

ENLARGED TO TWELVE PAGES.

# The Free Thinker

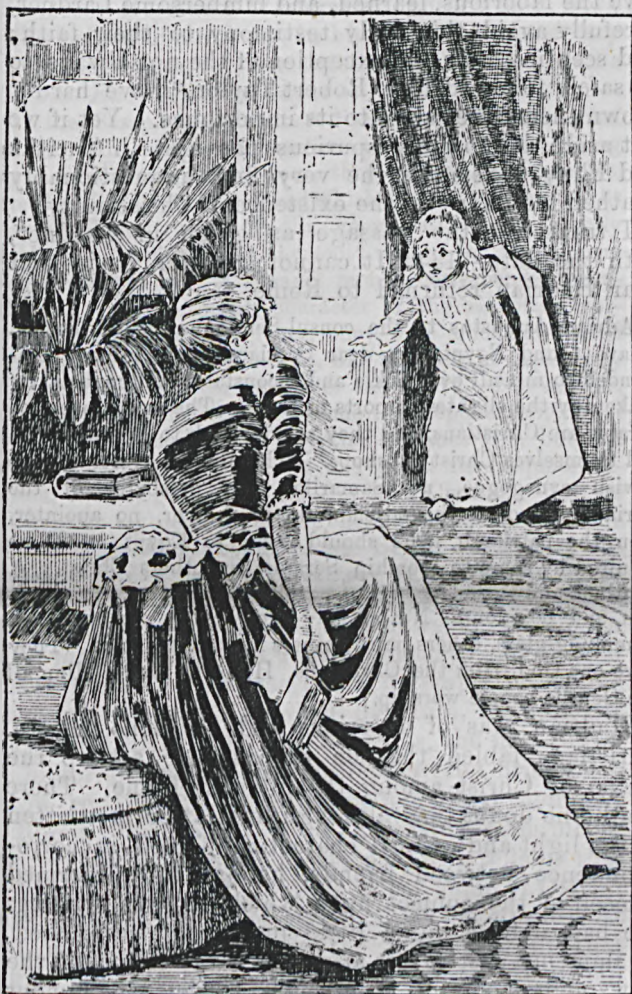
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1889.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.



## YOUTHFUL PIETY.

Maggie (who has been sent to bed alone for being naughty): "Oh, mamma, it's so dark."

Mamma: "Never mind, dear, go back to bed; God is there, and he will take care of you."

Maggie: "Well, God or no God, I'm afraid."

## CHRISTIAN HONESTY.

AMONG the men of science who grind in the mill of a bastard orthodoxy is Sir J. William Dawson, the Principal of McGill University, Montreal. The very position of this gentleman is a guarantee of conformity. He has given hostages to Bumble. His fortunes are bound up with Christianity. He has tacitly renounced the freedom which is exercised by men like Darwin, Lyell, and Huxley, who stand (or stood) outside such compromising institutions. Had Darwin been the head of a College he would never have written the *Origin of Species* and the *Descent of Man*. Had Herbert Spencer been a "Principal" he would never have had the principle to write *First Principles*, to say nothing of his *Sociology*. Had Huxley been an Oxford or Cambridge professor he would not have

been the dialectical champion of Darwinism, and the world would have missed those splendid articles and lectures with which he has enriched the literature of our age. Like a blind Samson, he would have ground, not even corn, but chaff for the Philistines, instead of smiting them hip and thigh, and occasionally slaying a whole thousand of them with the jawbone of one of their own asses.

Sir William Dawson was president of the British Association for 1886, and however his election may be regarded as a compliment to Canada, the fact is a kind of certificate of his standing as a geologist. He has written two or three volumes of scientific apology for the Bible, which have been quizzed in papers like *The Athenæum*, and his aid has been enlisted by the Religious Tract Society to give a scientific air to their series of *Present Day Tracts*, the object of which is to show that the Bible is the best of all possible books, Christianity the best of all possible religions, and the earth the best of all possible worlds for the best of all possible saints—or sinners.

One of Dr. Dawson's tracts deals with Points of Contact between Revelation and Natural Science. It is replete with a sort of dull Hugh-Millerism, which often runs into a sort of unconscious Joe-Millerism. It was said of Sidney Smith that his jokes were sermons and his sermons jokes. The second half of the charge applies to Dr. Dawson, who has caught the air of the pulpit in his scientific expositions; but the first half has no application to him, for he seems incapable of a deliberate joke, and falls into many a solemn absurdity for want of a saving grain of humor. There is something ludicrous, even to the point of pathos, in his grave attempts to sit in stable equilibrium upon two stools. He fancies himself as firm as a pyramid, but his grotesque contortions, and the swaying of his props, are enough to raise a smile on the face of a hermit. Professor Huxley is not a hermit; he has a fine, keen sense of humor; and we can imagine him in convulsions of laughter at Dr. Dawson's astonishing mixture of evolution and special creation. He has no alkali to mix the oil and water chemically, but he keeps stirring them with an orthodox stick, and bids you behold the mechanical compound; forgetting that when he leaves off stirring the two liquids will find their separate levels.

Still, it is not our purpose to follow his nonsense about "chance," as though it were a force or an entity; his childish accounting for the origin of life by the formula of "God said;" his eight-thousand-years chronology of mankind, which still has to be squared with the Bible chronology by legerdemain; his proving the reality of Noah's Flood by claiming it as a fact of Assyrian history," and reducing it to a local inundation recorded by an eye-witness! Our purpose is to show that Dr. Dawson is either very careless or very dishonest; and in such matters it is difficult to say where the one ends and the other begins.

"We find Mill," says Dr. Dawson, "in one of his last essays, after rejecting every other argument for the existence of a God, admitting that the argument from design in the universe is irresistible, and that nature does testify to its Maker." And a little further on he refers to design as "the one argument for God which is convincing to Mill."

Irresistible! Convincing! These are Dr. Dawson's epithets, and these he puts into the mouth of Mill. Probably not one in a hundred of his readers have read the Essay in question. They are, therefore, at Dr. Dawson's mercy, and he has grossly abused them. They will go about saying that Mill was a convinced Theist, who found the design argument irresistible; and they will give the authority of Sir William Dawson, who is "an honorable man"—"so are they all, all honorable men."

Now what does Mill actually say? He takes the case of the eye as one of the strongest instances of alleged design. "The particular combination of organic elements called an eye," he says, "had in every instance a beginning in time, and must therefore have been brought together by a cause or causes." And he goes on to say that "inasmuch as the elements agree in the single circumstance of conspiring to produce sight, there must be some connection by way of causation between the cause [or causes] which brought those elements together and the fact of sight." So far the admission is harmless enough. Any materialist might say "Amen." Design is as far off as ever. Mill deals with "the antecedent idea of sight," which is alleged as its final cause, and "regrets to say" that this part of the argument—the only theological part of it—"is not so inexpugnable as the former half." He expressly says that "Creative forethought is not the only link by which the origin of the wonderful mechanism of the eye may be connected with the fact of sight." There is another link, and that link is Natural Selection. Mill had not mastered this theory, but he saw that even if it were consistent with Creation "it would greatly attenuate the evidence for it."

This is what Sir William Dawson pretends to summarise by "irresistible" and "convincing." He has not even the honesty, or accuracy, to tell his readers that, even without Natural Selection, the design argument would in Mill's opinion amount to "no more than a probability." Nor does he whisper the important fact that, according to Mill's philosophy, "every indication of design in the Kosmos is so much evidence against the Omnipotence of the Designer;" that the upshot of any possible Theology is a deity of limited power and still more limited intelligence, who has other motives than the happiness of his creatures, and whose policy is such that if we look for justice in it "we find a total blank."

Sir William Dawson is a fair specimen of these Christian apologists. We have exposed his blunder or his crime, yet we do not suppose it will produce any correction in future editions of his tract. Should it do so we shall be agreeably surprised; but meanwhile we feel entitled to say that his honesty is no more "convincing" than his logic is "irresistible."

G. W. FOOTE.

Dominic (to choir leader)—The collection this morning, Mr. Hotwater, was very small, and I am sorry to say that I think the meagreness was largely due to you. Choir leader—Largely due to me, sir? Dominic—Yes. Hereafter, while the plate is being passed, I wish you would try to make a better selection of music than "Salvation's Free."

The following is extracted from an address by the Bishop of Peterborough (Dr. Magee) to a class of candidates for ordination:—"Most of you," he said, "will do well to avoid action in the pulpit. I shall never forget a raw-boned Irish curate I once had, with hands like legs of mutton. I can see him still preparing for a grand peroration and leaning over the pulpit with outstretched dependent palms, as he exclaimed, 'Paws, me brethren, paws!'"

## CHRIST AND SERAPIS.

"Out of Egypt have I called my Son."—MATT. ii., 15.

