and correspondent of the *Times*, once examined the advanced students in a missionary college in the presence of the principals. He asked, "Does the Christian education given in these colleges tend to make Christians?" "No." "Do you believe in the Christian religion?" "No, no, no," with one solitary "Yes." "Why?" "We don't believe in the Incarnation or the Atonement."

The Salvation Army succeed to some extent by becoming as ascetic and fanatical as the Hindus themselves. So also the Roman Catholics succeed somewhat by allowing the natives to indulge in processions and ceremonies in no respect differing from those of the heathen around them except that figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary are substituted for figures of Krishna and Devaki. But the generality of the converts of all persuasions become so from mercenary motives and are known by their fellow natives as *rice Christians*. A Brahman friend assured me that most of them revert to Hinduism when upon the point of death.

As for the African missions Mr. Johnston, the well-known African traveller who is our Vice-Consul in the Cameroons, says: "In many important districts where the missionaries have been at work for twenty years, they can scarcely number in honest statistics, twenty sincere converts. In other parts where large numbers of nominal Christians exist, their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues and unclean livers in the colony. In the oldest of our West African possessions all the unrepentant Magdalenes of the chief city are professing Christians, and the most notorious one in the place boasts that she never missed going to church on Communion Sunday." Of course Christ pays for all. Mr. Joseph Thompson gives similar testimony and says that a thousand are degraded by our gin for one elevated by the gospel. Three years ago in a Christian village, a quarrel arose and not a few were killed. The victors cooked and ate the bodies of the slain. As a punishment, the pastor announced that they were "suspended from church privileges."

Of the native pastors Mr. Johnston says: "With a few very rare exceptions, those native African pastors, teachers, and catechists whom I have met have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled immorality with an unblushing hypocrisy and a profane display of 'mouth' religion, which, to an honest mind, seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself." Occasionally we get similar testimony from missionaries themselves. Mr. Hall, a missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Bengal, writes of one village: "Alas! I must confess that neither reader nor schoolmaster have much influence with the people. Both are in the habit of drinking; the schoolmaster has been dismissed for bad conduct. Drunkenness, quarrelling, and fighting are of frequent occurrence." Of another village he says: "Alas! I have the same story to tell. There are serious complaints against the schoolmaster. I cannot put my hand on *one* man in our village and say he is truly converted." Of a third

village he says: "The people here are openly bad. No wonder that in Bengal, as in Western Africa, decreases are reported in the native Christian adherents. Doubtless," Mr. Hall adds, "this report will be thought a dismal one, and I know from experience it is not likely to be popular. Reports that cannot speak of success and growth and anecdotes of conversions are not taking to the public mind."

The testimony of lay travellers might have been backed up with plenty of similar citations. Thus Captain Richard Burton, the renowned traveller and scholar, said that "the native pagan of Africa was not a nice animal, but he was infinitely superior to the African convert to Christianity. No people could be worse, more immoral or in every way disgusting than the native Christians of Sierra Leone. The Christian missions were the curse of Western Africa, and the only antidote to it was the spread of Islamism. . . . African travellers rarely read the missionary advertisements from the Coast of Africa, which were mostly written in London *ad majorem populi injuriam*."

I could go on multiplying such citations but have exceeded my usual limits. The one exclusive and divine religion emanating from God himself and backed up with the money and prayers of the faithful, not only cannot hold its own against heathenism, but it is questionable if those who accept it are not worse than before. The Great Missionary Failure implies the Great Failure of Christianity.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress publishes a list of the religious and anti-religious journals who pay fair and unfair prices to their printing staff. Nearly half the religious periodicals are classed as "unfair" paymasters who refuse to give the trade prices. All the Freethought journals pay "fair" wages. The *Christian Commonwealth*, the *Rock*, the *Christian Herald*, and many others, beat down the wages, and denounce the sweating system—in others—as anti-Christian.

By the way, wouldn't it be as well if the Rev. Hugh Chapman, who has taken to preaching sentimental Socialist sermons and writing the same style of letters to the press, would take this matter up. Instead of lecturing "rotten society" in general, and denouncing "sweating" in general, he would do more good, and certainly display greater courage, by undertaking a crusade against the rat journals in his own line of business.

MR. CHAPMAN, in his debate with Mr. Foote, was like Dryden's hero, "all for love." But he now urges the necessity of State suppression of vice. His Church has been at that little game ever since the days of Constantine, with what success we see; yet here is Mr. Chapman crying out for more of the same old quack medicine.

THERE is one thing, and only one thing, the State can do to diminish vice; and that is to teach secular knowledge instead of religious nonsense in the schools, and to throw open all the institutions of culture and places of innocent recreation on Sunday. But these very reforms have been opposed tooth and nail by the Church to which Mr. Chapman belongs.

THEN again, Mr. Chapman says in the *Star* that "the rich will have to confine themselves to necessities." Very well, then why doesn't he ask the Bishops to begin? What cant it is for a parson to preach abstinence to laymen while the dignitaries of his own Church are notorious prodigals! Mr. Chapman might also define what is a necessity. Is it the fine black coat he wears, the Turkish cigarette he smokes, or the easy furniture on which he reposes his weary limbs after a sermon? We don't wish to be personal, but when a man sets up as a moral mentor he invites criticism.

