

# THE FREETHINKER

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S E R V E T U S .

(Burnt at Geneva, 27 Oct., 1553.)

MIGUEL SERVETO-Y-REVES, or, as he is now commonly known, Michael Servetus, was born in the year 1509, at Villanuova, a town of Aragon, in Spain. Destined for the Church, he was educated in the first place at a monastery in his native province, and afterwards at Saragossa. Having determined to enter another profession—that of the law—he went to study at the then famous University of Toulouse. Here he heard the first reverberations of the great thunder-clap of Reformation which then agitated Germany. He devoted himself to a study of religion, with the result that most of its dogmas completely vanished.

An idle story related by his enemies says that Servetus visited Africa, and there learnt his religion from Jews and Mohammedans. This was the customary charge against all who rejected Trinitarianism. There is no ground whatever for the report. In 1530 he went to Basle to confer with Ecolampadius. This reformer endeavored to convert him, and laid his case before Zwingle, Bucer, and Bullinger, who all considered him a gross heretic. Bucer was so horror-struck as to declare that the man who could hold such opinions deserved to have his bowels plucked out and to be torn limb from limb. Servetus determined to issue his work, *De Trinitatis Erroribus* ("On the Errors of the Trinity"). It was printed at Hagenau, in Alsace, Servetus having gone there to superintend the production. The book was suppressed at Ratisbon, and was publicly denounced at Basle by Ecolampadius. Melancthon also wrote to the Senate of Venice denouncing it. Thus did these reformers uphold "the right of private judgment." Servetus then went to Lyons, and supported himself as a corrector for the press. Here he edited Ptolemy's Geography, with corrections and notes. From Lyons he removed to Paris, where he took up the profession of medicine, to which he devoted himself with such assiduity that he was soon enabled to take his doctor's degree.

We shall not enter into the vexed question whether Servetus preceded Harvey in discovering the circulation of the blood. Dr. Willis, to whose book on *Servetus and Calvin* we direct those who desire further information, holds that Servetus was "the first who proclaimed the true way in which the blood from the right reaches the left chamber of the heart by passing through the lungs,

and who even hinted at its further course by the arteries to the body at large."

In France Servetus met the great reformer, John Calvin. A correspondence ensued, which in time became acrimonious. Calvin wrote to his friend Farel in 1546: "He offers to come hither, if I please. But I will not pledge my faith; for if he comes, and regard be paid to my authority, I will not allow him to escape with his life."\* To Pierre Viret he made the same declaration. Meanwhile Servetus was giving further occasion of offence. At Vienne he published what Calvin called impious notes on Pagninus' Latin Bible, the chief object being to show that the Old Testament prophecies commonly applied to Jesus did not originally refer to him, and could only be so applied figuratively. His next work was his famous *Christianismi Restitutio* ("Christianity Restored"), the title probably having reference to Calvin's *Christianæ Religionis Institutio*. This was issued at the beginning of 1553. To Calvin Servetus sent an early copy. The pious reformer, with the Christian perfidy which sticks at nothing against heretics, denounced Servetus through one Guillaume Trie to the Roman Catholic Church authorities at Lyons, to whom he was himself an heretic of the deepest dye. Servetus and his publisher were arrested. He was imprisoned, but, probably through private influence, was suffered to escape. Anxious to obtain refuge with friends in Naples, he passed through Geneva on his way to Italy, was seized at the instance of Calvin, and tried on the charge of heresy and blasphemy brought by one Nicolaus de la Fontaine, Calvin's own cook. The trial was that of a man foredoomed. The charges were transcribed by the hand of Calvin's own amanuensis. Servetus had compared the Trinity to Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Paganism; he had called true believers *trinitaires*; he had impiously annotated the Bible. Calvin, sitting as judge on his own accused, inveighed against the Pantheism of his enemy. Stamping on the pavement with well-calculated indignation, Calvin exclaimed: "Wretch, will you let it be said I tread upon your God?" Servetus replied: "I doubt not that this bench, and whatever else you can point to, is divine substance." "Soho, then, the Devil himself will substantially be God?" The meaning chuckle with which Servetus replied, "Can you doubt that?" was not lost upon his foe, and sealed a fate already signed. The Council of Geneva took advice of the Cantons of Zurich, Berne, Basle, and Schaffhausen; he was condemned on the 26th of October to be burnt alive at a slow fire!

On the following day he was taken to the place of execution, fastened by an iron chain to a stake, and his neck secured to a hempen rope. His two books were fastened to his waist, and his head was encircled in mockery with a chaplet of straw and green twigs, bestrewed with brimstone. The fire was kindled and the torch thrust in his face. The brimstone catching and the flames rising, wrung from the poor victim such a cry of anguish as struck terror into the surrounding crowd. After this he was bravely silent; but the wood, by a malice natural then to Christians when dealing with heretics, was purposely green, and although the people aided the executioner in heaping the faggots upon him, a long half-hour elapsed before he ceased to show signs of life and of suffering.

The fire which consumed the heretic reduced to a cinder the fair fame of his enemy, John Calvin. Vainly have his followers sought to acquit him of this indelible stain upon his character. Mosheim, referring to what Calvin himself avows, viz., "that he would not have persevered so resolutely on the capital charge, had Servetus been but modest,

\* Alex. Gordon, in his papers on Servetus in the *Theological Review*, 1878, p. 411, cites the original, which, he says, may be seen in the National Library at Paris.

and not rushed madly on his fate," exclaims: "What an avowal! Servetus, after all, must burn, not because he had outraged the word of God, but because he had addressed John Calvin in disrespectful language!" It is impossible to reconcile Calvin's avowal with the theory that he was only influenced by regard for truth. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the extirpation of heretics was the common creed of Protestants and Catholics alike. The great body of the reformers, including the mild Melancthon, fully approved of Calvin's conduct. Notions of complete toleration were held only by those who were esteemed the vilest heretics. Calvin himself rather boasted than repented the murder. In a letter to the Marquis de Poet, dated 30th September, 1561, he says: "Above all, do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus, the Spaniard." J. M. WHEELER.