THE Emperor Hadrian (76-138 A.D.) was certainly one of the most enlightened rulers who ever wore the purple. Perceiving that the vast provinces of the Roman Empire were no less its weakness than its glory, he made it the work of his life to become acquainted with their needs and improve their resources. To obtain personal knowledge of the varied races he had to govern, he left Rome in 119, and visited all his dominions, leaving everywhere traces of his beneficent energy.

After visiting Egypt, he wrote a letter to his kinsman, Servianus, the significance of which, as a document throwing light on early Christianity, has been generally overlooked. Christian evidence writers, save the laborious, learned, and lumbering Lardner, carefully avoid this early testimony to their faith; and sceptics, with the exception of the not always to be safely followed Rev. Robert Taylor,\* have hardly shown themselves alive to its importance. Yet if we put aside the possibly spurious passages in Tacitus and Pliny, it remains the very first unquestionably heathen testimony to the existence of Christianity.

I transcribe the passage as given in Lardner, with the date—134. It cannot be later, as in that year Hadrian returned to Rome.

Adrian Augustus to the consul Servianus wisheth health. I have found Egypt, my dear Servianus, which you commended to me, all over fickle and inconstant, and continually shaken by the slightest reports of fame. The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and they are devoted to Serapis who call themselves Christ's bishops. There is no ruler of the Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no presbyter of the Christians, no mathematician, no soothsayer, no anointer, even the patriarch, if he should come to Egypt would be required by some to worship Serapis, by others Christ. A seditious and turbulent sort of people. However, the city is rich and populous. Nor are any idle. Some are employed in making glass, others paper, others in weaving linen. They have one God, Him the Christians, Him the Jews, Him all the Gentile people worship.†

Hadrian was of a serious and religious nature. Christians fabled that he proposed to set up the statue of Christ among the gods at Rome. There can be no doubt that although his letter is written in the light and cynical character affected in correspondence between friends, he had fully informed himself of the subject upon which he was writing. He had, indeed, but a little previously suppressed, at immense cost to his army, an insurrection of the Jews under one of their many Christs, the famous Barcochobas, or "Son of the Star," and could not but take the deepest political interest in the varied faiths seething in the East and thence making their way even to Rome.

No ingenuity can get over this testimony of a competent observer, that the worship of Serapis and of Christ were then closely related if not identical. Serapis in the Leyden papyrus *Θεοσεραπιδος*, i.e. Osiris-Apis—meaning the dead Apis worshipped as Osiris and so the lord of the Underworld—was the chief deity of the Egyptians from the time of the Ptolemies, who by the elevation of this deity gradually assimilated the old Osiris worship with the Greek worship of Pluto or Hades. The very core of the Egyptian

\* See *Diogenes*, p. 189-194 & 386, Truelove's edition.

† Taylor's free rendering gives better the spirit and purport of the passage, "Egypt, which you commended to me, my dearest Servianus, I have found to be wholly fickle and inconstant, and continually walted about by every breath of fame. The worshippers of Serapis are Christians, and those are devoted to the God Serapis, who I find call themselves bishops of Christ. There is here no ruler of a Jewish synagogue, no Samaritan, no Presbyter of Christians, who is not either an astrologer, a soothsayer, or a minister to obscene pleasures." [Alyptes slaves who anointed those who went to the baths,] "The very patriarch himself, should he come into Egypt, would be required by some to worship Serapis, by others to worship Christ. They have however but one God, and it is one and the self-same whom Christians, Jews, and Gentiles alike adore—i.e. money."

religion from at least 3,000 B.C. lay in the doctrine of the resurrection of their dead. For this they built their magnificent tombs and embalmed their mummies. They hoped that, even as the sun, conquered by the powers of darkness, died in the west, passed through the underworld and rose again in the east in the morning, so the human soul would, after death, by the help of the sun god Osiris, dying with him and with him overcoming the evil spirits of the underworld, rise again with him in the triumph of day. This is the great theme of the Egyptian sacred books in which can be traced the whole story of a god miraculously born, dying, and rising again from the dead. The worship of Serapis was the culmination of this old faith when Egypt had been brought under Greek and Roman sway. Probably influenced by Buddhism the worship became largely ascetic.

Professor Hermann-Weingarten, author of a work on the origin of monkery, in his articles "Monastery and Monasticism," contributed to Dr. P. Schaff's *Religious Encyclopædia*, says:—

"In the Serapis temples there lived, completely secluded from the world, whole congregations of monks. After giving away their property to the poor, they retired to the temples, where they lived upon the bread which their relatives brought to them. The purpose of this renunciation was wholly ethical—the purification of the soul; and as the whole form of the asceticism of the Serapis monks corresponded peculiarly well with the sombre character of the Egyptian worship of the dead and the graves, they were much revered by the Egyptian people; indeed, like the bulls of Apis, they were considered as incarnations of the Deity. No wonder, then, that when Christianity became the popular religion of Egypt, the peculiar form of Egyptian religious life, but one in which a deep popular instinct had found its adequate expression, silently glided into the Christian Church. Just as the Christian stylite saints of the fifth century were a mere imitation of the stylite saints of the Syrian Astarte, so the Christian monks of the fourth century were a simple imitation of the Egyptian monks of Serapis."

The monkery of Christianity, however, goes back much further than the fourth century, and indeed dates from the Therapeutæ, those contemplative monks of Egypt, who are described by Philo, the contemporary of Christ, and who Eusebius, the first Christian historian emphatically declares were Christians.\*

How readily the Egyptian beliefs found their way to Rome, despite a law of Augustus prohibiting them, we have evidence in Horace, who tells us that the beggar would ask for alms in the name of Osiris; while Juvenal says the painters of the city almost lived upon Isis, such was the popularity of that Virgin Mother of God. The Emperor Domitian gave way to public opinion, and built in Rome a temple to Serapis, and another to Isis. Though these were converted to Christ's uses, travellers may still see the ruins of a temple of Serapis at Pozzuoli and that of Isis at Pompeii.

The Christian historian Socrates relates with surprise that when the Serapion at Alexandria was destroyed (for as soon as Christianity became predominant, it could not tolerate the rival faiths from which it had sprung), they discovered the sign of the cross. This was of course the *crux ansata*, the *ank* found in the Book of the Dead, and on monuments dating 3,000 years B.C., where it stands for the sign of *life*, one of the most cherished and common of Egyptian symbols.

From the time of the Ptolemies Alexandria was the great centre of communication between East and West. There were "dwelling devout men from every nation under heaven." One-third of its inhabitants were Jews, but Jews severed from their temple, and influenced by Greek philosophy and by Egyptian religion. An eclectic faith was the natural outcome of the situation. The materials were all at hand. To dispense with circumcision must to many

have been a gospel of comfort and joy. The letter of Hadrian shows that early in the second century Christianity had not entirely disengaged itself from the Egyptian faith, and is one of the many proofs that Christianity dates, not from Jerusalem but from Alexandria.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### AN INFIDEL DEATH.

MRS. MELISSA WALKER, the mother of Mr. E. Walker, formerly editor of *Lucifer*, and now editor of *Fair Play*, died on March 31st, after a painful illness of three months. Mrs. Walker had been brought up as a Christian, but shortly before her death partly dictated and partly wrote with her own trembling hand the following Last Statement:—

"I want every one to know that I die infidel to him who they say knew all things from the beginning to the end, still suffers countless millions to be ushered into this world, knowing the course they will take, and that, when they die, failing to believe in him, they must burn through the countless ages of eternity, for what little they have done in this world. I can not believe it; for that I am shunned worse than I would be were I a leper.

"I wish as little expense as possible when I am laid to rest. I do not believe in the wicked expense now so common at funerals. I wish to be buried in the old burying ground west of town.

"I want my dear son to conduct, and speak at my funeral. I want him to read that poem, if it can not be sung. I want Mr. Harman to speak, or any one who may feel so disposed."

Her wishes were respected. Mr. Harman read "Thanatopsis," and spoke briefly at the house, and Mr. Walker at the grave read the lines we subjoin, which are those to which the dying woman referred.

Lay me low, my work is done,  
I am weary, lay me low,  
Where the wild flowers woo the sun,  
Where the balmy breezes blow,  
Where the butterfly takes wing,  
Where the aspens drooping grow,  
Where the young birds chirp and sing;  
I am weary, let me go.

I have striven hard and long  
In the world's unequal fight;  
Always to resist the wrong,  
Always to maintain the right.  
Always with a stubborn heart  
Taking, giving blow for blow;  
Children, I have played my part,  
I am weary, let me go.

Shield and buckler, hang them up,  
Drape the standard on the wall,  
I have drained the mortal cup,  
To the finish, dregs and all.  
When my work is done, 'tis best  
To let all my troubles go.  
I am weary, let me rest,  
I am weary, lay me low.