THE editor of the *Methodist Times* notices and attempts to reply to Mr. Wheeler's recent article in the *Freethinker* on "Unsectarian v. Secular Education." The curious thing is that he answers himself in what he says of the Roman Catholics. He says: "Certainly the Roman Catholics have a right to sectarian schools, but not at our expense. Let them pay for their own schools. We entirely deny that they have any claim to have sectarian schools supported by the public taxes." Exactly what Mr. Hugh Price Hughes says to the Roman Catholics we say to the Methodists, and we deny that their Bible teaching is any whit less sectarian than Roman Catholicism.

THAT the editor of the *M. T.* misconceives the question at issue will be evident by a quotation. He says: "In the last issue of the *Freethinker*, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, the sub-editor, argues against our unsectarian policy at great length. There would have been great force in his argument if it were not

founded upon the absolute fallacy that secular education is fair all round. That assumption begs the whole question. We say that a secular policy is not a negative or a neutral policy, but a positive policy, and a policy fiercely hostile to our deepest convictions." Is the teaching of "the three R's" in School Boards then fiercely hostile to the convictions of the *Methodist Times*? All we ask is that rate-supported schools and rate-paid teachers shall teach that only upon which we are all agreed. This, we say, is the only policy that is "fair all round." If Methodists wish the Bible taught let them have it in their own schools, or let them teach it at home in other than School Board hours, but do not let them impose it on schools paid for by the whole of the community.

MR. HUGHES says: "Mr. Wheeler thinks he has cornered us by asking what our argument comes to in countries where Roman Catholics are in a great majority. Does it not logically involve in such countries the use of 'holy water and prayers to the Virgin?' Of course it does; and it involves the use of the Koran in Mohammedan countries, and of Colonel Ingersoll's tracts in Atheistic countries, if such should ever exist." So Mr. Hughes, knowing he is in the majority, insists upon its right to make its deepest wishes prevail. Mr. Wheeler, however, although an Atheist, would never urge that Colonel Ingersoll's tracts should be taught in places where Atheists were in the majority. His contention is that there is little enough time for instruction in secular knowledge, and that therefore all controversial questions should be rigorously excluded from rate-supported schools.

THE Rev. C. J. Street, Unitarian minister, of Croydon, points out the kind of "unsectarian" hymns used there in the Board School. Each little boy or girl has to sing of his or her soul:

For it must soar to worlds on high,
Where happy spirits dwell,
Or buried with the wicked lie
Deep in the abyss of hell.

And

This is the day when Jesus broke
The powers of death and hell;
Why should I still wear Satan's yoke
And love my sins so well?

Despite Mr. Street's protest, these hymns are retained by the "unsectarian" Croydon School Board.

AN Evangelist named Waugh has been making a godly attack on Newcastle, and his efforts and successes are chronicled by the local *Leader*. But as the same Evangelist made a similar attack on Newcastle three years ago, and the local papers have recently been complaining that, despite the diminution in the number of public-houses, Newcastle continues to be the most drunken city in England; it does not seem that Mr. Waugh's rough-and-tumble spoutings have had any beneficial effect on the morality of the inhabitants.

THE *Leader* quotes with approval Mr. Waugh's statement that he deals with "infidels" on the plan of "answering a fool according to his folly." Judging from the report of his speeches, we should say that is about the limit of his capacity. But even then he prefers to answer the "fool" behind his back.

THE infidel-slayers have been enjoying "a fine old time" in Newcastle lately. Well now, Mr. Foote is lecturing there to-day (Oct. 21), and there will be a fine chance for the infidel-slayers to come and annihilate him. He hopes they will. But will they?

THE Secretary of the Working Mens' Lord's Day Rest Association writes to the *Daily News*, to suggest that the "decrease" of the population in France is due to Sunday labor, and the "absence of the religious observance of the Sunday." It would be a fortunate thing for mankind if so simple a remedy for the great and ultimately increasing population difficulty were really effective. Over-population and its graver evils could then be prevented by a law closing the churches and keeping factories open on a Sunday.

THE *Oban Times* has a good old-fashioned article on keeping the Sabbath holy. Scotch servants, it appears, have a "bad habit" of visiting each other on the Lord's day; and as the editor of the *Oban Times* can visit his friends on any day that pleases him, he piously reprehends this evil practice. Having no harvest to gather in himself, he is also down on the farmers who do their harvesting on Sunday as "a work of necessity." The Glasgow Synod has condemned this damnable desecration, and the worthy editor backs up the "mееnisters." But he overshoots the mark when he quotes the fourth commandment, and adds that "the obligation is plain and direct." Yes, the obligation is plain and direct; but it is an obligation to keep the seventh day of the week and not the first. When the editor of the *Oban Times* keeps the Sabbath, like the Jews, on the proper day, he may have a right to lecture his neighbors; but until then he is as much a Sabbath-breaker as they are.

THE Rev. R. H. Baynes, honorary Canon of Worcester, was indicted at Oxford on four separate counts for obtaining money by false pretences from hotel-keepers and others. The reverend defendant had been allowed out on bail, but he failed to appear

when his case came on. He preferred to let his sureties forfeit the amount of their bail rather than he would face the charges against him.

SPURGEON has been seized with another attack of his rheumatic gout, and consequently could not preach on Sunday. Is it lack of prayer, or of faith, or of Deity that thus stops the soul-saving work of this great favorite of God?