#### SUNDAY CLOSING.

MR. STEVENSON, the pious member for South Shields, has carried the second reading of his Sunday Closing Bill. So far as he is concerned, it is a piece of pure Sabbatarianism. He is one of those narrow-minded souls who desire to see the entire human race modelled on their own pattern. When the world is full of Stevensons, we shall have the millennium. Such persons never have any belief in persuasion and moral influence. What they happen to dislike should be suppressed. The vices they do not affect should be punished. The tastes they do not share should be restrained by Act of Parliament. Mr. Stevenson wishes to see the Lord's Day monopolised by the churches and chapels. He distinctly told his constituents that he "could not think of such a thing" as opening museums, art galleries, and public libraries on Sunday. It does not enter within the range of his limited imagination that the millions who do not, and will not, patronise the gospel-shops, require *some* form of amusement and recreation. He has not mastered the simple and universal truth that human beings must have some kind of excitement to break the monotony of their lives. Mr. Stevenson would shut up every place but the tabernacle on Sunday, and let the people go there or wander about the streets counting the hours till the blessed Monday morning comes with its bustle and animation. Something, perhaps, might be said for closing the drink-shops, if the institutions of intellectual and artistic culture were thrown open. But that is not the case. Mr. Stevenson and his like have not the sense to improve the people by giving them fresh tastes and developing the good tastes they possess already. The pious, goody-goody reformers have but one nostrum, and that is the strait waistcoat. They fancy a man is improved by fetters, and feel sure the fetters should be of their making. The lessons of history are lost upon them. Christianity has endeavored to suppress vice by law ever since the days of Constantine, and the results are not encouraging. Down in Scotland, the clergy made a dead set against "fornication"; in fact, they had "fornication" on the brain. The culprits were subjected to ignominious punishment. And what is the result? Why this; Scotland produces more illegitimate children than any other civilised country. Acts of Parliament and penal laws cannot make people moral. They may restrain a few, but they do not assist the development of the many. Human nature has an excellent stubbornness, which resents being driven though it yields to considerate leading. Even children may be led a mile when they cannot be driven a yard. You will not suppress Sunday drinking by your Sabbatarian laws. While human nature is what it is, they are like punching a pillow. Hit it in one place, and it is out in another. Clubs will multiply, and brewers will supply private instead of public drinking establishments. That is what will happen; nothing less and nothing more.

Mr. Bradlaugh, we are happy to see, voted against the measure. Local Option is a question quite apart. The point was whether drinking a glass of beer on Sunday was a greater sin than drinking it on Monday. Mr. Bradlaugh could give but one answer to such a question, and he gave it by his vote. He opposed his party but satisfied his conscience; thus displaying his usual courage, which must be very nauseous to the week-kneed, sheep-like members of Parliament, who are representatives of the people in the

sense that they have no opinions, will, or conscience of their own.

This Sunday Closing Bill, we repeat, is mere Sabbatarianism. It is a pious dodge for filling gospel-shops and promoting the soul-saving business. That is why the ministers of all persuasions give it such hearty support. But it is more than possible that they are mistaken in their calculations. Half-and-half measures are generally useless. They should have the courage of their brazen trade, and call for a Bill compelling everybody to rent a pew in one of their Bethels. Short of that they are only playing. Meanwhile they may find that patient as the public is, its patience is still limited; and one of these fine days the great lethargic public will rise up in disgust, and make such a drastic change in our Sunday Laws as will set the clergy howling to a fresh tune. G. W. FOOTE.

#### CALVIN'S VICTIMS.

As the Freethought martyrology, under the domination of Calvin at Geneva, with the exception of the case of Servetus is but little known, we give the following list, which, although only including those who were prosecuted for their religious opinions, is none the less far from complete. Garrido in his *History of Persecution* says: "The history of Geneva, during the twenty years that followed the return of Calvin, composes one of the most blood-stained pages that is presented to us by the chronicles of intolerance. In it we find even sorcery punished by a fiery death. During the space of sixty years, the archives of that city show 150 instances." Calvin was determined to rule in accordance with the will of God. To put down libertines he drew up a pedantic code of laws largely drawn from the Old Testament. These laws ordered the punishment of women who arranged their toilet with too much coquetry, and men who dared to play at cards. Men were forbidden to dance with women or to wear figured hose or flowered breeches. Many were also severely punished for Sabbath breaking.

Jacques Gruet, whose great crime in the eyes of Calvin was having written on one of his books the words *Toutes folies* (all follies). Accused of heresy and blasphemy, he was tortured and put to death by order of Calvin at Geneva, July 26, 1547.

Giovanni Valentino Gentilis, of Cosenza, an Italian heretic who fled to Geneva to avoid persecution. At the instigation of Calvin he was thrown into prison. Fear of sharing the fate of Servetus made him recant. He was afterwards beheaded at Berne.

Antoine d'Argilleries, who was at first a Jacobin monk and afterwards a Protestant preacher, was tortured several times, and afterwards decapitated and his head nailed to the gibbet (1561), for having eight years previously taken the part of Servetus against Calvin at Pont de Veyle.

Giovanni Paolo Alciati, of Savigliani, took refuge in Geneva, whence he was obliged to fly. Calvin obtained against him a decree of banishment.

Giorgio Biandrata also had to fly to escape the anger of Calvin, who heard of his anti-Trinitarian views.

Matteo Gribaldi, a juriconsult, who took the part of Servetus, was ordered to quit the town. Beza, with Christian charity, said that the plague which took him off in 1564 took the place of executioner to this heretic.

Of all these further accounts will be found in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

Other Italians who were banished from Geneva were Hippolyte de Carignan, Nicolo Gallo, Baptisto Gustiniani, Silvestro Telio and Fausto Zucchi.

Jerome Bolsec, a physician of Lyons, who followed Calvin to Geneva, was imprisoned, and after a long detention banished for differing from Calvin on predestination.

Guillaume du Bois was imprisoned, put into irons, made to stand in shirt and barefoot, and banished for having said that Calvin had retracted one of his writings.

Thivent Bellot, tortured and banished for having refused to take oath.

Guillaume Guanier, of Paris, banished under pain of the lash, after having had a dogmatic discussion with Calvin.

Matthew Antoine, condemned to cry mercy and perpetual banishment under pain of the lash (1556), for having said that heretics should not be burnt.

Sebastian Castellio was also deprived of his ministry and banished for the same offence, and for having maintained that Solomon's Song was sensual.

Toussaint Mesquin, of Dom pierre, condemned to go barefooted in shirt, and banished under pain of being hung, for having attacked the doctrine of predestination.

Antoine Narbert, printer of Dauphine, condemned to have the tongue pierced with a hot iron, and banished under pain of decapitation for having reviled Calvin when in a state of drunkenness.

Denis Billonet, of Boussac en Berry, a printer's corrector, condemned to be whipped through the town, and marked on the forehead with a hot iron, and banished under pain of death for having spoken ill of the holy predestination of God.