#### ANOTHER ONE.

WE learn from the San Antonio *Daily Express* of the existence of another converted Infidel. He is lecturing in San Antonio, and the following is the opening paragraph of his speech as reported by the *Express*:—"I was an Infidel for twenty years and taught disbelief in the Christian religion under the auspices of the central organization. I have been the friend and follower of Ingersoll. I have been in the prize-ring, and it was for an offence against the laws of Canada that I was imprisoned. It was in that jail in Canada that I realized the wrong of my past life. I was changed, and the change was brought about through the influence of the little tear-stained, thumb-marked Bible which my mother sent me." He goes under the name of J. S. Merriman, and now makes a speciality of preaching to the poor. We haven't the slightest doubt that he has been in jail, and if lying were a criminal offence we have no more doubt that he would be there again. When and where did the central organization of Freethought employ him, and when and where did he enjoy the high honor of possessing the friendship of Colonel Ingersoll? Places and dates are quite important in conversions of this sort.—(New York) *Truthseeker*.

\* Further evidence of the antiquity of Christian monkery may be found in *Crimes of Christianity*, pp. 48, 49.

## A SHAKY FIRM.

THE funniest people that spin round the sun  
On this speck 'mid the heavenly host,  
Are those who love God in three bits, of which one  
Is the left-handed son of his ghost.

Their broken-up Deity thinks that this speck,  
Which he claims as the work of his hand,  
Is staid as a rock, though it reels like a wreck,  
Or a pebble that rolls on the strand.

He also believes the terrestrial crust  
To be flat as a cake of the pan;  
And says that he made the first man from the dust,  
And the woman, full-grown, from the man.

This perfect first pair, quite the best he could make,  
For posterity pickled a rod;  
For, in their perfection, they thought that a snake  
Was a much safer guide than their God.

Their maker, for this, gave them both a bad time;  
He condemned all the world for their sakes;  
Established the toothache, made thinking a crime,  
And cut off all the legs of the snakes.

Four thousand years later, he saw what an ass  
He had been to kick up such a mess;  
Because his own patent, a lad and a lass,  
Had not proved to be quite a success.

However, his pride, even then, did refuse  
To un-do what his folly had done;  
He, sneakingly, therefore, arranged with some Jews  
To atone for his crime through a son.

The shuffling old humbug! His god-ship, entire,  
Was the cause of the ruin, yet he,  
To shirk quite two-thirds of the consequence dire,  
Very artfully gemmed into three!

The best of the joke is: his lordship doth speak  
As if we, and not he, were to blame;  
The height, and the depth, of his infinite cheek  
Are beyond all the reaches of shame!

If four thousand years had to pass ere old Jah  
Could develop from one into three,  
What time must elapse ere the son be a pa,  
And the father a grandfather be?

For, surely, since Jah, with his ghost and his son,  
Cannot manage to save e'en a Jew,  
'Tis time that the son, like the father, had one,  
Just to see what a grandson would do.

As young blood might wake up this business begun  
By this ghostly, but spiritless, Co.,  
In style morganic, the ghost of the son,  
Like his father's, a wooing should go.

But, not like his dad's, to an ignorant lass  
Of a barbarous tribe in the East;  
The girl of his choice should be able to pass  
An exam. in the "three Rs" at least.

A new avatar, in a land civilised,  
Where no devils with swine play the deuce,  
If properly tested, and well supervised,  
Might, to man, be of some little use.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

"Why do you speak in such a low voice?" said a member of a certain church to the pastor. "Well," he replied, "when I first began to preach they called me the shouter, because I spoke so loud. One Sunday morning, just after I finished the prayer, and while the solemn hush was still upon the congregation, a little fellow broke the silence with the question, 'Ma, is God deaf?' I have never shouted since."

He gazed around the cheerful and comfortable looking apartments, then, addressing the widow, he said:—"Your husband's been dead over a year now?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh; "over a year," "I remember reading his obituary," he said, "and I thought it contained a misstatement of facts." "A misstatement of facts?" "Yes; it said he had gone to a better home. In my opinion it would be impossible for him to find a more cheerful, more comfortable, and, with you in it, a more charming and desirable home than this." The widow smiled sweetly, then he was accepted.

## ACID DROPS.

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society has held its anniversary breakfast, and danced upon poor Mr. Caine, whose criticisms have roused the anger of all the gentry engaged in spending English money on heathen souls. Among the heathen they seem to reckon the French, for Mr. Gibson, a Paris missionary, spoke of their work in that city. There was also a live missionary from South Africa, who has actually converted a Kaffir chief and turned him into a Methodist local preacher. But a still bigger lion was the Rev. David Reece, who has just come home after a twelve years' absence in Mysore. Having come from the spot, he was able to contradict all that Mr. Caine had said. Yet, after all, he quite overlooked the fact that Mr. Caine's figures are all taken from the missionary reports.

Wesleyans have apparently a very incipient sense of humor. Mr. Reece produced "roars of laughter" by that old "wheeze" about teaching your grandmother to extract the contents of an egg. What a pity they don't go to pantomimes! How they would enjoy old pantaloons and the hot poker, to say nothing of the clown and the sausages! It would be a red-letter evening in their pilgrimage through this vale of tears.

According to the *Rock*, the fierce criticism of missionary enterprise has not lowered its finances. The Church Missionary Society has this year beaten all record by raising a quarter of a million. Yes, Carlyle was right; England contains thirty millions of people, mostly fools. The more the pious lay is exposed, the faster its dupes shell out.

A traveller writing in the *American Cosmopolitan Magazine*, says: "An Arab converted to Christianity first and foremost leaves off his three daily ablutions and drinks wine. Often, on my inquiry as to the well-being of some native who was known to me, have I received the reply: 'Oh! he's a ruined man! He has turned Christian and drinks!' After which words the speaker invariably expresses his strong feeling of disgust by spitting energetically on the ground."

The Christian tourist is a caution. Looking over Mariette-Bey's standard work on *The Monuments of Upper Egypt*, we find that one traveller, an American, "visited all the ruins in Upper Egypt with a pot of tar in one hand and a brush in the other, leaving on all the temples the indelible and truly disgraceful record of his passage." Of one tomb, that of Teh at Sakkarah, he asserts it "has actually suffered more damage at the hands of tourists during the last ten years than it had during the whole of the previous six thousand years of its existence."

Talmage broaches a new project. He wants all the sects to unite and devote the last ten years of this century to winning the world for Christ. He feels sure they will succeed, and so do we—when they unite. If the sky falls we shall catch larks without shooting them.

Why ten years? Well, Talmage has a capital reason. "Next to the figure seven," he says, "ten is with God a favorite number." Indeed! Then Mr. Cumberland, the thought-reader, would find the Lord an easy subject. But fancy an infinite being having favorite numbers, like any kitchen wench! Such numbers, of course, ought to be lucky; but would Talmage consider them a specially good investment in a lottery? We guess not.

Money will be wanted for Talmage's big project. But the Christians have it, and they must give it up all for Jesus—that is, for ministers and missionaries. We fancy we see them.

Talmage will have to get his scheme in operation by January 1, 1891, and if by that time he converts half the heathen in his own country, we shall be prepared to lay odds on his final success. Dr. Felix Adler, of New York, says that 5 per cent. of Congressmen take bribes openly, and another 10 or 15 per cent. under the rose. Suppose Talmage begins with that lot, and postpones surveying mankind from China to Peru.

The Rector of St. John's, Maddermarket, Norwich, has sent to the secretary of the Norwich branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society the following letter:—"Be so good as to send me no more notices of the meetings of a society which encourages schism and heresy by combining for spiritual purposes with those who have cut themselves off from the true branch of the Church in the land, and which tends to increase contempt towards the Holy Scriptures by making them too familiar." We quite agree with this fine old clerical bigot in one particular. The more familiar people are with the Holy Scriptures the more certain will be their contempt.

The Rev. John Mercer Muzzell, of Ashton, is committed for trial on a charge of indecently assaulting Mary Hannah Hulme, aged four years and a half, at Stockport. Females were ordered out of court before the evidence was taken.

There is trouble in the Salvation Army at Montreal. The captain recently took farewell of the corps, and a new captain was appointed. It has just been discovered that the army is 500 dols. short.

Prince Law, a negro living on the Springfield plantation, five miles from Savannah, has been reading the Bible too much. He got it into his head that he ought to offer a sacrifice, but, with the usual selfishness of religionists, he never thought of offering himself. Driving his wife out of doors, he beat his five-year old son to death with a scantling. He is now a raving maniac in gaol.

Robert B. Clark, a young engineer's draughtsman, of Peckham Rye, is another instance of the beneficent fruits of revivalism. Arrested for attempted suicide, he remarked that he had denied the spirit of God and had the Devil in his mouth. In answer to the magistrate, he said he had been "striving with the spirit of God for the salvation of my own soul and failed." People express surprise at such cases, quite unaware that the doctrines they themselves pretend to believe would have the same unhingeing tendency if actually credited.