THE *Rock* thinks that eschatology is a matter of "such indescribable solemnity" that it is "almost too awful for a public discussion," even at a Church Congress, and should "rather be approached upon our knees." The pious editor is also grieved that laughter should have been heard at the Congress on so sacred and awful a subject. It is also shocked at the "flippant" way in which clergymen like the Rev. Sir G. W. Cox treat Christ's words concerning the judgment day. He shows an utter want of reverence it seems, and he is "beneath contempt" when he concludes that "as some discourses in the first gospel were not uttered as they have come down to us, and were, perhaps, never uttered at all, discourses in the other gospels might be in the same case." He also has no sense of the gravity of the question when he points out that the epistles "bearing the names of Jude and Peter," together with the imagery of the Book of Revelations and the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of St. Matthew are simply reproduced from the book of Enoch—a work which was written before our gospels, and which forms no part of our Bible. That the paper of this rationalising clergyman should meet with applause at a Church Congress excites "sorrow," alarm and "disgust" among the orthodox.

THE Holy Office at Rome has declared against cremation and ordered the French clergy not to abandon the customary Christian burial. *Semper eadem*. Rome is always the same—the unchanging enemy of every reform.

WHAT crazy arguments men are driven to by their religious prejudices! It is reported that among Bishop Dupanloup's papers was found an essay on cremation, in which he endeavors to prove that without the interment of dead bodies for successive generations the earth would lose all fertility and power of reproduction! As the song runs, "the man who says that 'll say anything."

HITHERTO the Christian missionary in India has been chiefly if not solely, indebted to the periodical advent of famine for what success his proselytising mission has achieved in this land of the so-called "heathen." But the times are now sadly out of joint, and a case has recently occurred in the vicinity of Calcutta in which an old father, married for the second time to a necessarily young wife, embraced Christianity, not to attain his spiritual salvation, but to attain that very mundane consolation which is begotten of the assurance that his young widow will not be molested after his death—which in the nature of things cannot be too far off in his case—by her stepson. This son, the father apprehends, will neglect his stepmother when she becomes a widow, and will also deprive her of her property. So, to prevent the possibility of a consummation which he so devoutly dreads, the astute father has stolen a march upon his unsuspecting son by turning a Christian and indirectly cutting him off with a shilling, while thus securing for his prospective widow every penny he may leave her. Such is the popular version of the secret cause of the conversion of Babu Russick Lall Sircar to Christianity at the age of sixty. The Babu is well known as the manufacturer of a series of keys to university textbooks, and has the reputation of being fairly well read in English literature.—*Calcutta National Guardian*.

LET dogs delight to bark and bite, etc. Mrs. Bessie Rogers, the wife of the vicar of St. Mark's Liverpool, has been fined half-a-crown and costs for assaulting one of her husband's female parishioners at a vestry meeting with an umbrella. On the whole we pity the vicar. He should keep a sharp eye on that gingham.

A BOOKBINDER who at one time refused to bind our publications on the ground that it hurt his conscience, has lately committed suicide by poisoning himself. His religiosity was not of much use to him, seemingly.

EVERYBODY knows the story how St. Patrick used the shamrock as illustrating how three were one. According to J. B. Friedrich—*Die Symbolik und Mythologie der Natur*—it was a very ancient symbol expressing religion among the ancient Germans, as setting forth the three grades of Druids, Bards, and Neophytes.

A DELICATE question has been under discussion at Rome. "In an extreme case would a priest be able to hear confession and give absolution by telephone?" After a deal of argument it was decided in the negative, personal attendance being declared absolutely necessary for the administration of absolution. It was probably felt that if once confession by telephone was permitted, the husbands of fair Catholics would insist upon their wives confessing to the priest only at the safe distance of a few miles.

THE Rev. J. R. Nicholl, of Streatham, demands two years' tithes of Mr. Kimber who has only been a tenant in the district for a few months. Mr. Kimber is at the clergyman's mercy, and he also has to pay or collect the tithes for the whole of the estate, although he does not know the names of the tenants, or the particulars. The tithes which he can thus be legally forced to pay amount to eighty-four times his own share. Mr. Kimber appealed to the rector's conscience and received the following reply:—"Sir,—I am informed by my agent that the tithe rent-charge upon the land to which you refer in your letter of the 28th has not been paid for some years, and that the collection of the rent from the occupants of the estate on which you are building rests not with him, but with one or more of the occupants of the property. My agent therefore leaves this duty with you. I am yours faithfully, J. R. NICHOLL." Mr. Kimber is awaiting the brokers whom the rector will send as the fitting representatives of Christ and his Church.

GOD has sent more floods to comfort the Chinese. He has swept away the new embankment, raised at a cost of £2,000,000. Nearly a thousand laborers who were working on the embankment were swept away at the same time and were drowned. The flood is now pouring unchecked over a vast extent of low-lying country. The officials in charge of the embankments are to be severely punished. What is to be done to the heavenly author of the disaster for thwarting all their efforts?

AT Winnipeg, the Indians have for a year or two past been in such a state of starvation through failure of the game that more than twenty Fort Chippewyan Indians have died of hunger. Some of the Indians had to resort to cannibalism as the only means of preserving life. One party of Cree Indians were thus reduced from twenty-nine in number to three. This is how the heavenly father feeds his children on earth below.

DR. TANNER, who rivalled Jesus Christ and the prophets by fasting forty days and forty nights, now proposes to outdo them. He believes he can hibernate like a bear, and offers to allow himself to be sealed up in an air-tight coffin until such a time as he shall specify for release.

SECRETARY STEVENS of the American Secular Union, has caused to be prepared a full and accurate list of the untaxed church property in Chicago. It amounts to something like 6,000,000 dols., and if taxed would pay 60,000 to the public treasury. The exemption of this property is an unmitigated swindle.—*Free-thought* (San Francisco).