J. M. W.

## AN ARGUMENT FOR UNBELIEF.

WERE the belief in the creation of the universe by a personal deity a true one, we might reasonably expect to find the greatest agreement in it amongst those who spent their lives in the study of nature, for here, according to this belief, would be exhibited the deity's direct workmanship. But the exact opposite is what we find, for the students of nature furnish a smaller proportion of believers in supernaturalism than do any other class, and, in countries where this belief prevails, the largest proportion of its adherents is ever furnished from those classes which know and care least about nature and its laws. The denser the ignorance in these countries the greater the unanimity of belief in a personal deity. This is because the most ignorant think the least. Disbelief and non-belief—Atheism and Agnosticism—increase in the same ratio as the laws of nature become understood and the knowledge of them diffused.

This looks as though the belief in supernaturalism had nothing in nature to justify it, as though it were founded on ignorance, and leads to the opinion that it would very soon expire in these days of high civilisation were it not continually inculcated by teachers on whom is spent untold millions to uphold it by those who fail, or pretend to fail, through false training, or prejudice combined with selfish motives, to see its injurious effects.

Teaching dogmas as motives for well-doing, which the more intelligent and earnest-minded of the community are nowadays sure to discover are untrue, is as injudicious as it is immoral.

It is, perhaps, well that the truths of science, which clearly demonstrate the utter preposterousness of religious dogmas, such as "after death the judgment," should first of all be apprehended in all their bearings by the highest of the race; were this not so, and the case reversed, the consequences might be disastrous in those countries where for hundreds of years these dogmas have been inculcated by a self-seeking priesthood as furnishing the only means whereby social order could be maintained, and human nature thus warped from a true foundation by a fallacious belief in rewards and punishments in a future life.

That these consequences would be peculiarly disastrous to the moral and physical well-being of the clergy themselves seems indicated by their constant reiteration that religious dogmas afford the sole motive for moral conduct, and that unbelievers of them would be logically justified in being guided by the principle of "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die," as though man's greatest happiness in this world consisted in gratifying his purely animal appetites, as though, after perceiving the falsity of religious dogmas, man would run riot in excesses which he knew must morally, intellectually, and physically ruin him. But whatever ill effects might ensue through people of brutal natures acting after this fashion on account of the artificial restraints being suddenly removed which had served to keep them in check, they themselves would be the principal sufferers, and the law of natural selection would speedily ensure their extirpation.

Scientific truths are the greatest safe-guards against evil, and nothing should be taught the rising generation which has not been scientifically demonstrated. Here is the fundamental difference between the teaching of science and orthodox religion: the teacher of the one says, examine for yourself; whereas the other inculcates implicit faith, to believe dogmas whose sole foundation are the writings of old Jews and Greeks, whose knowledge, as displayed by themselves, must have been of the most meagre and imperfect description. J. E. ROOSE.

## ACID DROPS.

"We are abandoning dogma," says the *Christian World*, "and getting closer to the heart of Christ." How pretty! But what the deuce does it mean? We should put it, on behalf of the Christians, in a different way: "We are rebuilding and re-fitting the ship, chartering a different cargo, and running up fresh bunting, but we intend to keep the same old figure-head."

THE Rev. Walter Walsh, of Newcastle, preached last Sunday on "Popular Literature." Judging from the newspaper report, the reverend gentleman is in a very dense fog. He began by telling his audience—we mean his congregation—that literature was an outcome and one of the blessings of Christianity; a statement which involves one of two bits of nonsense—either that Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Virgil, Ovid, Lucretius and Tacitus were Christians, or that their writings are not literature.

THEN Mr. Walsh went on to deplore the evils of our daily and weekly press, one of the worst being the verbatim reports of naughty cases in the Divorce Court and elsewhere. Probably this is mischievous, but Christian ministers have little right to play the censor, while their Bible, their Blessed Book, their infallible Word of God, which is forced into the hands of children of both sexes, contains details of wickedness and filthy expressions such as no editor could dare insert in a newspaper even if he wished to. Physician, heal thyself, is a very good maxim. Of course, a doctor may catch a disease, but if a patent medicine man offers a certain cure for blotches while his own

face is a perfect eruption, he is simply an object of ridicule or something worse; for he must be either a fool or a knave, and a pretty big one too.

CHARLATANRY is the key-note of Christian reformation nowadays. Your popular preacher gets into a snug pulpit with a big salary, selects one or two carnal indulgences he doesn't happen to have a strong taste for, inveighs against them as the sins of the age, implores everybody to abandon them, and on the smallest amount of self-denial gets a big reputation for "purity"—in other words, becomes a full-blown Pharisee. Here is the Rev. J. McNeill, for instance, holding forth at Exeter Hall against the harmless, necessary pipe, as though it contained theft, adultery, and murder. He beseeches the male sex to sign the pledge against it, and tells them, in the high falutin' style which passes muster for sublime eloquence, that "the scratching of the pen when they signed the pledge would be heard with joy in heaven and with fear in hell." Possibly, on going home, the too too excellent McNeill ate such a hearty supper that he had to let out a couple of buttons. It is the old game—

Compound for sins you are inclined to  
By damning those you have no mind to.

PHYSIOLOGICALLY, smoking may be injurious or otherwise. There is a good deal to be said—at any rate, a good deal *is* said—on both sides. But to make it a deadly sin, and the ceasing from it a supreme virtue, is simple jockassery; and the jockassery shows what shifts the poor Christians are reduced to. Mr. Spurgeon is a world-famous preacher and he smokes first-rate cigars. Would Mr. McNeill have the courage to tell Mr. Spurgeon that when he smokes a good Havanna he is burning incense to the Devil? John Bright was a good Christian, and, what is more, a good man, and John Bright loved a cigar. Does Mr. McNeill fancy himself John Bright's superior because he refrains from smoking? If he doesn't, his Exeter Hall sermonising is the most despicable cant. If he does, he has the paltriest standard of virtue that ever was applied by a peddling moralist to human conduct. Virtue doesn't consist in giving up some little pleasure, and priding yourself on the sacrifice; virtue consists in veracity, honesty, courage, generosity, and an active desire to promote the welfare of your fellow men and women.

HELL is still a burning question, at least among the Congregationalists. Dr. Hannay talked round about it in fine style the other day in the Memorial Hall. He hadn't made up his mind, and didn't like making up his mind; that is, he is waiting to see how the cat jumps; and meanwhile he belongs to the party who "refuse to dogmatise on this awful subject."

BUT why "dogmatise"? Who cares a straw about Dr. Hannay's personal opinion? He knows no more about hell, personally, than a seal, or a walrus, or a polar bear. The only important question is—What does the Bible teach? And if, after eighteen centuries, the very men who live by teaching it don't know what it means, hadn't they better give up the business and get a living, if only a bread and cheese one, at some honest employment?