The Easter Vestry meeting in Garvah, county Londonderry, was "a caution to snakes." There was a row over the election of churchwardens, the incumbent was accused of partiality in the chair, and there was soon a riot in the church. Vestrymen pummelled each other, and (*pace* Butler)

Each proved his side was orthodox  
By apostolic blows and knocks

One of the combatants, being knocked about too freely, drew a revolver, and the sight of the cold iron caused a calm which Christian charity was unable to produce.

There was an Easter Vestry row, too, at St. Andrew's, Northampton. No revolver was flourished, but if hard words broke bones there wouldn't have been a sound one in the whole meeting. Choice epithets flew about, picked from the good old cursing parts of the Blessed Book; and the Rev. G. Whitehead and his vestrymen vied with each other in the exchange of incivilities and abuse. The running was very close, in fact it looked like a dead heat; and it is next to impossible to declare who won the slanging match.

The Rev. Montagu Burnett, of Southend, objects to representatives of the press being allowed to report the vestry meetings. There has been a good deal of squabbling thereupon. The vicar has a personal objection to one of the reporters, but he denies having personal animosity.

Every year the Church of England finds it more difficult to get capable young men for the ministry. The result is that a large number of its recruits preach borrowed sermons, Spurgeon being laid under the biggest contribution. His sermons are "racy," and only a penny each.

The Rev. Mr. Savage, Unitarian, in the *North American Review* singularly combats Mr. Bradlaugh's unbelief by telling him that "free-minded, well-informed people no longer believe in any fall of man." The Bradlaughs and Ingersolls, retorts the *Galveston News*, will say thanks for this kind of defence of Christianity, and will come back with the query that if it had not been for Voltaire, Paine,

Huxley, and themselves, would not the "free-minded," etc., have been now believing in the fall of man as of old? Some people can have the hardiness to set up as defenders, when they don't themselves believe, but only cling to a name and a profession that enable them to maintain a certain position.

President Harrison is delighting the church and chapel folk in the United States. He is a good old Sabbatarian, and that counts for much. Now, also, he is working all the piety he can into the Washington centennial. He has issued a state document "recommending" that on Tuesday, April 30, "all the people of the entire country repair to their respective places of divine worship at 9 o'clock in the morning, to implore the favor of God that the blessings of liberty, prosperity and peace may abide with us as a people, and that his hand may lead us into the paths of righteousness and good deeds."

This document, signed by Benjamin Harrison, is countersigned by James G. Blaine, secretary of state. The latter gentleman, we believe, knows all the ways that are dark and tricks that are anything but vain in Yankee politics, and he must have thrust his tongue in his cheek (and he has a good deal of it) when he put his signature to this godly rigmarole.

A conference of Yorkshire Sunday School Unions at Osselt has been rendered notable by a paper by Miss Byles, urging that teachers should make themselves acquainted with the discoveries of science and the results of criticism. We doubt if it will add to their faith.

Miss Stirling, "the martyred prisoner of Chillon," about whom the Salvation Army and its friends have made so much fuss, was imprisoned for persistently enticing children to her meetings against the consent of their parents. This is what the Swiss authorities say, and, if it is correct, we do not know of any country that would not endorse them in their "persecution."

The sensitive ears of the French, it is stated, cannot stand the big drums of the Salvation Army. "Marshal" Clibborn has therefore decided to suppress them, and the howlings of the army in France will be henceforth accompanied by the piano and harp and other stringed instruments.

The "Church Army," following in the wake of the Salvation Army, appeals for money on the ground of "the appalling irreligion of the masses." The Army finds employment for a number of sky-pilots in holy orders, but otherwise out of a job. The chief feature of its recent conference appears to have been the "Church Army" music, led by the Church Army Trombone Soloist.

A farmer named Reed, who formerly held a pew in the parish church of Newington, from which he withdrew in consequence of a disagreement with the vicar (the Rev. G. R. Baker), showed the masculine character of his Christianity by forcibly ejecting the person who occupied his seat. The occurrence aroused the piety of the congregation, and the vicar experienced some difficulty in conducting the service.

The Rev. J. T. Butlin, Vicar of St. Clement's Parish, Nechells, Birmingham, pretends to the possession of some of those miraculous powers which Jesus Christ promised to all believers. He holds faith-healing services at the vicarage, and has cured his own servants of all sorts of disorders, real or imaginary. But, it seems, "it must be plainly understood that every case is not blessed." In one case of healing it is triumphantly recited that, as the result of prayer, a patient "lost all pain and died peacefully." One, who had a pain in his knee, cried out "Lord! this will never do—take the pain away," and the pain disappeared. It seems, therefore, to be efficacious to mingle a little expostulation with your prayer.

Lieutenant Lynch, of the United States Navy, thinks that a saline pillar capped with limestone, situated at the south part of the Dead Sea, was the object which Josephus and others supposed to have been Lot's wife. As the

pillar is about 40 feet high, they must have concluded that Mrs. Lot stretched her neck a good deal in looking back.

There is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth among the pious at Wellingborough, where the Working Men's Club is in future to be opened on Sundays. There was a long and lively discussion on the proposal, but the "chance of a dividend" carried it against Sabbatarianism.

Poor John the Baptist Freund has got it hot. Two months' imprisonment for brawling, and two months for assaulting the police. Freund it appears has been brought up at the Mansion House fourteen times. His declaration that the Lord told him to say what he did say had no weight with the Lord Mayor. The doctors say he shows no sign of active insanity. They would probably have said the same of the Prophets and John the Baptist himself. The Lord Mayor in sentencing him said it was a case of fanaticism but not of madness. We think his lordship would find it difficult to define where the one ends and the other begins.

Prophet Baxter invited General Boulanger to attend a discourse and hear himself proved to bear the number of the beast to be the ten horned leopard, and the forerunner of Antichrist. The general is so uncertain of what his own future will be that he is said to be quite anxious to get a tip from the prophet.

The Rev. D. M. Ross, of Dundee, has been holding forth to a "crowded audience" on the Battle against Unbelief. If the "crowded audience" was satisfied, it was easy to please. Mr. Ross does not believe in meeting sceptical difficulties with "a direct answer." He prefers to indulge in unlimited gush, a perfect Noah's Flood of sentimentalism, under which every mental point is obliterated. One of his remarks was that "the words of Christ were the Magna Charta of brotherhood." Maybe; we don't know. But we do know this. Jesus Christ said, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor." Has Mr. Ross carried out this article of his Magna Charta?

"Cease making creeds word-puzzles, and make them broad and simple," says the Rev. J. B. Meharry, of Crouch Hill. He wants the Churches to imitate St. Paul, who wrote some long-winded epistles, and "shape a creed within the compass of about a dozen lines" Capital! As the Frenchman said, "Splendide, vera good!" We await the result of the reverend gentleman's suggestion, and meanwhile we offer a rough draft on which the clergy may go to work.

Here it is: I believe in God the Father Almighty, the sovereign; and in Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, the half-sovereign; and in the Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, the five-pound note; and I hate their adversary, the Devil, an empty purse. There isn't much theology in this, but it formulates the real creed of most sky-pilots.

The Rev. R. F. Horton has a patent recipe for reading the Bible. It is worth a guinea a word, to the clergy. He recommends "reading prayerfully, turning up all the references, and bringing the passages together, but *not stopping at the difficulties.*"

Pious Jews have been scandalised by the discovery that one of the most highly venerated of their hymns is simply a slightly modified adaptation from the cavatina in the first act of Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro*. All the Jewish hymns were popularly supposed to be the same as sung in the temple at Jerusalem, but critical investigation shows that, like the books of Moses, they must take a much later date.

Catholic Congresses are being held in Austria, Spain, and Portugal. The wires are all being pulled with one object—the restoration of the Pope's temporal power. None of the Powers, however, will venture to interfere with Italy on the Pope's behalf. Another object of the Austrian Conference is the obtaining supreme control of national education, which is explained as including clerical supervision of teachers and the suppression of the study of the natural sciences. Here, Cardinal Manning only asks for a share in the school rates. Where Catholics are in the

majority the case is far different. Everywhere the black brigade seek for supremacy.

This is how the Rev. Myron Reed, of Denver, keeps the Sabbath holy: "I believe," he says, "in a day of rest. It is good for the wheel of the waggon, it is good for the master, and it is good for the horse. At my house Sunday is the best day in the week. If we ever have a good dinner it is on that day." But how about Mr. Reed's cook?

The millinery business is a very ancient one. It began when Mother Eve ate that apple and found she wanted a *trousseau*. Ever since then the sex has been fond of dress, and the passion is still so strong—in fact, it grows stronger with civilisation—that the Bishop of Rochester has found it necessary to rebuke the budding beauties of his diocese for over-dressing for confirmation. If they must go to extremes, the Bishop prefers them under-dressed.