It is said that a Maine clergyman, a man of great simplicity of character, told a friend of the difficulty they had in getting their youngest child to go to sleep. "Did you ever try one of your sermons on him, doctor?" asked a friend jokingly. "No," said the parson, seriously, "I never thought of that." A few days afterward, again meeting his parishioner, he said: "Oh, do you know, I adopted your suggestion of reading one of my sermons to my boy, and it worked like a charm."

IN the case of the "Somers Town murder," as it is called, Emma Wakefield, who died from the effects of an unlawful operation, is described as singing hymns "Oh, so sweetly," and as saying on her death-bed that there was an angel waiting to receive her. The piety which found vent during the delirium of her dying hours had not restrained her from unchastity, from treachery to the young man to whom she was engaged to be married, or from a resort to criminal means of escaping exposure.

ALFRED LAY committed suicide on the Underground Railway on Friday, October 12, by laying his head on the rails in front of an approaching train. A letter found on his body showed him to have been a true Christian. He forgave his enemies (the poor fellow had none), and asked God to forgive him and bless his friends. Another fact for Talmage!

CHRISTIAN Russia is very zealous for the right kind of Christianity. A priest sent the caretaker of his church to ascertain what kind of sermons certain Jesuit missionaries were preaching. The result was that the man became a Catholic and his wife and children followed his example. The man is now sentenced to six months' imprisonment for abandoning his religion and corrupting his wife's faith, and the wife is also sentenced to the same punishment for corrupting the faith of her children. Such is Christianity where civilisation is not as yet sufficiently strong to restrain it within the bounds of justice. Forty or fifty villagers, who had also been converted to Catholicism, were sent into the interior. Their crime is punishable by banishment to Siberia.

Truth, referring to the odd texts some clergymen select for their sermons, had it that—"When Dublin Cathedral was reopened after the restoration at the expense of a Mr. Wise, the Archbishop took for his text, 'Go thou and do like Wise.' Not to be outdone, a clergyman in his diocese, when opening a church built by a brewer, said his text was to be found in He brews xxx."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, October 21, Nelson Street Concert Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. At 11, "Gladstone and Ingersoll"; at 3, "Is Christianity True?"; at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

Thursday, October 25, Blue Ribbon Hall, Marsham Street, Westminster; at 7.45, "The Bible."

Oct. 28, Hall of Science; 30, United Radical Club.

Nov. 4, Leeds; 11, Middlesboro'; 18, Portsmouth; 25, Birmingham.

Dec. 2 and 9, Hall of Science; 16, Manchester; 23, Camberwell.

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.

J. RUTHERFORD.—Never mind. Manchester has taken the date. Hope to see you as promised at Newcastle.

PETER WESTON.—Advertisement inserted. Mr. Forder has written you.

R. FOX.—You and your friends' view of the Sketches shall be taken into consideration. Thanks for the cuttings.

S. HATTEN (New York).—You are for the Sketches. Others are against. Our problem is to please both. We shall ponder the mystery, which is harder than the Trinity itself; and very likely we shall have to end by pleasing ourselves.

SCOTCH FREETHINKER.—We have given the *Oban Times* a paragraph.

W. JONES.—Surely you should not object to our calling you "elegant and modest." You call this "abuse," and we fear you are too good for this world.

A. GUEST.—(1) The argument from the supposed disappearance of Christ's body from the sepulchre is based upon the assumption that the alleged events in the gospels all occurred as they are there related. But this assumption cannot be granted. The fact is now certain, that the "resurrection" idea gradually grew up among the Christians. Certainly, there is no evidence that a public dispute over Christ's body ever took place. (2) There is absolutely nothing in the narrative to show or suggest that the wine manufactured by Jesus at Cana was "unfermented." (3) When your friend asserts that "all that is good on earth is in the hands of those who believe in the carpenter's son of Nazareth," he is talking nonsense. There is plenty of good outside Christendom, and plenty of evil inside it.

T. W. G. WRATISLAW points out in regard to the contention that "take no thought" means "no anxious thought," that the Rev.

J. Hunter Smith, M.A., says, "Neither in classic nor in Hellenistic Greek" do the words so translated imply anxious thought. The five points of Calvinism were drawn up by the Synod of Dort 1618—19, in answer to the Arminians. They are particular predestination, limited atonement, natural inability, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These points are all found in Calvin and are deduced from the scriptures, but comparatively few Christians defend them now. A note was made upon the Bishop of Sodor and Man last week. We have also written on *Vino Sacro*.

W. H. MIDDLETON.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Many have come across the *Freethinker* by accident, as you did, and been convinced of the falsity of Christianity. You will see a list of our Tracts on the back page. Any orders should be sent to Mr. Forder.

J. S. J.—Capitals are used for proper names, and sometimes for emphasis. Father becomes a sort of proper name when it designates a particular deity, and so does Son. We don't intend any compliment to either. It is only a matter of convenience.

W. T. LEEKY.—Mr. Woffendale is far too sensible a man not to ride in tram cars on Sunday. Sabbatarianism is very well for the pulpit, but not so well for the street. Besides, the reverend gentleman could argue that the horses were *not his*.

INCOG.—"All is Well" is better, but it falls off towards the end.

PHONO.—Always glad to receive jokes.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We saw nothing in the paragraph, and the magistrate's remark did not strike us as very pertinent. Everybody must know that it takes more than £57 a day to keep the Salvation Army going. Why, then, all this surprise?

R. NICHOLLS.—Yes, we are in a greater fog than ever. But there is no hurry.

AN APPEAL.

