

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. IX.—No. 22.]

SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 1889.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—II.

ON "THE BELIEVING THIEF."

To the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

SIR—You are one of the most popular preachers in Christendom, you gather round you a congregation of five thousand men and women, and your printed sermons are said to be circulated in every part of the world where the English language is spoken. Nature has endowed you with a clear musical voice; not the orator's voice, which is capable of expressing every emotion, from the soft whisper of pity to the thunder of denunciation, but the preacher's voice, fitted to express the subdued and monotonous feelings of Protestant theology. This gift, combined with a fair command of homely English, and a Saxon capacity for work, accounts for your remarkable success. You are not an evangelist of new ideas. You have not to create an appetite for what you supply. The material upon which you work was produced in unlimited quantities before you were born. Orthodox instincts, orthodox sentiments, and orthodox ideas, were already in existence, and you have only played upon them. Out of the five million inhabitants of London, who are mostly Christians by training, temperament, and profession, you have collected five thousand. This proves you an able competitor against other preachers, but it gives you no position as a leader of thought or a general in the army of progress.

You have a certain vein of facetiousness, and a reputation for telling "good stories," but your gifts in this direction are heightened and exaggerated by contrast. The pulpit is expected to be dull, or at least decorous, and feeble witticisms from such a quarter are apt to pass as potent; just as a somersault, which is commonplace on the part of a street arab, would be comic if cut by a clergyman.

Your private life is said to be exemplary. I have no means of judging, but I am content to believe; as a man I value my own character, and I am ready to respect yours. But I am unable to reconcile your mode of living with your profession. I cannot understand how anyone with a fair amount of sincerity can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, and above all the gospel of the Sermon on the Mount, and at the same time maintain an establishment like yours. When I hear that your residence is one of the finest in the south of England, that your grounds are magnificent, that your live stock rivals the Queen's at Windsor, that you keep a splendid carriage and several fine horses, that your table is well appointed and your cigars are excellent, I am positively amazed at your imitation of Christ. At such a rate the Cross is easy to be borne. When I consider that you fully enjoy all the good things of this life, which must be provided by the labor of others, and that you have in addition the glorious assurance of a reserved seat in Paradise, I cannot help reflecting that there is after

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all a profound truth in the text that "godliness is great gain."

What a difference there is between the founder of Christianity and its modern exponents! He had not solved the problem of how to make the best of both worlds. He drank to the dregs that bitter cup which has furnished them with an easy theme for the cheapest eloquence. He died upon the Cross, and they live upon the Cross. I am not one of his devoted admirers, but I turn from them to him with a sense of relief. He looks pathetic, tragic, sublime, in comparison with those who coin his blood into golden shekels.

Nor am I able to reconcile your enjoyment of life with your belief in predestination, hell, and the eternal perdition of the majority of the human race. You do not merely accept these doctrines; you cling to them, and you denounce your brethren who would desert them for a sweeter faith. You see multitudes of your fellow-creatures dancing along "the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire." The friend whose hand you clasp to-day may be in Hell to-morrow. Your own children may fall into the place of torment. Yet you smile, you crack jokes, you grow fat, you contract the rich man's disease of gout. Is this consistent? Is it honorable? Is it humane? If I believed your frightful creed I hope I should have the decency to be solemn.

When your gout is acute you show your trust in God, and your belief in the efficiency of prayer, by taking a holiday at Mentone. You leave the congregation to pray for your recovery while you try the effect of the air and sunshine of the Mediterranean. Does it not occur to you that an Atheist might get better in such circumstances? Why is it that God does you more good in the South of Europe than in the South of London? Why is prayer offered up in one place and answered in another? Why does God help you, and give no relief to the suffering thousands within a mile of your Tabernacle, who do not earn a splendid income by preaching "Blessed be ye poor," who must bear their afflictions in the fetid atmosphere of narrow streets, and languish and die for want of the resources which keep you out of heaven.

This is a long exordium to a brief letter. Let me now pass to the sermon I wish to criticise. It was preached on April 7, and is therefore an expression of your ripest wisdom. Its title, "The Believing Thief," attracted my attention. There are so many believing thieves, and I wondered which of them you selected. Six years ago I fell among thieves myself, and they were all believers. An Atheist was a *rara avis* in Holloway Gaol. There were Catholics and Protestants by the thousand, during the twelve months I enjoyed a seasonable relish of Christian charity, and I was fully prepared to meet a believing thief. You have introduced one. You select the first on record, the thief who begged a favor of Jesus on the cross. He was the very first Christian who ever entered heaven,

and you "think the Savior took him with him (I don't admire your grammar) as a specimen of what he meant to do." This fortunate gentleman, you admit, was a convicted felon, and perhaps a murderer, but he believed on Jesus at his last gasp, and his soul soared away from the cross to the realms of bliss and glory. The other thief missed his opportunity, and that one mistake made all the difference between heaven and hell. It seems a heavy penalty for a single blunder, but everyone knows that the difference between heaven and hell is no greater than the difference between divine and human justice.