Over in America the sky-pilots seem to do a little business in advertising. Anyhow, the New York *Christian Register* prints an ironical article two columns long, giving a number of wrinkles in this line. "There is," it says, "no bill-poster so effective as the minister's tongue when one end of it is loose and the other is well handled."

His name was Alfred Cook, his age was 49, he worked for Spiers and Pond, and in his leisure he was a saint. But somehow his wife had him before the beak in the Thames Police Court for assault. They had only been married nine weeks, but he had blacked her eyes, broken a paraffin lamp over her, and demonstrated his lordship in other convincing ways. But all these charges he strenuously repudiated. "My God," he exclaimed, "don't I go on my knees every night? I could not do what she charges me with." Still the magistrate believed her, and the prayerful saint was ordered to find one surety in £20 to keep the peace for six months, or in default to be imprisoned for 14 days.

Dr. Ryle, the Protestant Bishop of Liverpool, has just lost his third wife. One of his lordship's most famous tracts is entitled "Shall We Know One Another?" His answer is, decidedly yes. What a warm time he will have when he recognises all his wives, and they recognise him—and each other! Oh, what must it be to be there! At a shilling a head the show would be crammed.

Christians who object to the use of satire and ridicule when directed against their own faith can, nevertheless, revel in jibes directed against another faith than their own. Here is the pious and Conservative *St. James's Gazette*, of April 30, sneering at the small number of the Positivists, spelling the object of their devotions as "Younanity or Humahnity," and describing their revered founder, Auguste Comte, as "a somewhat weak-minded French teacher of mathematics, who was unfortunate enough to have to be confined in a madhouse after beginning to study metaphysics." This is considered smart writing, though similar language applied to the founder of Christianity would raise the hair of the editor of the *St. James's Gazette* as highly blasphemous.

Dean Goulbourn, at any rate, does not mean to give up the good old-fashioned lake of brimstone and fire. He writes a preface to a pamphlet entitled *Hell; Words from the Orthodox Side*, in which the Scriptural claims of the comfortable doctrine are enforced. Dean Goulbourn probably remembers the wise words with which Benjamin Disraeli met Dean Stanley's rationalism—"All very well; but you must remember, No dogmas, no deans."

How many Christians fear to exercise their intelligence or hear an argument against their faith! A few weeks ago a friend of ours asked a schoolmistress in the north of England to come and hear Mr. Foote lecture. "Oh," she replied, "I should like to, but I dare not. I feel sure I should become a Freethinker." Two or three days ago, one of our readers asked a Chicago man what he thought of Ingersoll. The reply was, "Well, I haven't heard him. I should like to, but I'm afraid I should turn out an infidel."

Paul said "Prove all things," but he said also that if you don't believe the right way you'll be damned. So the Christians are frightened at the sound of a new truth.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

*Sunday*, May 5, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Manchester: at 11, "The Fear of Death"; at 3, "Blasphemy: a Reply to the Bigots in the House of Commons"; at 6.30, "God Help Us."

*Monday*, May 6, Temperance Hall, Horsedale Street, Oldham: at 7.45, "Why I Reject Christianity."

*Tuesday*, May 7, Central Liberal Club, Albert Square, Staleybridge: at 7.30, "Blasphemy: a Reply to the Bigots in the House of Commons," with special reference to the member for Ashton.

*Wednesday*, May 8, Secular Hall, Rochdale.

*Thursday*, May 9, Lower Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool.

May 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. 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. 7d. 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. 8d.

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.

It being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

J. HEMINGWAY.—The remittance was sent to Mr. Forder, not to us direct; hence the delay. Accept our thanks.

P. S. (Newcastle).—Do you refer to the Rossiter-Foote debate? If so, we have no intention of printing it in pamphlet form. The report was not verbatim, but only a newspaper summary, though a very full and excellent one.

W. SWAIN.—Thanks for the report.

ON THE WAR PATH.—It is a subject we cannot pursue, as it is rather beyond the scope of this journal. We gave our opinion for what it is worth. The rules of the N. S. S. do not exclude Agnostics, nor even Theists. They only exclude Supernaturalists; that is, persons who believe in prayer and miracles, and persons who subordinate this life to speculations about another. Thanks for the cuttings.

E. MORGAN.—Your letter is a fair comment on the Rossiter-Foote debate, but as we were one of the parties you will understand why we do not insert it. We agree with you that it is amusing to see Christians giving up Hell, and priding themselves on their progress, when Freethinkers always denounced the doctrine and were "helled" for doing so.

DR. VOELKEL.—Block sent. Please acknowledge and return when done with.

W. K.—The coroner was churlish in appointing another foreman because you desired to affirm. We do not know that there is any definite form of affirmation, which is legally requisite in every court.

R. CHRISTIE.—(1) We do not remember the article you allude to. (2) Not only are there resemblances between Buddhism and Christianity, but Mithraism and the religion of Egypt furnish strong analogies. Christianity, in fact, was constructed by a process of selection from all previous systems; and that was the secret of its success. (3) Do not press the Krishna myth, for it has not been proved to be older than that of Christ. (4) There is absolutely no contemporary references to Jesus in profane writers. Supposing the passage in Tacitus to be genuine, he may be regarded as the first Pagan who mentions Christ; but the passage is very much disputed. (5) Bain's *Emotions and the Will* will help you. (6) You probably refer to the Book of the Law. See 2 Kings xxii. (7) A list of the division was printed in the *National Reformer*.

D. WOODHOUSE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

H. EGGBRECHT.—Glad to hear from recent converts. We have sent you a poster.

R. E. HOLDING.—We are obliged for the cuttings. Discussion with orthodox persons will sharpen your wits, establish you in the true faith, and help to shake the credulity of some benighted Christians.

W. C.—Always glad to receive cuttings from the religious press.

T. GRIFFITHS.—Mr. Foote was imprisoned for the 1882 Christmas Number. You might obtain a copy, at a good price, by advertising for it, but it is very doubtful. Several ordinary numbers were previously indicted, but that prosecution failed. See *Prisoner for Blasphemy*.

E. LOWE.—There is a book by Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York, that might serve your purpose. Mr. Forder would order it for

you. The paper you enclosed is hardly worth notice, but thanks all the same.

B. A.—Your sonnet is good in some respects, but your versification is faulty. You cannot expect to succeed at once. Persevere.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Always glad to hear from you. We value your appreciation of our "increasingly interesting paper."

D. BAKER (Birmingham) sends us £2 2s to assist in our effort to improve the *Freethinker* and its circulation.

G. M. D.—Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. Forder. You speak of the "idolatrous nations" as though they were relatively barbarous. Egypt, Phœnicia, and Babylon were far more civilised than Israel. The sacred number seven, the seven days' week, and other things were derived by the Jews from Babylon. What do you mean by "the phenomena of sleep?"

JOHN SISSON.—The stamps you sent have not arrived. You meant them to "support the *Freethinker*," but your intention is not shared by some enterprising member of the Post Office staff.

H. M. RIDGWAY sends five shillings for the London Secular Federation. He thinks the enlargement of this journal "is a great step and looks like progress." We assure him that in future our Tracts, of which many thousands are circulated yearly, shall be printed on better paper. We lose on them, but they do good work, and serve as an advertisement.

STUPID AWE.—See "Acid Drops."

RECEIVED.—The Liberator—Freethought—Secular Thought—Bulletin des Sommaires—Ironclad Age—The Thinker—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Open Court—Fair Play—Truthseeker—Diamond Fields Advertiser—Brighton Times—The Leeds Times—Boston Investigator—Church Reformer—Sussex Times.

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.

MR. FOOTE will begin, in our next number, a series of Letters to the Clergy. The first will be a letter to the Bishop of Carlisle on "Creation," in answer to his lordship's volume bearing that title. These Letters will be vividly written, and the epistolary style is admirably adapted to the popular taste. Those who wish to promote our circulation should order extra copies for distribution among their friends.

OUR circulation has slightly, but steadily, improved since the *Freethinker* was enlarged to twelve pages, but it will have to increase still more to cover the extra cost of production. Mr. Joseph Hemingway, of Lancaster, sends us £1 towards our expenses, and £2 2s. comes from Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham. This we mean to spend in advertising, and any sums sent us from other quarters will be spent in the same way. We should like to advertise judiciously in a dozen of the principal papers, such as the *Star* and the *Weekly Times* which we have already patronised; and the posting and other circulation of a few thousand bills would be of great service.