THE London Secular Federation has agreed with Mr. Hubert Bland to contest Finsbury, and with Mr. J. H. Ellis to contest West Lambeth, at the approaching School Board elections. The nominations will take place on November 2, and it would be a comfort to know by then that the major part of the expenses was already secured. Every Freethinker in London should take a personal interest in the matter, and contribute a mite towards the Fund. There may also be Freethinkers in other parts of the country who are ready to assist in an attack on the great central stronghold of reaction. Messrs. Bland and Ellis have a good prospect of winning if the sinews of war are provided.

Freethinkers and Radicals willing to serve on the Finsbury Committee should communicate at once with Mr. G. Standing, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C.; and those willing to serve on the West Lambeth Committee to Mr. R. S. Seago, 209 Hill Street, Walworth, S.E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an improved audience at Milton Hall on Sunday evening at Mr. Foote's second lecture, and some fresh members were enrolled. We trust the Branch will have a successful winter. The Building Society requires more shareholders. About £500 has been subscribed, but no move can be made till the amount is doubled. Freethinkers residing in the district should see whether they cannot give this enterprise a lift.

THE Westminster folk did not turn up in large numbers at Mr. Foote's first lecture on October 11. One gentleman and his wife said they never enjoyed a lecture so much in their lives. There was, at any rate, a good deal of *matter* in the lecture, although empty benches do not inspire eloquence. No doubt the other evenings will bring a larger attendance.

THE London Secular Federation holds its first social party this season at the Hall of Science next Thursday (Oct. 25). The concert will commence at 8.30 and last till 10.30. Then follows dancing from 11 till 1. Mr. Foote is lecturing that evening at Westminster, but he will look in afterwards. Tickets for the concert are 6d., and for the concert and ball 1s. They can be obtained at the Hall of Science, or of any Branch Secretary.

THE object of these social parties is to bring Freethinkers together and make them better acquainted with each other; and any profit is spent by the Federation in propaganda. We should like to report a capital gathering next Thursday.

MR. FOOTE'S *Infidel Death-Beds* has run out of print, nearly five thousand copies having been sold in two years. A new edition is in the press, and will be ready in a few days. Many names have been added, so that the little work is more valuable than ever. Among the additions are Baskerville, Bayle, Bentham, Paul Bert, Darwin, Auguste Comte, Charles Darwin, William Godwin, Dolet, Helvetius, Holbach, James Mill, Madame Roland, Winwood Reade, and Schiller. Facts are also added as to the deaths of John Stuart Mill and Volney. These alterations and additions make the work as complete as it can well be made without overstepping its proper limits. But, of course, they swell the size, and necessitate a slight increase in price. The new edition will be sold at eightpence in paper covers, and fifteenpence in cloth.

ACCIDENT or miracle has brought us a copy of Mrs. Besant's *Our Corner* for review. By-and-bye, some time before next year, we shall very likely get a copy of the N. S. S. *Almanac*. This October number of *Our Corner* is a very good one. Mr. Bradlaugh relates the story of his parliamentary labors during last session, and Mrs. Besant vigorously criticises the reactionary report of the Education Commission. Mary Reed writes, with just a soupçon of the too-too style, a lively article on Japanese art. Edward Carpenter follows with a rather cheap imitation of Walt Whitman. Then comes J. M. Robertson's able essay on "Christianity as a Historic Cause" (by the way, the *a* should be *an*). G. B. Shaw continues a novel, which is sure to be clever. Finally there is a paper by R. G. Hember on "Secularism from a Positivist Point of View."

MR. HEMBER writes ably and carefully, but, like nearly all Positivists, he adopts a mildly benevolent and patronising attitude towards Secularism. Positivism is a religion, and there is nothing like religion—the sort doesn't matter—for giving a man a sense of superiority. Mr. Hember feels unable to denounce our attacks on theology, for, as a good Positivist, he also wants to get rid of that article. But he tells us that criticism isn't everything, as though we ever asserted it was. He is all for "institutions," and therein lies our point of difference. Freethinkers generally hold that the world has had enough—in fact, much too much—of "institutions," and that what is wanted now is plenty of free play of mind. Get rid of error, seek truth, and cultivate honesty of mind as well as conduct; this seems a sufficient gospel for to-day. But the system-mongers are not satisfied with this. They want to teach nature herself. They are for making fresh moulds for the free spirit of man, for settling things for future generations, and acting as a special providence for the whole human species. Well, they won't succeed; and a good job too.

CONSIDERING Mr. Hember's ability, his remarks on the "Liberty" spoken of in the N. S. S. principles are extraordinary. He does not despise freedom; nay, he thinks it worth striving for, and dying for; but, after all, freedom is a word which is "positive in form and negative in meaning." Just as blindness means the absence of sight, so liberty means the absence of restraint. Very good, Mr. Hember; but suppose you look at freedom the other way about. Here is a man in a prison cell—say the editor of the *Freethinker*. You tell him that freedom is a good thing, an excellent thing; yet, after all, it is negative, being only the absence of restraint. Will he not bowl you over in a minute, by showing that you have hold of the stick by the wrong end? His liberty is *positive*; it means work, enjoyment, usefulness—in short *life*. And his restraint is *negative*, being simply the absence of all this. The prison is an "institution," so we mustn't speak lightly of it, but

from the Secular point of view it isn't much to the free play of one's faculties.