I cannot but admire the airy manner in which you skim over the discrepancy in the gospel narratives. Luke is the only one who relates the incident of the believing thief; the others represent both thieves as mocking Jesus. But instead of seeing a gross contradiction, as you would in any other history, you suppose they both mocked Jesus at first, and one of them was converted while engaged in this pastime. Such a method of interpretation would make a harmony of the wildest discord.

According to Luke, Jesus said to the believing thief "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." You dwell upon *To-day* with "damnable iteration," and you affirm that the converted felon was in Paradise that very evening. You decline to speculate "as to where our Lord went when he quitted the body which hung upon the cross," though you must be aware of the importance of this problem. The Creeds say that he "descended into hell." This was the opinion of the greatest Fathers, it is endorsed in the Church of England articles, and it is countenanced by Peter and Paul. You shun the discussion of this point, and indulge your foible of dogmatism. Jesus died an hour or two before the thief, and "during that time the eternal glory flamed through the underworld, and was flashing through the gates of Paradise just when the pardoned thief was entering the eternal world," so that the Savior and his "specimen" went through the pearly gates together. You add that "We know Paradise means heaven, for the apostle speaks of such a man caught up into Paradise, and anon he calls it the third heaven."

Your uncritical audience may swallow this as gospel, but I can hardly suppose you so ignorant. You must be aware that the matter is not so simple. Learned divines have written at great length on the subject, and although their speculations are not infallible, there is still less infallibility in your dogmatism. Take up so accessible a book as Bishop Beveridge's *Ecclesia Anglicana Ecclesia Catholica*, read his chapter on the third Article, consult his learned and voluminous footnotes, and then ask yourself whether it is honest to veil the controversy from your congregation, and to decide it for them peremptorily as though you were an independent oracle of God?

Learning apart, sir, there is another reason against your dogmatism, and that is the language of Scripture. If Jesus went to heaven the very evening of his Crucifixion, did he descend again to re-animate his body on the Sunday morning? And why did he undertake two such journeys? Was it simply to fulfil his promise to the believing thief? Or was it to settle with his Father the arrangements for his public ascent?

Not being inspired, you may decline to answer these questions. But there is another question to which I may demand a reply. According to your assertion, Jesus went up to heaven on the Friday evening; but according to John (xx., 17), Jesus met Mary Magdalene in the garden on the Sunday, and when she would have approached him, he cried, *Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father*. If Jesus did not speak these words, we may as well sell our Bibles for waste-paper; if he did speak them, you have been preaching a falsehood. I know the tricks of your

craft, but I refuse to be deceived. I take a sentence in its plain and grammatical meaning. "I am *not yet ascended* unto my Father" is as clear a sentence as ever came from the lips of God or man. If Jesus had visited "the third heaven" before, he would have said "I am now descended from my Father." You may answer (what will not a minister answer?) that the "I" refers to Christ's *body*, but it is flying in the face of common sense. "I" may mean soul and body, or soul without body, but it cannot mean body without soul.

Three-fourths of your pretty rhetoric is thus exploded. The believing thief was not in paradise with Jesus that very day. Forty days elapsed according to one narrative—and you must accept it—before the Lord ascended; and during that time the believing thief must have hung about "the pearly gates" waiting for his Redeemer.

Let me press the dilemma. If Jesus said "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," he was mistaken, and if he was mistaken then, he may have been mistaken on a hundred other occasions. If Jesus did not say it, Luke is mistaken, and if Luke was mistaken once, he may have been mistaken often. Nay, if Luke was mistaken, Matthew, Mark, and John may have been mistaken; and your infallible Scripture is like a dilapidated spider's-web; or, if you prefer the simile, like a leaky kettle, which lets out the water of inspiration and puts out the fire of belief.

(To be concluded.)

G. W. FOOTE.

THE DYING MOTHER'S LAMENT.

"OH God, it is a dreadful night—how fierce the dark winds blow,

It howls like mourning *banshee*,¹ its breathings speak of woe;
'Twill rouse my slumbering orphans—blow gently, oh, wild blast,

My wearied, hungry darlings are hushed in peace at last.