MR. FOOTE starts on another lecturing organising tour soon after this number of the *Freethinker* is issued. On Sunday he lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Manchester, where we hope he will discourse to fine audiences. On Monday he visits Oldham, lecturing in the Temperance Hall, and afterwards holding a conference with the members of the Branch in their own room. Tuesday is devoted to Staleybridge, Wednesday to Rochdale, and Thursday to Liverpool. This work is under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive, which doesn't mean to let Branches remain sick for want of a little medicine.

FAULT has been found with Sylvain Maréchal for his having placed Jesus Christ in his Dictionary of Atheists. We find, however, that Mr. Wheeler has got "GOD" in his *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. It stands at the top of p. 152, the article underneath being "Godwin."

WE hope to see a vigorous open-air preaching of Free-thought during the summer, especially in London, although the provinces ought not to neglect this method of propaganda. The London Secular Federation powerfully assisted in this work last year, and it will do so again if the party will only place funds at its disposal. Subscriptions can be sent to Mr. R. O. Smith, honorary

treasurer, 142 Old Street, E.C., or to us direct. They will all be acknowledged in due course.

IT is a significant fact that the two London Presbyteries have just held a Conference on "Open-air Services," and the "Scotch Spurgeon," the Rev. John McNeill, urged upon them the necessity of going out into the streets and conducting services there. He laid great stress on singing, but this is cheap and easy, and dispenses with brains in the preacher. It is also grossly unfair to other open-air speakers, who cannot make themselves heard when a Church party pitches the harmonium close by and in a Day-of Judgment voice sings "Hold the Fort" or "Safe in the Arms of Jesus."

THE East London Branch opens its lecture station on Mile-End Waste this morning (May 5) at 11.30, when Mr. Thurlow will lecture on "The Real Character of Jesus."

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, in June 1854, a Bible Convention was held at Hartford, in Connecticut. Among the speakers were Joseph Barker—then a Freethinker—Lloyd Garrison, and Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose. This lady was one of the heroines of the Abolition movement, and she had the sagacity to see that every form of slavery is founded on ignorance and superstition. She spoke out boldly against the Bible, especially in relation to the rights of women, and her remarks were so distasteful to the bigots of the other sex that they treated her with shameful discourtesy, one of them getting at the gas-metre and plunging the hall in darkness in the middle of her discourse. Fortunately the gas was lit again, and the brave lady went on as though nothing had happened, only remarking that some people "love darkness rather than light."

MRS. ROSE was complimented on her eloquence, and the reader may judge for himself whether she deserved it. Her two Addresses have just been reprinted in a handsome pamphlet by J. P. Mendum, of Boston, the conductor of the *Investigator*. They are well worth reading and might be put with advantage into the hands of liberal women who have not yet come over to Freethought. Mrs. Rose, we may add, is still living in London; a lonely widow, nearly eighty years of age, and a great sufferer, but as staunch a Freethinker as ever. Her head and face are remarkably fine.

THE seventh Conference of the German Freethinkers' Union will take place at the Elysium Hall, Chemnitz, on the 25th and 26th of May. Drs. Büchner and Specht will be present. Any thinking of attending should communicate with Dr. Specht, Gotha.

THE Universal Congress of Freethinkers will be held at Paris in September, and we dare say the N.S.S. will be represented. The conveners expect a long discussion on a variety of topics, for they date the Conference to sit from the 15th to the 22nd, or eight days. Among the topics set down for debate are the following;—Religion in the Light of History and Science, Liberty of Conscience, the Scientific Basis of Morality, Woman's Rights, Education, the Duty of Parents and the State towards Children, Legislative Reforms necessary to secure practical Liberty of Conscience, State Subvention of Religions, How best to combat Superstition.

THE last day of the Conference will be devoted to visiting the Pantheon, the monuments of Dolet, Voltaire and Diderot, and the Museum of Religions founded by M. Guimet. In the evening there will be a fraternal banquet.

THE Rev. Henry Truro Bray, minister of an episcopal church at St. Louis (U.S.), has resigned his pulpit on account of his growth in scepticism. He says there are many clergymen who share his unbelief, but for various reasons (all the same at bottom, we reckon) they do not leave the Church.

THE Rev. Minot Judson Savage, is a very advanced Unitarian. He has recently been taken to task for saying that "magnificent buildings, millions of money, thousands of men, grand enthusiasms, marvels of patient labor, prayers and aspirations, are all expended in the effort to deliver an

imaginary man from the imaginary wrath of an imaginary God in an imaginary hell."

THE *Londoner Zeitung Herman* gives an abstract of the will of a Erlebaldo Cossio, a Garibaldian and Freethinker, of Mantua, who has left 4,000 lire for a "Garibaldi Institute." He desired that the Garibaldi hymn should be played at his funeral, and for inscription on his grave the words, "Erlebaldo Cossio, Freethinker, born 19 February, 1824. Died 4 April, 1889. Pray not for the Dead."

THE report of the number of schools which attain the mark "excellent" shows the decided superiority of the Board schools over the voluntary ones. In London 528 out of 1129 Board schools are reported "excellent," but only 304 out of 1264 voluntary schools. At Birmingham out of 99 Board schools 47 are "excellent," but out of 132 voluntary schools only 23. Leicester Board schools stand very high, 33 out of 35 being "excellent," while the voluntary excellent ones are 21 out of 54. At Nottingham too, 61 out of 78 Board schools are so reported, but only 27 out of 98 voluntary schools. Newcastle has 13 "excellent" Board schools out of 18 but only the same number of "excellent" voluntary schools out of 56. At Sunderland, 17 out of 26 Board schools are "excellent," but only 5 out of 34 voluntary schools.

AN Association for the defence of the doctrines of Buddhism against the proselytism of Christians has been formed in Japan. Educational institutions with this object have been started. We hope they will educate the shrewd and lively Japanese out of both Buddhism and Christianity.

PROFESSOR BLAKE is lecturing on the Thursdays in May at the Theistic Church, Swallow Street, Piccadilly, on "Theism *versus* Christianity," his object being to show that "however good Christianity may be, pure Theism is better." Discussion is invited. This, at least, is a sign of the times.

OUR contemporary, *The Thinker*, of Madras, appears to have had a bad time, owing to lack of funds. Still it struggles on, and we hope it will overcome its difficulties. The latest numbers to hand reprint articles by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler from our own columns.

AMONG our welcome exchanges is the *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, one of the oldest Freethought papers in existence. Now and then it lays the Old World journals under contribution. The number for April 20 reprints Mr. Foote's article on the Whitechapel murders, entitled "God in Heaven."

*Secular Thought*, of Toronto, edited by Charles Watts, is not yet self-supporting, but the circulation improves, and we hope soon to hear that it pays its way and leaves some remuneration for those who gallantly conduct it. Mr. Watts is away a good deal, lecturing and debating, but "Alastor" ably occupies the editorial chair in the "boss's" absence. The last number of *Secular Thought* gives an account of Mr. Moss's victory from the *Freethinker*, and hopes that "his future service to the Secular cause will be marked by the same earnestness and fidelity to principle that to our knowledge characterised his former labors in our ranks."

JOSEPH SYMES is a candidate for the Victorian Parliament. He has—that is, he had on March 8—addressed a big and enthusiastic meeting. But his programme is awful—just like Joseph; and if he gets in on such lines we shall think the age of miracles is *not* passed. Our old colleague is a terror to all the bigots, despots, and blarney politicians in the colony: and they generally succeed in keeping a man like that outside Parliament.

THE *Leeds Times* has the fairness to insert a well-written letter from our good friend Mr. J. Greevz-Fisher on the question "Is Resurrection Credible," in answer to one of its editorials.

THE National Sunday League holds its annual meeting at St. James's Hall next Wednesday. Amongst the speakers are Mr. H. L. W. Lawson, M.P. (president), who



voted for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws; Lord Thurlow, Sir Henry Roscoe, Herman Vezin, Thomas Burt, M.P., the Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth, and the Rev. H. B. Chapman. Time 8 o'clock. Admission free.

It is now announced that the statue erected to the memory of Giordano Bruno in the Campo dei Fiori at Rome will be inaugurated on Sunday, the 9th of June, and the International Committee are organizing a series of receptions in honor of the event. The railway companies have been asked to offer facilities to deputations travelling to Rome to be present at the celebrations. The English members of the International Committee are Messrs. Herbert Spencer, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Professor Max Müller, the Right Hon. J. Stansfield, M.P., and Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.; and among the foreign members are M. Renan, Dr. Haeckel, Professor Kuno Fischer, Senor Castelar, M. Kossuth, Henrik Ibsen, M. de Laveleye, Signor Crispi, and many others. Signor Giovanni Amici, 66 via Du Macelli, is the secretary of the committee.

ON Sunday May 19th, the monument to Etienne Dolet, the French printer of Lyons who was burnt to death for Atheism at Paris on the 3rd of August 1546, will be inaugurated. The Pedestal represents the city of Paris raising Freethought. Two bas reliefs represent the arrest and execution of Dolet, while the statue above represents him with bound hands awaiting the moment of execution.