THE Secular Publishing Company, Toronto, send us their reprint of Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*, which is tastefully got up and priced at 10 cents (5d). They also send us two pamphlets by Charles Watts, who is doing good work for Freethought in Canada. The first is a capital reply to Father Lambert (20 cents), and the second on "Evolution and Special Creation" (10 cents), one of the best things Mr. Watts has ever written.

Secular Thought, Mr. Watts's journal, now arrives regularly, and is quite up to the old mark. A recent number reprints one of Mr. Ball's articles.

THE Convention of the Canadian Secular Union, held at the Science Hall, Toronto, on Sept. 15 and 16, appears to have been a large and successful gathering. Secularism appears to be flourishing in Halifax, St. John's, in Summerside, Prince Edward's Island, in Hamilton, Ontario, and other parts of the Dominion. William Algie was elected President, and Mr. J. A. Risser Secretary. A committee appointed to consider ways and means of sustaining *Secular Thought* reported in favor of raising one thousand dollars annually for three years from Jan. 1, 1889.

THE writings of Horace Seaver, who has for nearly half a century edited the *Boston Investigator*, have been compiled and put into book form by Mr. L. K. Washburn. The selected writings comprise the best editorials written on a variety of subjects during this period. The services of Mr. Seaver to the cause of Freethought and Mental Emancipation in America have been of the first order, and we trust that the writings of the veteran will find appreciation among the younger generation.

THE report was false. Colonel Ingersoll is *not* going to debate Protection with Henry George. The reason is a comforting one. He is too busy.

INGERSOLL has not only subscribed handsomely for the relief of the yellow fever sufferers in the South, but offered to go upon the platform and lecture for the same purpose.

SUNDAY freedom is growing in the States, though Canada must be in an awful state when its reformers compare their dismal Sabbath with the jolly one we enjoy in England! The *New York Sun* says, "The growth of Sunday pastimes, in the shape of sports by land and water, is a proof of the remarkable change that has taken place in the Sunday habits of our country."

DR. EDMUND MONTGOMERY, of America, writing to Dr. B. Underwood on Richard Proctor's death, says: "He was thoroughly free and fearless, openly avowing his disbelief in God and the immortality of the soul."

DR. MONTGOMERY is a very positive sort of Atheist himself. "To my mind," he says, "it is absolutely certain there is no God, and that death ends our individual existence, and I deem it essential to the humanitarian creed to convince the world of this."

AS Mormonism is breaking up in Utah, that territory seems to become a good ground for Freethought propaganda. Mr. J. L. York and Mr. Putnam have recently been there, and Mr. B. F. Underwood, late editor of the *Open Court*, is engaged for a series of twelve lectures.

PROFESSOR VISCHER's theory of St. John's nightmare, which makes the Apocalypse out to be a Christian revision of a Jewish document, has found many supporters upon the continent.

WE hope Joseph Symes is not as pale-faced as his paper, which suffers from a chronic lack of printer's ink. However, the contents are all right. The last number of the *Liberator* to hand reports a first-rate quarter's work and a flourishing balance-sheet. The Australasian Secular Society has got over its troubles, and is more prosperous than ever.

WHILE the Christian missionaries are looking forward to the conversion of Japan, the Japanese Buddhists are not without hopes of turning the tables. One of them in America writes to the Japanese journal: "If we had among us some persons who could intelligently expound the doctrines of Buddhism as they really are, and who were authorised to admit candidates into the church, I have no doubt that many people would openly embrace the faith, and receive the doctrines of the great teacher." Another says: "Christianity is on its decline, even in this country, much more than in Europe, and it would be a good thing if some Buddhist missionaries would come here and preach. They would be received by the Theosophists with open arms."

THE Buddhist organ denies that Christianity is making much progress in Japan. It says, "Some missionaries from France, England, the United States, and Russia are endeavoring to Christianise this country, but for the present their followers are

few and the influence of their religion is very weak upon society. Meanwhile our young Buddhistic men, particularly those of the Shin Shiu sect, exhibit a strong spirit to propagate the truths of Buddhism over the face of the world, and they are making preparations in learning English and other languages." We are well assured that educated Buddhist, Hindu, or Mohammedan missionaries would make a sensation and a success in London. Perhaps some of our Oriental friends will take the matter into consideration. We shall be happy to lend them some assistance.

MALTHUSIANISM AND GOD.

A CLERGYMAN, writing in the *Daily News* against Malthusianism, says:—"How can enlightened men continue to adore a God who, they believe, without even the excuse of necessity, deliberately creates more human beings than can possibly find existence? The parental instincts even of erring mortals are outraged at the idea, as a cruel act of power. If we are to accept this belief, the darkest pages of human tyranny pale before the tyranny of the Eternal King."

The Malthusian law is a demonstrated truth acknowledged by almost all scientific men and political economists. The vicar who writes to the *Daily News* confesses that Thorold Rogers "is the only Englishman of any eminence, excepting perhaps one other, who has rejected the Malthusian doctrine." As the educated clergy accept the Malthusian law, it is to be hoped that the Rev. Francis Minton will press on them his very forcible presentment of the cruel inhumanity of their God in making or obeying a law which creates misery, vice, and death on the largest scale.

The fact of the rapid multiplication of the human race, as of all other living organisms, cannot be controverted. The census returns show it too plainly. The population of the United States doubles in twenty-five years. A hundred years ago it was but three millions, now it is over fifty millions. Immigrants, it is true, have poured in from Europe, but in spite of this loss the population of most of the countries of Europe has doubled during the century.