DR. HANNAY wound up a long discourse by calling on the English-speaking people of the world to combine in one mighty federation, and accept their "providential vocation as leaders and teachers of truth and righteousness." Well now, that *is* rich. We should just like the opinion of foreign countries on our "providential vocation." Doesn't it seem like sneaking every bit of property we can lay hold of, and consecrating the theft with a hymn and a Scripture lesson? Considering how Jesus Christ was always "going for" the Pharisees, it is really astonishing that Christians model themselves so thoroughly on the pattern of that distinguished sect.

THE Rev. J. W. C. Pearse, Baptist minister at Tring, is in clover. They have had a special flare-up to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of his pastorate. Lord Rothschild sent a £10 note, and the congregation presented a couch. We understand the note, though it came from an unbelieving Jew. But why the couch? Verily the world, and especially the religious world, is full of mystery?

ANOTHER Baptist minister has been preaching at Leeds on "Settling Accounts." That's a subject on which a good many ministers, not to say their creditors, are deeply interested. Nobody can say that the Rev. James Horns doesn't preach seasonable sermons.

By the way, the Holy Ghost says "Owe no man anything." Yet half the gospel shops in England are heavily in debt.

THIRTY-TWO Edinburgh churches have decided to drink the blood of Christ in unfermented wine. Well, that's better than bad port. The only wonder is they haven't gone in for Scotch whiskey.

ACCORDING to the Bible, wine cheereth God as well as man. Query—How many hogsheds of unfermented grape-juice, or gooseberry-juice, or turnip-juice, would it take to give old

Jahveh a fillip? We suspect he prefers the good old sort, such as his beloved son manufactured in Palestine.

CHRISTIAN missions have found a champion at last in the Rev. W. J. Woods, of Clapton Park Chapel. He laughs at the cavils of men like Mr. Caine, M.P., and assures us that during the past 100 years quite 30,000 heathen have become real Christians.

ALLOWING the exactness of these figures, just for the sake of argument, what do they prove? The missions have cost over £200,000,000 during the century. For that you have 30,000 converts. That means £6,666 13s. 4d. a piece. Are the heathen worth it? Wouldn't it be better to spend all that money in setting up British working-men in co-operative industries?

Now look at the figures in another light. In one century 30,000 heathen have been bought—we mean brought—to Jesus. Well, there are about 1,000,000,000 heathen in the world, and at this rate it will take 3,333,333 years to convert them all. And long before that, says Prophet Baxter, the business of this planet is going to be wound up. Let us pray.

THE Rev. W. J. Woods quite forgets that while his divine religion has at immense cost converted 30,000, the heathen have increased at over fifty times that rate by the simple process of addition to the population.

THE Baptist missionaries deny the statement of Mr. Caine that the cost of a Roman Catholic missionary is £30. They say it is at least double that amount. But this will not bring the sum up to above a quarter of what a Protestant missionary expects to get for his arduous labors.

JAMES HOLBROOK, clerk of St. Bartholomew's Church, Clay Cross, had a professional difference with a lady, Mrs. E. A. Smith, on the occasion of a wedding. He was fined 1s. and 14s. 6d. costs, and we dare say, in future, he will consult his finances before indulging in the sport of pummeling ladies.

THE piety of Mr. James Monro, C.B., the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, appears to emulate that of his predecessor, Sir Charles Warren. At any rate, he made a very unctuous speech at the annual meeting of the Christian Police Association, and declared "their all was from God." We fancy if this were really so Mr. James Munro would have an extremely small force at his command.

THE police are an important class of men in Russia. Among their multifarious duties is that of admonishing church members who neglect too long to partake of the Blessed Communion.

THE Clergy Defence Society, with over fifty policemen, have been unable to carry out their attempt to distrain for tithes in Whitechurch, Wales. A mob armed with sticks obstructed the sheriff and his men, and compelled them to return to Cardigan.

THE *Dominicales* of Madrid has the following: An elderly nun had been sent to an asylum in Lungara (Spain) because religion had upset her mind. This nun shut herself in her room a few days ago, took off her dress, set fire to the clothes and succeeded in burning her body to ashes. In spite of all this Christians have the impudence to tell us of the thousand and one consolations of religion, and that Infidels are always committing suicide.

THE hand of the Lord was laid heavy on his faithful pastor, the Rev. John Shepherd, vicar of Treneglos-cum-Warbstow, Cornwall, and he was found lying dead against the hedge in a field.

THE Associated Press Correspondent at Danville, Illinois, reported the baptism of seven persons from Blunt township, Vermillion Co., by the Rev. Mr. Hodge, of Catlin, who, a hole having been cut in ice, took the thinly-clad and shivering converts, and dipped them in the name of the blessed Trinity. On the following day the correspondent had to despatch another item as follows: "Mrs. McMann, one of the women immersed through a hole in the ice at Blunt, Sunday, is dying from the shock to her nervous system." Yet Christians talk of the fanaticism of alien faiths.

THERE are now 275 "Lady Clergymen" in the United States. They never take their text from 1 Tim. ii, 11, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection," or from 1 Cor. xiv, 34, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak."

"JUDAS ISCARIOT" has been arrested for selling gingerbread in some illegal fashion in New York. He is a middle-aged Greek, and not, as some might fancy, the Wandering Jew.

THE sudden resignation of the Rev. Albert Spencer, vicar of All Saint's Church, Finchley Road, St. John's Wood, has left that congregation as sheep without a shepherd. As Mr. Spencer declared that he could not divulge the reasons of his resignation, speculation is rife upon the subject. An aggrieved member of

the congregation writes to the *South Hampstead Advertiser* that 'the prospect before us now is that of a deserted church.'

SOME disclosures of credulity came out at Brighton, in a charge of assault preferred against the leader of the "Army of Lord" named Wood, who is known as "King Solomon." The complainant, a tailor, had given over £300 to the Army, on the promise that the Lord would return it. Whilst in bed on the night of March 21st "King Solomon" entered the room, pulled off the clothes, and dragged him along the floor, remarking that he was full of the devil. He is now penniless. Wood was fined £5 or one month's imprisonment.

DAVIDIC courtesy and loving-kindness is emulated by the Rev. J. Hiles Hitchens, D.D., who sends to *The Young Man* a sermon on the text, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Mr. Hitchens is not content with this. Atheism is "withered, sapless, sepulchral." It is "restless, joyless, hopeless," as well as foolish. The folly is illustrated because "Before a man can absolutely deny the existence of an all-wise and all-powerful and omnipotent Creator and supporter of all things, he must explore the universe, examine all space, and exist in all time." After this specimen of his powers of logic and his understanding of his opponents' position, we are not surprised at Mr. Hitchens trotting the old lies that "Volney, in a storm at sea, ran about the vessel crying, 'O, my God! O, my God, what shall I do?'" and that Paine "lived with bitter remorse to exclaim, 'I would give worlds, if I had them, that *The Age of Reason* had never been published.'