WE are pleased to notice that editions of M. C. Cilwa's French *Calendrier Republicain* will be issued both in Spanish and Italian.

THE *Independent Pulpit* for April, conducted by Mr. J. D. Shaw, shows a varied list of contents, of which we mention an article by Mr. L. K. Washburn on the Heart of Christianity, as especially pithy and logical. Dr. Edgeworth gives a curious defence of prayer which he says was one of the principal means of delivering him from superstition. The injunction of his mother to pray morning and evening he says, brought me daily face to face with the question: Do I really believe in a Supreme Being? And it was gradually forced in upon me that such a power, infinitely good and wise, could not possibly leave himself, herself or itself a subject of doubt or speculation, while, on the other hand, the world, ascribed to his workmanship, left so much to be desired in the goodness or wisdom of its arrangements. I read with avidity the Bridgewater treatises and St. Pierre's *Harmonies de la Nature*, but deism was doomed, and I came to the conclusion that to pray was to be a hypocrite and a coward. I stood and I remain self-convicted of agnosticism. In fact, I had to throw God overboard, in order to save his moral character against the damaging testimony of his imputed works.

It is stated that the French Ambassador at Rome has discovered there a famous portrait of Voltaire that has been missing for more than half a century. It represents the great sceptic in his youth.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our permanent placards, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (7) Do one of the above, or all of them if you can.

#### CHRIST AND MIRACLES.

By COL. INGERSOLL.  
[Conclusion.]

No one can overestimate the evils that have been endured by the human race by reason of a departure from the standard of the natural. The world has been governed by jugglery, by sleight-of-hand. Miracles, wonders, tricks have been regarded as of far greater importance than the steady, the sublime and unbroken march of cause and effect. The improbable has been established by the impossible. Falsehood has furnished the foundation for faith.

Is the human body at present the residence of evil spirits, or have these imps of darkness perished from the world? Where are they? If the New Testament establishes anything, it is the existence of innumerable devils, and that these satanic beings absolutely took possession of the human mind. Is this true? Can anything be more absurd? Does any intellectual man who has examined the question believe that depraved demons live in the bodies of men? Do they occupy space? Do they live upon some kind of food? Of what shape are they? Could they be classified by a naturalist? Do they run, or float, or fly? If to deny the existence of these supposed beings is to be an Infidel, how can the word Infidel "carry an unpleasant significance?"

Of course it is the business of the principals of most colleges, as well as of bishops, cardinals, popes, priests, and clergymen, to insist upon the existence of evil spirits. All these gentlemen are employed to counteract the influence of these supposed demons. Why should they take the bread out of their own mouths? Is it to be expected that they will unfrock themselves?

The Church, like any other corporation, has the instinct of self-preservation. It will defend itself; it will fight as long as it has the power to change a hand into a fist.

The Agnostic takes the ground that human experience is the basis of morality. Consequently, it is of no importance who wrote the gospels, or who vouched or vouches for the genuineness of the miracles. In his scheme of life these things are utterly unimportant. He is satisfied that "the miraculous" is the impossible. He knows that the witnesses were wholly incapable of examining the questions involved, that credulity had possession of their minds, that "the miraculous" was expected, that it was their daily food.

All this is very clearly and delightfully stated by Professor Huxley, and it hardly seems possible that any intelligent man can read what he says without feeling that the foundation of all superstition has been weakened. The article is as remarkable for its candor as for its clearness. Nothing is avoided—everything is met. No excuses are given. He has left all apologies for the other side. When you have finished what Professor Huxley has written, you feel that your mind has been in actual contact with the mind of another, that nothing has been concealed; and not only so, but you feel that this mind is not only willing, but anxious, to know the actual truth.

To me, the highest uses of philosophy are, first, to free the mind of fear, and, second, to avert all the evil that can be averted, through intelligence—that is to say, through a knowledge of the conditions of well-being.

We are satisfied that the absolute is beyond our vision, beneath our touch, above our reach. We are now convinced that we can deal only with phenomena, with relations, with appearances, with things that impress the senses, that can be reached by reason, by the exercise of our faculties. We are satisfied that the reasonable road is "the straight road," the only "sacred way."

Of course there is faith in the world—faith in this world—and always will be, unless superstition succeeds in every land. But the faith of the wise man is based upon facts. His faith is a reasonable conclusion drawn from the known. He has faith in the progress of the race, in the triumph of intelligence, in the coming sovereignty of science. He has faith in the development of the brain, in the gradual enlightenment of the mind. And so he works for the accomplishment of great ends, having faith in the final victory of the race.

He has honesty enough to say that he does not know. He perceives and admits that the mind has limitations. He doubts the so-called wisdom of the past. He looks for evidence, and he endeavors to keep his mind free from prejudice. He believes in the manly virtues, in the judicial spirit, and in his obligation to tell his honest thoughts.

It is useless to talk about a destruction of consolations. That which is suspected to be untrue loses its power to console. A man should be brave enough to bear the truth.

Professor Huxley has stated with great clearness the attitude of the Agnostic. It seems that he is somewhat severe on the Positive Philosophy. While it is hard to see the propriety of worshipping Humanity as a being, it is easy to understand the splendid dream of Auguste Comte. Is the human race worthy to be worshiped by itself—that is to say, should the individual worship himself? Certainly the Religion of Humanity is better than the religion of the inhuman. The Positive Philosophy is better far than Catholicism. It does not fill the heavens with monsters nor the future with pain.

It may be said that Luther and Comte endeavored to reform the Catholic church. Both were mistaken, because the only reformation of which the church is capable is destruction. It is a mass of superstition.

The mission of Positivism is, in the language of its founder, "to generalize science and to systematize sociality." It seems to me that Comte stated with great force and absolute truth the three phases of intellectual evolution or progress.

*First.*—"In the supernatural phase the mind seeks causes—aspire to know the essence of things, and the how and why of their operation. In this phase, all facts are regarded as the productions of supernatural agents, and unusual phenomena are interpreted as the signs of the pleasure or displeasure of some God."

Here at this point is the orthodox world of to-day. The church still imagines that phenomena should be interpreted as the signs of the pleasure or displeasure of God. Nearly every history is deformed with this childish and barbaric view.

*Second.*—The next phase or modification, according to Comte, is the metaphysical. "The supernatural agents are dispensed with, and in their places we find abstract forces or entities supposed to inhere in substances and capable of engendering phenomena."

In this phase people talk about laws and principles as though laws and principles were forces capable of producing phenomena.

*Third.*—The last stage is the Positive. "The mind, convinced of the futility of all inquiry into causes and essences, restricts itself to the observation and classification of phenomena, and to the discovery of the invariable relations of succession and similitude—in a word, to the discovery of the relations of phenomena."

Why is not the Positive stage the point reached by the Agnostic? He has ceased to inquire into the origin of things. He has perceived the limitations of the mind. He is thoroughly convinced of the uselessness, and futility, and absurdity of theological methods, and restricts himself to the examination of phenomena, to their relations, to their

effects, and endeavors to find in the complexity of things the true conditions of human happiness.

Although I am not a believer in the philosophy of Auguste Comte, I cannot shut my eyes to the value of his thought; neither is it possible for me not to applaud his candor, his intelligence, and the courage it required even to attempt to lay the foundation of the Positive Philosophy.

Professor Huxley and Frederic Harrison are splendid soldiers in the army of progress. They have attacked with signal success the sacred and solemn stupidities of superstition. Both have appealed to that which is highest and noblest in man. Both have been the destroyers of prejudice. Both have shed light, and both have won great victories on the fields of intellectual conflict. They cannot afford to waste time in attacking each other.

After all, the Agnostic and the Positivist have the same end in view—both believe in living for this world.

The theologians, finding themselves unable to answer the arguments that have been urged, resort to the old subterfuge—to the old cry that Agnosticism takes something of value from the life of man. Does the Agnostic take any consolation from the world? Does he blot out, or dim, one star in the heaven of hope? Can there be anything more consoling than to feel, to know, that Jehovah is not God—that the message of the Old Testament is not from the Infinite?

Is it not enough to fill the brain with a happiness unspeakable, to know that the words, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," will never be spoken to one of the children of men?