Nature—or, according to Christians, God—bids all living things "increase and multiply." By obeying this divine law man brings upon himself wretched poverty, never-ending drudgery and misery, wholesale vice, degradation, pestilence, starvation and famine. If the inferior creation were beneath God's notice—if he cares naught for oxen, as St. Paul teaches us—he might still have studied the one favored animal which he made in his own image. Why did he not teach man the cause of these gravest of evils? Why did he not bid him be prudent in multiplying his race, and so enable him to escape the otherwise inevitable suffering that would ensue? Why does God lead him on to misery and death by the most powerful and insidious inducements? Why does he make love the unsuspected source of widespread wretchedness and moral degradation?

The educated Christian who believes in Darwin rather than Moses, will plead that this increase, and the consequent struggle for existence, are the necessary means of securing the progress or evolution of the race. Without this struggle, and the consequent survival of the fittest, man would never have emerged from savagery, or indeed would never have been evolved at all. But this is no excuse for an omnipotent Being, who could have secured a good result without evil means. The elimination of the unfittest is a terrible process, and it is often carried out by methods of wholesale torture and massacre which are but slightly discriminative in their action. Take the following list of Indian famines since 1837 as a specimen of the way in which God clears off the redundant population that he so recklessly pours into the world:—

1837-8. In North-West India over 800,000 people perished of famine.

1865-6. About 1,000,000 perished in Bengal and Orissa.

1868-9. About 1,500,000 perished in Rajpootana, etc.

1874. Famine in Bengal.

1877. About 500,000 perished in Bombay, Madras, Mysore, etc.

1879. Famine in Cashmere.

These famines, partly mitigated by the efforts of the British Government, were thrown into the shade by the famine in the North of China which is said in 1877-8 to have destroyed nine millions and a half of people. These are merely the comparatively recent disasters of two Asiatic countries. What must be the famine-roll for the past centuries of the whole world? Many ancient famines are

recorded—famines in which half the populations of the chief towns disappeared, famines in which parents devoured their own children for very hunger—but accurate returns of the vast numbers who died are not obtainable.

Even these famines are surpassed, so far as the sum total of suffering is concerned, by the innumerable and chronic cases of semi-starvation, and by the plagues, wars, and other evils, which help in the task of checking the reckless increase of population before the famine limit is reached. Were it not for the relief afforded by those checks, mankind would be face to face with a continual scarcity of food almost equivalent to a perpetual famine. Such would be the inevitable effect of the law by which population tends to increase faster than the supply of food.

The Rev. Francis Minton is not far out in his reflections on the God who could frame and enforce so cruel, so relentless, so treacherous a law. Mr. Minton thinks, indeed, that this consideration effectually disproves Malthusianism. A merciful God could not make so merciless a law. Exactly. A merciful God and the merciless struggle for existence through rapid multiplication are irreconcilable. They cannot both exist. As we know the Malthusian law to be true, as we know the consequent struggle for existence to be a fact, the all-benevolent God of the Christians is demolished. All that can be left to Christians who accept logical conclusions is an inferior God, a reckless tyrant who, "without even the excuse of necessity, deliberately creates more human beings than can possibly find subsistence." As this divine conduct is an outrage on parental instincts, and a tyranny darker than that of the worst of human despots, we can join Mr. Minton in asking educated believers and learned clergymen how they can continue to adore a Being who is guilty of such reckless cruelty.

W. P. BALL.

EXTRA SPECIAL DESPATCH FROM OUR EXTRAORDINARY AERIAL COMMISSIONER.

"CIRCE," OCTOBER.

THE present communication is earlier than at first intended, for one or two reasons—first because my steering gear is out of order, the cause of which you shall learn presently, and secondly to sound a note of warning to a professor on your earth who ascends great distances by the aid of a balloon, and then lowers himself by using a parachute. I beg to tell him that should he unfortunately get out of the attraction of his planet and go sailing away (God Almighty or the d—l knows where) he may collide with one of the numerous Christs who are continually getting themselves crucified, and are repeatedly making ascensions after burial—it's their business, their sole occupation in life, in fact there seems no other use for them. Should this professor bump against one of these individuals in mid air the consequences would be awful—the professor would be damaged past repairing, and the particular Christ he cannoned against would have his dignity and pose upset, making him unlike the pictures in our National Galleries, and the atmosphere would be darkened by expletives of a sombre kind. So let your fellow countryman keep his eyes well open, for these deities are very touchy fellows, especially when hunger, thirst, and attrition have played the very deuce with their tempers, as they must do on a journey of a few decillion of miles. The accident to my own aerial machine was caused by an incident of this kind, so I have had to put into this small asteroid to repair my steering gear, as it had received a parting kick from the Jesus Christ I upset. I found, on arriving at "Circe," that it was a very small affair, but was nevertheless inhabited by men and women of the kind we are accustomed to, only much smaller. They also had their legends and myths. One similar to ours told of a diminutive Christ who had got himself down to their dimensions before incarnation, and had caused himself to be crucified on a little gallows or cross. Their books also relate pretty miracles and wonders occurring at the death of a third part of their deity. Dead and dry old saints woke up and ambled into the towns, black darkness and all the other events of this dark story took place. The worship here is somewhat similar to yours, the one idea seeming to be to get on the blind side of their deity, and if there is a possibility of his detecting them in some glaring act of turpitude they then try to assuage his wrath by fulsome adulation, calling him a god of mercy, exclaiming that greatness is over all his works, and designating themselves abject worms and all that is base. Their customs are slightly different from those you reverence. For instance, you toll a bell—the passing bell—when a person dies—they commission their chief church dignitary to "tum, tum" on the banjo, and it seems to me to be just as efficacious. Their churches, again, are built with the apex in the ground, the top being square and comfortably cushioned so that should their Christ again appear and be carried to a pinnacle of a temple, he may be more comfortable and not have the point of the joke made so palpable. Their sacrament is a very solid affair—a public supper in fact, finishing with harmony of a very pronounced type, twelve baskets being always ready to gather up the fragments. These baskets never seem to be used though.