GOOD Rev. Brother Wilbur has just fallen a victim to the disease known as the Davidic malady. So fatal is this complaint amongst reverend gentlemen that a national quarantine against it is loudly demanded. Read:—"Buffalo, N.Y., March 6.—A sensation has been caused here by Bishop Coxe unfrocking Rev. Sidney Wilbur, rector of the church of the Epiphany, at Suspension Bridge. He was convicted of immoral conduct in an ecclesiastical court. A widow named Mrs. Colt, fair, fat, and forty, was mixed up in the scandal, and Wilbur, after being compelled to leave his pastorate, took her to New York, where the couple were married after Wilbur obtained a divorce from his wife in California."—*Ironclad Age*.

MANY Christian people regard with alarmed wonder the spread of Infidelity in the land, and the defection of young people from the religion of their fathers, without being able to comprehend that any reasons exist for a decadence of popular belief in divine institutions. Of course the progressive spirit of the age is primarily responsible for the decline of faith, but there are other influences for which Christian people are responsible themselves, that assist to bring about the results that alarm them. For instance, there has been disporting himself, under the patronage of leading clergymen in several churches of this city, a blasphemous young acrobat by the name of Harrison, who has been conducting what he calls "revival services," for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred dollars per week and his expenses. The performances at these "revival services" are of a nature to disgust every intelligent person, and arouse the contempt of all who scorn a hypocrite. Religion may be morality touched with emotion, but it is hard to make the non-believer accept a religion that consists of asininity touched with finance.—*Life*.

BOSTON boasts of a dog, the member of a family where fish is always eaten on Fridays, that for some time past disappeared on Thursday evenings and was not seen again until Saturday morning. So says the *Sun*. Investigation showed that the intelligent but heretical brute spent Friday with a family where meat was eaten on that day. Even a dog knows better than to be a Catholic.

THE editor of the *Brighthouse Echo* inserts the letter of "B. H.," who went to a "special service" in that town. One of the evangelists, it appears, though twenty years younger than "B. H.," catechised him as to his sins, and upon his refusing to make a confession, got upon a seat and, attracting the attention of the whole congregation, said, "Here's a man who never did anything; not even told a lie. He ought to be put under a glass shade." Upon "B. H." leaving, the evangelist had the impudence to follow him to the door and ask him to come again. We suspect he will not want to attend any more of these special services.

A SCOTCH divine took to preaching out of doors in the summer afternoons. He used to collect the people as they were taking the air by the side of a stream outside the village. On one occasion he had unfortunately taken his place on a bank, and fixed himself on an ants' nest. The active habits of these little creatures soon made the position of the intruder upon their domain very uncomfortable, and, afraid that his audience might observe something of this discomfort in his manner, he apologised by the remark:—"Brethren, though I hope I have the Word of God in my mouth, I think the devil himself has gotten into my breeks."

**MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.**

Sunday, April 7, Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Birmingham. At 11, "Mr. Adam and Mrs. Eve"; at 3, "Peter the Fisherman"; at 7, "Come to Jesus."

April 12, Debate with Rev. W. Rossiter, Camberwell; 14, Hall of Science; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Camberwell.

May 5, Manchester; 12, Milton Hall; 19, Milton Hall; 26, Camberwell.

June, 8, N.S.S. Conference; 23, Hall of Science, London; 30, 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. B. 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. Australia, China, and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

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.

H. LEMMON.—Received with thanks.

L. CLIFFE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. S. MARTIN.—Your lines are not poetical, but they are brief and pithy.

Be kind and be just,  
And ne'er in God trust;  
If you do you will bust.

T. CRAIK.—The legend of St. Veronica has been coined by personifying the "true likeness" (*vera icon*) of J. C., said to have been impressed on a handkerchief, and making it into the name of a saint. It may be just "as true as gospel" for all that.

W. J. B. points out that the devil showing Jesus all the kingdom of the world is by no means a new idea, but is referred to by Strauss. It is difficult to suggest any absolutely new interpretation of the old book.

SEVERAL Correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's organising visit to the North of England.

C. W.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

G. MANCO.—Your letter cannot be answered till next week, in consequence of the editor's absence.

E. PANKHURST.—We have not discontinued our illustrations. They are simply omitted for a few weeks to test the effect on our circulation. Our inclination is to give occasional good illustrations.

H. ROTHERA.—It is to be hoped the discussion has done some good. Of course you can hardly expect to convert your opponents, but here and there a reader may be influenced.

W. TAYLOR.—Huxley's works are published by Macmillan and Co. Most of his writings, except the purely scientific ones like *Physiography*, touch upon the relation of scientific theories to religion and metaphysics; notably those in the volumes entitled *Lay Sermons, Critiques and Addresses and American Lectures*.

C. MURRAY, 88 Rose Street, S. S., Glasgow, has a quantity of old *Freethinkers* and *National Reformers*, which he will be happy to send to any parties who can distribute them usefully. Recipients must pay carriage.

ON THE WAR PATH.—Such things do not disturb our equanimity. Still, we thank you for your expression of goodwill.

W. H. writes: "I was not aware of the existence of your paper until I found one among some waste paper I bought. The sketch made a lasting impression on my mind, and I have read your paper ever since." This correspondent should apply to Mr. Forder, as above, for back numbers of the *Freethinker*.

J. E. D.—"Thinker" is evidently a shuffler. He makes a statement, which you confute, and then replies that if it isn't true it ought to be. That, indeed, is the real secret of these death-bed stories about men like Voltaire. The Abbé Barruel is no authority. He was a rabid priest. Bishop Wilson knew nothing of Voltaire but the tittle-tattle of pious society long after his death. Lamartine gives the fullest account of the Girondists. Chesterfield was a professed Christian.

E. WALLER says that Prophet Baxter, of the *Christian Herald*, is a brother of the Prophet Baxter who wrote *Louis Napoleon*, and died a few years ago.

RECEIVED.—Liberator—Echo—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt—Le Danton—Bulletin des Sommaires—Open Court—Fair Play—Christian Pilot—Freethought—South Hampstead Advertiser—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Church Reformer—Secular Thought—The Young Man—Western Figaro—Brighthouse Echo—Great Thoughts.

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.**

NEXT week the *Freethinker* will expand into twelve pages, and as the number will be specially interesting, we hope our friends will make a special effort to circulate it. An extra copy or two distributed among their friends would do us considerable good. We shall have an excellent cartoon on the Bishop of Lincoln's trial, with an editorial on the same subject, dealing with the points at issue, and showing the solemn, nay awful, character of

this stupendous struggle over altar candles and the Lamb. There will also be a descriptive report of the House of Commons debate on Mr. Bradlaugh's Blasphemy Bill, and a similar one of Mr. Foote's debate with Mr. Rossiter. Other items will be discovered when the reader turns his optics on the pages, and we shall be deceived if he doesn't bless us with a blessing like that of Balaam the son of Peor.