Is it a small thing to lift from the shoulders of industry the burdens of superstition? Is it a little thing to drive the monster of fear from the hearts of men?—*North American Review.*

## H E L L .

HELL appeared to me like a great town kitchen, with an endlessly big stove, on which were placed three rows of iron pots, and in these sat the damned, and were cooked. In one row were placed Christian sinners, and, incredible as it may seem, their number was anything but small, and the devils poked the fire up under them with especial good will. In the next row were Jews, who continually screamed and cried, and were occasionally mocked by the fiends, which seemed odd enough—as, for instance, when a fat, wheezy old pawnbroker complained of the heat, and a little devil poured several buckets of cold water on his head, that he might realise what a refreshing benefit baptism was. In the third row sat the heathen, who, like the Jews, could take no part in salvation, and must burn for ever. I heard one of the latter, as a square-built, burly devil put fresh coals under his kettle, cry out from his pot—"Spare me! I was once Socrates, the wisest of mortals—I taught Truth and Justice, and sacrificed my life for Virtue." But the clumsy, stupid devil went on with his work, and grumbled—"Oh, shut up, there! All heathens must burn, and we can't make an exception for the sake of a single man." I assure you, Madame, the heat was terrible, with such a screaming, sighing, groaning, croaking, crying, quacking, cracking, growling, grunting, yelling, squealing, wailing, trilling—and through all this terrible turmoil there rang distinctly the fatal melody of the Song of the Unwept Tear.—Heine's *Reisebilder.*

The revolt of the barmaids has begun. They have held a meeting in London, and decided to improve their condition. Excessive Sunday labor is one of their grievances. One barmaid suggested a deputation to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him to explain the relation of the Church to the fourth commandment. She said she had looked into a church that morning—to get out of the rain—and the parson told her to keep holy the Sabbath day. She wanted to know how to commence. (Laughter.) Witty girl! She ought to be in Parliament instead of snivelling Sam Smith or Colonel Sandys.

REVIEWS.

*An Open Letter to the Marquis of Dufferin.* By Eardley Norton. London: Indian Political Agency, 25 Craven Street, Charing Cross. (6d.)

*The Indian National Congress.* Same Publisher.—Both pamphlets are worth reading by all who are interested in the national movement of India.

*Against Socialism.* By Humanitas. Freethought Publishing Company. 1d. Written with the author's usual vigor and shrewdness. He is opposed to Socialism, and he points out its practical defects; though, of course, it is hardly possible to discuss the subject to very much advantage in such a small compass.

1889, *Almanach Publié par la Société Des Libres Penseurs de Liège.* E. Pierre et Frère, Rue de l'Etuve 12, Liege. —Although we have received this somewhat late, we can warmly commend it for its excellent and pithy quotations. One of its mottoes is from Oscar Beck "Aide-toi car le ciel ne t'aidera pas." (Help thyself, for heaven will not help thee.) We are pleased to notice that this freethought Almanack is in its eighth year. The price is only 15 centimes.

*Moses oder Darwin? Eine Schulfrage.* Von Dr. Arnold Dodel-Port; Zurich, 1889.—The eminent botanist who sends us this little book of 112 pages, rightly poses the query Moses or Darwin as a question for schools. Jews and Christians alike believed that the world and all its varied forms of life were created by the Word of God. Science knows nothing of creation, but conclusively shows that life has evolved from lower forms. Shall we go on teaching the doctrines of an ignorant and barbarous past, or remodel our lessons in accordance with the best knowledge of to-day? Dr. Dodel-Port ably advocates the latter course. In the first part of his work dealing with Moses he shows himself as well acquainted with the fictions of the Bible as he is with the truths of science. We rejoice that Professor Dodel-Port puts the matter so plainly. He is ably fighting in Switzerland the great battle of science against obscurantism, which is the combat of the age in every country.

*The Psychic Life of Micro Organism.* A Study in Experimental Psychology by Alfred Binet. Translated from the French by Thomas McCormack, Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1889.—Those who are interested in the study of biology and the difficult questions of instinct and reason, mind and matter, may do well to turn to the facts and arguments here given by Mr. Alfred Binet. He holds and does much to demonstrate that psychological phenomena, the existence of something akin to will and mind in the higher organisms are found in the very lowest forms of life. He endorses in fact the remark long since made by quaint old Montaigne that "the same desires stir mite and elephant alike." Not only do such organisms as infusoria guide themselves in swimming about, avoid obstacles, seize their prey and feed, but there exist microscopic organisms which lead a life of habitual isolation, but which "understand how to" unite for the purpose of attacking prey at the desired time, thus profiting by the superiority which numbers give. The chapters on fecundation are most interesting as showing the analogies of the spermatozoid and ovule with those of the male and the female higher animals. M. Binet indeed holds that "Sexual selection acts among spermatozooids just as among all animals; it is the most agile and the stoutest spermatozoid that first penetrates the ovule and effects fecundation." Altogether the author shows that the study of micro-organisms is a branch of science at once extremely interesting and extremely complex. Our American friends of the *Open Court* deserve credit for their enterprise in translating such a work, and for the excellent style in which it is produced.

Sam Jones, the revivalist, has been fishing for souls in San Francisco. He claims to have caught twelve hundred. That is disputed, but there is no dispute about the twelve hundred dollars he got for the job.

A Peterborough farmer, looking through his Bible on Good Friday, found an old ten-pound Bank of England note—probably a stopped one—dated November 10, 1832. Since then there has been a lot of Bible-opening all through Lincolnshire and the Midlands, but we haven't heard the result. Very likely there has been a good deal of extra swearing.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CIRCULATING IT.

THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Many of your readers no doubt have the same facilities of access to the current year's "Home Counties Directory" as myself, and can therefore afford themselves the same fun in anticipation as the writer, viz., by purchasing four copies of "The Freethinker" and four 1d stamps, searching out addresses and forwarding same to some quiet somnolent country town, thereby astonishing the natives. I generally select hairdressers or bootmakers, knowing their passion for garrulity, and then think of the effect on receipt. The hairdresser perhaps shedding tears of anguish on a customer's cranium, as he thinks of the wrecking of his pet superstition; or picture to oneself the bootmaker, with teeth firmly set, savagely whacking the sole leather, as some slight satisfaction at having the third part of his deity held up to ridicule. But, anyhow, it makes them think, and I know they must talk.

F. A.

WHAT IS A PREACHER?

- A preacher is a pendulum wagged by a creed.
- A preacher is a puppet who closes his eyes and ears to reason's "open questions."
- A preacher is a noisy jack, braying on the highway of thought as the car of philosophy passes.
- A preacher is an astronomer trying to eclipse the sun of reason with the shadow of hell.
- A preacher is an insurance agent offering life policies payable after death—the premium always payable in this world.
- A preacher is a keeper of a toll-gate on heaven's highway.
- A preacher is a vulture plucking geese.
- A preacher is a member of a board of trade dealing in futures for pay.
- A preacher is a scarecrow, to frighten children and dupe the timid.
- A preacher is a ram's horn of Gideon, to make a noise.
- A preacher is a clock set to run backward.
- A preacher is a pilot in a fog—he doesn't know any more than the passengers.
- A preacher is a doctor of divinity when it gets sick.

GEORGE ENDERTON.

PROFANE JOKES.

A clergyman named Fiddle refused to accept the title of D.D., because, he said, he didn't want to be called the Rev. Ichabod Fiddle, D.D.

Wife: "My dear, what is the subject of to-morrow's sermon?" Minister: "The 'Fivolities of Modern Dress.'" Wife: "You must postpone it. I shall wear my new bonnet to-morrow for the first time."

A hungry guest having commenced his dinner before the host had said grace, the latter altered his usual supplication, thus: "For what we are about to receive, and for what Mr. B. has already received, may the Lord make us truly thankful."

In the choir of Rochester Cathedral there is a handsome brass eagle for the lectern. On one occasion a special service was being held, and the congregation was so large that "every vacant seat was occupied." Two women were conversing afterwards about the service, and one of them asked the other if she got a good seat. "Oh, yes," said her friend, "I was fortunate enough to get a capital seat, for I sat next the fowl."

CHRISTIAN AND EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY.—"There is indeed hardly a great and fruitful idea in the Jewish or Christian systems which has not its analogy in the Egyptian faith. The development of the one God into a Trinity; the incarnation of the Mediating Deity in a virgin, and without a father; his conflict and his momentary defeat by the powers of darkness; his partial victory (for the enemy is not destroyed); his resurrection and reign over an eternal kingdom with his justified saints; his distinction from, and yet identity with, the uncreate incomprehensible Father, whose form is unknown, and who dwelleth not in temples made with hands—all these theological conceptions pervade the oldest religion of Egypt. So, too, the contrast and even the apparent inconsistencies between our moral and theological beliefs—the vacillating attribution of sin and guilt partly to moral weakness, partly to the interference of evil spirits, and likewise of righteousness to moral worth and again to the help of good genii or angels; the immortality of the soul and its final judgment—all these things have met us in the Egyptian ritual treatises. So, too, the purely human side of morals, and the catalogue of virtues and vices, are by natural consequences as like as are the theological systems. But we recoil from opening this great subject now; it is enough to have lifted the veil and shown the scene of many a future contest."—Prof. John Pentland Mahaffy, *Prologomena to Ancient History*, pp. 416, 417; 1871.

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