Their representative Bensons, Spurgeons, Booths, etc., are very learned, for the passages in their holy book which their deity has left obscure they can translate and make lucid with a glibness most astounding. Certainly each one's translation is different, but that makes the enjoyment more intense. Every sect, I noticed, kept up

one holy solemnity in common; the collection, I mean, that very ancient mystic rite.

Large reservoirs of water were in the vicinity of each church, so that on the second appearance of their Christ he should not have to wait for a marriage feast to show his skill in turning water into wine. Plantations of fig trees were growing ready for the "cussing" business, should he feel inclined. Their great dead wits, poets, orators, etc. they preserve, so that he may have worthy objects to raise from death, and not waste his powers on such poor subjects as he was in the habit of doing on his first appearance—actually raising a high old tramp named "Lazyrust," a regular scrap hunter, for no seeming purpose but to show his skill. The poor decayed old chap had to lie down again, so had a double dose of dying without giving any information worth recording. They say, "We don't want these wastrels resuscitated; let us have a look at our great dead again in life, so that we may learn something worth knowing."

My view from this asteroid shows the firmament completely dusted with large and small planets, and I consider the numerous Christs and Virgin Marys have no sinecure if all these worlds have to be visited. I am afraid they lose many opportunities by not advertising themselves better, say by a dozen or two posters printed in bold type, announcing "The two thousandth night of our great trick act, the crucifixion, with all the old effects—positively our last appearance on this planet, book early."

Shall leave here soon, and hope to be able to give you further experiences of my visits to some of the numerous planets in my view.

REVIEWS.

Lord Wolseley on Courage and Military Genius, by Julian Gray, price twopence; London, S. H. Lazarus, 3, 33, and 51 Bookseller's Row, W.C. A well-timed and well-written criticism upon the recent articles in the *Fortnightly Review* by "Our Only General."

Parliamentary Review Session, 1888. By THOMAS WOOD ARTHUR BONNER. 63 Fleet Street, E.C. Price 6d.—A synopsis of the legislation and debates of last Session, that calls for no special notice.

Life Lore—A Monthly Magazine of Natural History. W. Mawer. 4 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.—This excellent magazine, to which we have already directed attention, gives as a frontispiece to its October number, a capital life-like portrait of Charles Darwin. It contains much matter of interest to biologists.

The Popular Faith Exposed. By JULIAN. Watts and Co. 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St.—This is a scholarly pamphlet of 32 pp. The author brings out the evidence that the Gospels were not extant before the second half of the second century. He says: "That after Papias subsequent fathers frequently referred to the books of the New Testament canon is condemnatory rather than the contrary. It shows that, after the time of Papias, these books made their appearance, and, when extant, were known. In the time of Papias they had not made their appearance, and were consequently unknown." The writer also shows that the earliest Christians were heretics, that the Church doctrines are due to Councils, and not to Gospels, and that the so-called "revelation" is human in every aspect. Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ* is retorted upon by instances of the "undesigned discrepancies" between the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. The price does not appear on the cover.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.—According to this [the popular and received theology of Christian communities] the condition of the departed depends ultimately upon the will of a being who a long while ago cursed all mankind because one woman disobeyed him. The curse was no mere symbol of displeasure, but a fixed resolve to keep his victims alive for ever, writhing in horrible tortures, in a place which his divine foreknowledge had prepared beforehand. In consideration, however, of the death of his son, effected by unknowing agents, he consented to feed with the sweets of his favor such poor wretches as should betray their brethren and speak sufficiently soft words to the destroyer of their kindred. For the rest, the old curse survives in its power; condemning them to everlasting torment for a manifestation of his glory. To the dead then, if this be the future life, there is left only the choice between shame and suffering. How well and nobly soever a man shall have worked for his fellows, he must end by being either the eternal sycophant of a celestial despot, or the eternal victim of a celestial executioner. If this horrible story be true, the noblest thing left for us is to curse God and die. The awful wickedness which the popular legend ascribes to its Deity is not to be got rid of by any corresponding monstrosity of structure, by giving him five heads or three personalities, or a round hundred of eyes or arms. The things which are told of him are foul and despicable deeds, were they knowingly done by Cerberus or Cyclops."—W. K. Clifford, *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1875.

PROFANE JOKES.

Not long since a certain preacher described a pond in which he had seen many fine fish, and brought it in as an illustration in one of his discourses. On the following Sabbath morning six deacons were missing from their pews, but when the pastor took a stroll after service, he saw the absent six sitting on the verdant bank of that identical pond, and half-a-dozen corks were bobbing on the surface of that stream.

Two ladies were in a train which suddenly began to bump with great violence, for it had gone off the line. The likelihood of a fatal ending to their lives and a speedy entrance into paradise alarmed them so much that they completely lost their heads, and began praying, as they thought, in the first words that came to their tongues. One of them repeated the creed as a charm against danger, the other piously exclaimed "for what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful."

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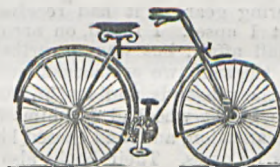
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