A DELEGATE meeting of N. S. S. Branches in Northumberland and Durham met on Saturday afternoon, March 30, in the rooms of the Newcastle Branch. There was an excellent attendance from Newcastle, South Shields, Bedlington, Jarrow, Chester-le-Street, Stockton, West Hartlepool, and other places. Mr. S. Peacock, of South Shields, was voted into the chair, and Mr. J. Brown, of Newcastle, was selected *pro tem.* secretary. Mr. G. W. Foote was present as an adviser on behalf of the Central Executive. After a good deal of amicable discussion it was unanimously resolved that a Northern Federation should be formed to supplement the work and organisation of the affiliated Societies. A committee of five was then appointed to draw up a constitution to be submitted to all the northern Branches as soon as possible. The delegates exchanged ideas as to the special work of the Federation, the raising of funds, and so forth; and the meeting broke up with a pleasant feeling that a successful movement had been initiated.

THE Constitution Committee arranged to meet within a week. We trust its report will speedily be in the hands of the Branches, and that no time will be lost in getting to work. Our view is that the right method will not be a complex one. What is required is a simple constitution, good, capable officers, and a pretty free hand. Energy and perseverance ought to make a flourishing organisation in such a populous district.

METROPOLITAN friends who intend to join the London Secular Federation dinner on April 15 should lose no time in providing themselves with tickets. It will be necessary to know, three or four days beforehand, how many the tables should be laid for. The dinner will be well served, there will be a toast or two, and afterwards some good music and recitations. Mrs. Wheeler has promised to preside at the piano.

A SPECIAL feature of the dinner will be the presence of ladies. The Federation doesn't believe in the hoggish exclusion of the fair sex from such gatherings, and it wants to interest the more influential half of society in our cause. A considerable number of ladies are certain to be present, and the dinner will thus be a civilised entertainment.

MR. FOOTE had capital audiences at South Shields on Sunday, and an enthusiastic reception. Opposition was offered to the morning and evening lectures by Mr. Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society, who is now stationed at Liverpool. He was brought or sent to the Durham district to counteract Mr. Foote's week's work. Mr. Wise is a courteous opponent, so far as our experience goes, and we hope he will keep pegging away. The more life the Christian Evidence Society displays the better for Freethought. Mr. Wise didn't convert many of Mr. Foote's audience at South Shields.

THE debate next Friday (April 12th) at Camberwell Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, between Mr. William Rossiter, Principal of the Camberwell Free Fine Arts Gallery, and Mr. G. W. Foote, will be on the question: "Is Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress?" The Rev. H. B. Chapman, Vicar of St. Luke's, Peckham, who debated the same subject with Mr. Foote last year, will take the chair at 8 p.m.

MR. ROSSITER desires it to be known that the "Rev." prefixed to his name on the handbill is only a courtesy title and that he is not F.R.S., which is a misprint for F.R.G.S.

THE two lectures on Animism and Theism delivered by Mr. Foote in the minor Hall of Science, London, were attended by the *élite* of the Freethought party. Notes were taken, books of references jotted down, and this effort of the London Secular Federation is sure to be fruitful. During April, on Thursdays, the 11, 18 and 25, Mr. Wheeler will continue the course, dealing with the relation of Christianity to pre-existing religious systems. His discourses will amply repay all who attend.

SOUTH LANCASHIRE towns that desire to utilise Mr. Foote's services during his week of organisation early in May should communicate at once with him or Mr. Forder. Monday, May 6, is taken by Oldham. Saturday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday should be engaged forthwith. The N. S. S. Executive will assist in defraying the expenses.

THE Rev. H. V. Williams has been letting out against St. Paul at North Shields. The Great Apostle was "in error in saying that sin entered into the world through Adam," since man lived and sinned thousands of years before the date of the Creation Story. Neither did death enter the world by sin, for "millions of generations of plants and animals lived and died before the first human beings." Mr. Williams holds that Paul was quite at sea upon these matters. Hear, hear! But why on earth didn't

Jesus Christ give him a compass? Where is the sense of converting a man by a miracle, turning him into a special missionary, and letting him go wrong all the while?

THINGS are mending. Yes, the world does move. The *Christian World* is favorable to opening art galleries on Sunday for the people who don't care for church.

It is a sign of the times that the *Newcastle Daily Leader* gave a brief, but extremely fair, report of the Secular Conference, and not only mentioned Mr. Foote, but also the *Freethinker*, without any pious shudderings.

PETITIONS in favor of Mr. Bradlaugh's Blasphemy Bill should be sent in to as many members of Parliament as possible. Mr. Forder will supply sheets for signatures on application. Every petition sent in is a distinct advantage. We beg of all our friends to be active in this matter.

THERE is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth to say nothing of other deplorable symptoms, among the bigots of South Shields. The new School Board is more secular and democratic than the old one, and parson Bailey's little motion for the appointment of a committee to examine the children in "religious knowledge" has been defeated. There was a tie—6 to 6—and the Chairman gave his casting vote in favor of the progressists. Still, the fight is not over, for it is believed by the bigots that they can bring up a strong contingent in the form of one reactionist, and get the resolution rescinded at the next meeting. Well, we shall see. Mr. Peacock, the Freethought member, thinks there is little reason to fear.

AN interesting lecture on "Sabbatarians in South Hungary" by Dr. Gaster is reported in the *Jewish Chronicle*. Dr. Gaster has recently been over to Hungary to see the remnant of a whole population, which towards the middle of the seventeenth century passed over from Christianity to Judaism. The founder of the sect was one Simon Pecsy, who was Chancellor to the Prince of Transylvania. He had been a Catholic, then a Lutheran, then a Unitarian, and he finally, in 1630, took refuge in Judaism, taking over the inhabitants of no less than 72 villages. His land and the villages were confiscated. To avoid persecution they openly adopted Christian practices, which were thrown off in the privacy of their homes. Recent signs of toleration have induced some of these persons to openly announce themselves not Christian.

ON Sunday (April 7th) Mr. Wheeler lectures at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, on the somewhat extensive subject of "The Religions of the World."

A FRENCH investigator of Celtic mythology, M. Lizeray, discovers a doctrine of the Trinity to have existed among the Druids. He has just put forward a work in Paris entitled *La Trinité Chrétienne Dévoilée* (the Christian Trinity unveiled). We need scarcely say we consider that the origin of Christian dogmas is to be looked for rather in Egypt than in Gaul.

MRS. M. P. KREKEL, the widow of the late Judge Krekel, is highly spoken of as a Freethought lecturer in America. There is a wide field there, and the more ladies enter on the work the greater will be the harvest. In the work of conversion we reckon a woman equal to three men any day.

THE April number of *Time* contains Mr. J. M. Robertson's lecture on Mithraism, a review of which we hope to present to our readers next week.

*Le Danton* of April 1st gives its readers a sketch of the career of Mr. Bradlaugh, who doubtless has many admirers in France. We are glad to notice that our contemporary bids fair to be successful, and speaks of enlarging and appearing weekly instead of monthly as at present.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY is always eager for the fray and replies to the Rev. Doctor Wace in this month's *Nineteenth Century* in his characteristic vigorous style, and shows he knows far more about Biblical criticism than most of the professors of theology.

MR. SYMES, writing before the receipt of the first part of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, says: "The dead heroes of our cause are too soon forgotten. We wish all their memories were embalmed in good readable lives or biographies. Nothing could be more instructive to our young people, nor could we have a better method of teaching the history of Freethought."

How time flies! Here is Mr. Symes writing in the *Liberator* on "Five Years in Melbourne." It is needless to say they have been years of untiring energy, activity, and struggle.

THE *Edinburgh Evening News* gives a very good report of a lecture by Mr. Ritchie at the Union Secular Hall in opposition to a recent lecture by the Rev. John Smith on the "Inadequacy of Secularism."

A WORK on *Paul of Tarsus*, by the author of *Rabbi Jeshua* is announced.

#### A "MORAL" OLD GOD.

BELIEVERS in the Bible crowd to the front to denounce immoral literature, but they seem to forget that the Word of God contains far more filth than any other book in the world. God Almighty should be utterly ashamed of himself for writing and publishing such an obscene work. He must consider himself lucky that he is a god and not a man, or he would have been prosecuted long since for such an abominable production.

There are many chapters in his Holy Book that no minister would dare read to his congregation, and a father or mother would never think of reading such filthily literature to their children. Yet in our public schools this vile book is given into the hands of the young for their edification, and sceptics are looked upon as horrible wretches for trying to rid the schools of this wicked and immoral Bible. Children are sure to find out all the worse parts of the book; in fact, this requires very little pointing out, for the filth abounds in nearly every chapter; and yet the author is looked upon as a very moral old God, and the essence of purity and goodness.

Now let any Christian ask himself what need is there for God telling us about Noah exposing his nakedness and cursing his son for covering him up? How much wiser and better are we for knowing this marvellous event. Surely we could have done without such a piece of history. And for what reason does a moral God want to let us know about Lot offering his two virgin daughters to a lustful crowd so as to spare a couple of angels? Why need he further publish to the world the fact that these two daughters seduced their drunken father and had children by him? This "moral" old God also tells us about Dinah being ravished by Shechem, and of Reuben committing incest with his father's concubines. God also relates in his Holy Book how the young woman named Tamar deceived Judah, her father-in-law, and had twins by him, and how Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph and caused him to be put in prison for not acquiescing in her desires. We also read in God's Holy Book all about the young woman named Ruth laying down with her cousin Boaz. Certainly the couple were eventually married, but a moral old God might well do without such an unnecessary yarn as this.

God relates one or two charming anecdotes concerning his bosom friend David. How he had to get a hundred foreskins of the Philistines before he could have Michal for a wife, and how he danced naked before the ark; how he saw a beautiful woman washing herself on the housetop, and had her brought to him, so that he could commit adultery with her; and finally how David, when dying, had a young virgin put into his bed to make him feel warm. This "moral" old God tells us how Amnon, a son of David, fell sick for his sister Tamar, because she was a virgin, and "forced her, and lay with her." And although these facts are related by God in his Bible, Christians still consider that he is all that is pure and holy.

Moral Jehovah also informs us how some men shamefully abused a loose woman all night. These men, it appears, had been offered a young maiden in lieu of this woman, but they refused this offer from a kind paternal relative. The poor woman was, after being abused, eventually killed, and her body cut up into twelve pieces and sent to all the coasts of Israel. What a delightful and edifying story for the young!

In Deuteronomy xxv., 2, occurs words that are not fit to be read in a Sunday-school. Jehovah must be particularly proud of this book of the Bible. No doubt it is his masterpiece; it contains some of the choicest language possible. It refers to rape, fornication, adultery, unchastity, bastards, castration, abominable practices, in fact all the filth imaginable. Such vile stuff might be fit for God's Holy Book, but we do not care to pollute our pages with a further account of such indecent writing of this "moral" old God.

In Ezekiel iv., 12, we read that barley cakes are to be baked with dung that cometh out of man; and in 2 Kings xviii., 27, we read even something worse. In fact God's Holy Book is crowded with similar savory morsels.

As a further proof of the "morality" of the Bible God, we find innumerable instances of his chosen people being ordered in battle to kill all men, and married women and children, but keep alive for themselves all young women that have not known man by lying with them. And this "moral"

old God has thirty-two especially preserved for his own private use.

What have Christians to say to the "moral" injunction of their Heavenly Father which occurs in Deut. xxi., 11—15.

When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife, then thou shalt bring her home to thine house and she shall shave her head and pare her nail; and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

After reading this, no one can deny that Jehovah is the pink of purity.

The Bible is supposed to be the foundation of modesty and morality, but surely, after carefully reading all the obscene, vulgar and beastly verses that it contains, no one with a grain of sense and common honesty can help thinking that the author is not fit to be worshipped as a pure and holy God.

SCOFFER.

ANOTHER INFIDEL DEATH-BED.

An esteemed Spanish correspondent writes: "The town of Almeida (Spain) has just witnessed a grand spectacle, and one which its inhabitants will not soon forget. Eight thousand persons accompanied to the English cemetery the remains of an eminent Freethinker. The coffin was carried by the deceased's friends for more than three miles. The Old Jew upstairs seemed to dislike the secular burial, for during the procession he poured water as if he was rehearsing for a second deluge.

"Joseph Litran was the name of the deceased. He was a practising physician whose generosity and charity had made him the idol of the poor. He was elected a member of the Revolutionary Assembly in his youth, and took an active part in the revolution of September. In 1885, when the cholera broke out in his native town and the surrounding neighborhoods, he distinguished himself by his zeal and devotion to the sick. The Government rewarded his conduct with the Cross of Beneficencia. It is reported that the local sky-pilots, on hearing that Litran was agonising, had the impudence to rush to his house in order to try to extract a confession, whether true or hypocritical. But nothing could make the staunch Freethinker recant. The priests, infuriated, refused to admit 'a heretic' on consecrated ground; the body, therefore, was brought, as already mentioned, to the English cemetery. The Freethinkers of Almeida afterwards held a meeting, at which it was determined to build a civil cemetery, so that in future Freethinkers of that town will be carried to their last abode without being molested by those blackguards of priests."

THE GODS.

When, ope'd the portals of a temple proud,  
The priest drove far the awed and vulgar crowd,  
The uninitiated standing hushed around  
Within the untitled, consecrated ground  
As if, forsooth, their eyes profane might see  
A radiant glimpse of Present Deity!

Seclusion is the shield of gods of earth  
And heaven; the common eye,  
Admitted, mars their deity.

Shrines, holies, penetrated with a cloud,  
Of mystic incense godhead ever shroud,  
The deities celestial ne'er were seen.  
The priests' taboo and menace intervene—  
Their earthly worshippers must kiss the dust,  
And from the Hierarch take his gods on trust.

When eyes profane investigate the shrine,  
Silence and vacancy alone are there;  
The gods dissolved have melted into air,  
For stupid Awe alone sees forms divine.

B. W. BALL.

Little Tommy Ray had quarrelled with his sister and would not kiss and be friends. His aunt said: "Oh, don't you remember what papa read at family prayers this morning, that we were to forgive seventy times seven?" "Yes," replied Tommy, "but I ticklerly noticed it was to your brother, not sister."

Young Artist (displaying a picture): "This painting is entitled 'Jonah and the whale.'" Possible Purchaser: "Where is Jonah?" Artist: "You notice the rather distended appearance at the whale's stomach midway between the tail and the neck?" Purchaser: "Yes." Artist: "That's Jonah."

CORRESPONDENCE.

PALEY'S PLAGIARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In a recent number you have a paragraph anent, Paley and his illustration of "the watch." Chambers, in the *Book of Days* (vol. ii., p. 197,) thus nails this illustrious error to the barn door:—

"Many must remember the exquisite gratification experienced when reading for the first time Paley's admirably interesting illustration of the watch. Alas! that watch was stolen from Bernard Nieuwentyt, and unblushingly vended as his own by William Paley! As a fair specimen of this great and gross plagiarism, a few passages on the watch argument may be here adduced. The Dutchman finds the watch in the middle of a sandy down, a desert, or a solitary place; the Englishman on a heath; and thus they describe it:

"Nieuwentyt: 'So many different wheels, nicely adapted by their teeth to each other.'

"Paley: 'A series of wheels, the teeth of which catch in and apply to each other.'

"Nieuwentyt: 'Those wheels are made of brass in order to keep them from rust; the spring is steel, no other metal being so proper for that purpose.'

"Paley: 'The wheels are made of brass, in order to keep them from rust; the spring of steel, no other metal being so elastic.'

"Nieuwentyt: 'Over the band there is placed a clear glass, in the place of which, if there were any other than a transparent substance, he must be at the pains of opening it every time to look upon the hand.'

"Paley: 'Over the face of the watch there is placed a glass, a material employed in no other part of the work, but in the room of which, if there had been any other than a transparent substance, the hour could not have been seen without opening the case.'

The preceding quotations are quite sufficient to prove the identity of the two works (*The Religious Philosopher*, by Nieuwentyt, and *Natural Theology*, by Paley. Paley, in putting forth the *Natural Theology*, as his own, may have been guided by his favorite doctrine of expediency; but if he did not succumb to the temptation of wilful fraud, he must have had very confused ideas on the all-important subject of *meum* and *tuum*. No one can have any hesitation in naming Bernard Nieuwentyt the author of Paley's *Natural Theology*."

The above will pretty well show that Paley was more gifted than honest, and not quite a Christian pattern. DOLF.

REVIEW.

*Populäre Entwicklungsgeschichte der Welt.* Von Karl August Specht; Gotha, 1889.—We are pleased to notice that this is the third edition of the history of the world's development, by Dr. Specht, the editor of *Menschenhum*. Dr. Specht is fully competent for his task, which is simply that of popularising the conclusions of science respecting the formation and development of the world. It is written in a clear, simple style, at once suitable to young and old, and embodies the latest conclusions of spectrum analysis on the constituents of the solar system, as well as the conclusions of geology in regard to our own earth. Dr. Specht moreover does not hesitate to point out the difference of these conclusions from those found in the Bible. The work is not of the dry-as-dust order which we are so used to from learned Germans. Dr. Specht shows that the teachings of science can be made as interesting as a novel. This is the secret of his success. The work, which runs to 458 pages, is excellently printed in bold type, and is altogether a credit to the publishers.

PROFANE JOKES.

One Sabbath afternoon, a Scotch minister, in his closing prayer earnestly besought some seasonable and much-wished-for rain. Immediately rain began to fall—the first for many weeks—and for a short time it fell in torrents. Meantime the congregation was dismissed; and then came the scramble for umbrellas. One lady who had no umbrella commenced gathering the skirts of her gown over her head before quitting the church vestibule, at the same time remarking to a neighbor: "Eh, wumman, isn't it too bad o' the doctor? He might ha' lotten us hame first!"

A soldier in one of the Rebellion's battles was sitting very coolly behind one of his guns, where the shot were falling very fast. Being asked by the chaplain whether he was supported by Divine Providence, he replied, "No, Sir, I am supported by the Ninth New Jersey!"

UNCLE RASTUS IN COURT.

Magistrate (to witness): "You do solemnly swear, Uncle Rastus, that the evidence you are about to give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" Uncle Rastus: "Ye-es, yo' Honah; but cudden yo' swa' me on a smaller Bible? De siz ob dat book, sah, makes de old man nervous, 'deed it do."

Magistrate (to Uncle Rastus): "This policeman, Uncle Rastus, says he caught you stealing chickens last night." Uncle Rastus: "Yes, sah, an' I tole de gemman when he 'rested me dat de minister was comin' ter dinner de nex' day, an' I hadn't a scrap ob meat in de house. Yo' see, sah, it was a matter of religyion with me. It wouldn't do ter disappoint one of de Lawd's elect." Magistrate: "And what did the policeman say?" Uncle Rastus: "He said 'Rats,' sah. Now, yer Honah, dat man hain't got 'nuff respect' fo' de relijus side ob life ter be ev'n 'motely connected wif de majesty ob de law."

Magistrate: "You have been arrested a good many times, Uncle Rastus." Uncle Rastus: "Not lately, yo' Honah. Yo' see I 'sperienced religyion 'bout a yeah ago, an' I don' s'pose I 'se ben 'rested mo'n free or fo' times since. I 'se leadin' a diffrunt life, sah."

NOW READY.

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