"And how the cold rain tumbles down in torrents from the skies,

Down, down, upon our stiffened limbs, into my children's eyes;
Oh, God of Heaven! stop your hand until the dawn of day,
And out upon the weary world again we'll take our way.

"But ah! my prayers are worthless—oh! louder roars the blast,

And darker frowns the pitchy clouds, the rain falls still more fast;

Oh, God! if you be merciful have mercy now, I pray—
Oh, God! forgive my wicked words, I know not what I say.

"To see my ghastly babies—my babes so meek and fair—
To see them huddled in that ditch, like wild beasts in their lair;

Like wild beasts! No! the vixen cubs that sport on yonder hill

Lie warm this hour, and, I'll engage, of food they've had their fill.

"Oh, blessed Queen of Mercy, look down from that black sky!
You've felt a mother's miseries—then hear a mother's cry;
I mourn not my own wretchedness, but let my children rest—
Oh watch and guard them this wild night, and then I shall be blest!"

Thus prayed the wanderer, but in vain!—in vain her mournful cry.

God *did not* hush that piercing wind, nor brighten that dark sky;

But when the ghastly winter's dawn its sickly radiance shed,
The mother and her wretched babes lay stiffened, grim and dead.

JOHN KEEGAN (*Irish Poet*.)

School inspector at girls' school: "What did the Apostles do when they were upon earth?" Little girl: "Married the Epistles, sir."

¹ *Banshee*—A spirit, or being of Irish superstition, which comes to mourn the death of individuals destined for the grave.

CHRIST OR CHREST.

THE term Christian, as everyone knows, is commonly derived from the Greek "Christos" which signifies "anointed" a term especially applied to the Jewish Messiah as the anointed king of Israel, although Jesus was never anointed, either as high priest or king. It is by no means so generally known that there was another and very similar term of totally different signification, viz., *Chrestos*, good, pleasant, gracious, kind, which, in the early days of the Church, was often confounded with it, and which survives in the French form *Chrétien*.*

In 1 Peter, ii., 3, we read, "The Lord is gracious" (*Χρηστός ο Κύριος*), and this play on words is continually found in the writings of the early fathers. In his first Apology (circa 150), Justin, called the martyr, says, "We are accused of being Christians, and to hate what is excellent (Chrestian) is unjust.†" Justin, too, quotes from an unknown source, "Be ye good (*Χρηστοί*), even as your Father is good (*Χρηστός*)" Clement of Alexandria also, in his *Miscellanies*, written about the end of the second century, says, "Now those who have believed in Christ, both are, and are called *Chrestoi* (good).‡" Tertullian, too, a Latin father, who is the first to refer the term Christian to its connection with anointing, in his address *Ad Nationes*, early in the third century, says, "Even when by a faulty pronunciation you call us 'Chrestians' (for you are not certain about even the sound of this noted name), you in fact lisp out the sense of pleasantness and goodness.§" Lactantius, also a Latin father, says "They, ignorant, by the change of a letter, are accustomed to call him Chrestus."|| This was written fully two hundred years after Suetonius had spoken of Claudius having, impelled by Chrestus, driven the Jews out of Rome for constantly rioting, and even at the end of fourth century Jerome (in Gal. iv., 22), claims that they are good because *chrestotes*.

It thus appears that the Christians of the first four centuries were known as Chrestians, and were accustomed to get the credit of being good and gracious because the word *christos* when uttered had a similar pronunciation to that of *chrestos*. The name Christian, be it observed, was originally, like that of "Quaker" or "infidel," a term of reproach. It was exactly equivalent to "Greaser," and probably referred not to any personal Christ, but to their custom of anointing with oil. The name, being in Greek, could not have been originally taken or given by Palestinian Jews. Indeed, we read in Acts xi., 26, that the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

If we ask why the Latin fathers when they translated *Ἰησοῦς* into *Jesus*, did not also translate *χριστός* into *Unctus*, we shall see reason to surmise it was because of the additional meaning attached to the term. And this other meaning was really primary and pre-Christian. Dr. J. B. Mitchell, to whose valuable little book on *Chrestos* I must express my indebtedness, states that "Careful search through the Christian inscriptions, numbering 1,287 in the fourth volume of Böeckh's *Corpus Inscriptorum*, published in 1877, fails to discover a single instance of earlier date than the third century wherein the word Christ is not written Chrest or else Chrest." No epithet was more naturally applied to the honored dead than that which implied that they were good, gracious and

benignant. The term became analogous to that of "sainted one." *Chrestos* was indeed the distinctive title of Serapis or Osiris considered as the Lord of the Underworld, when the Greek conquerors of Egypt by this worship assimilated the old Osiris faith with the Greek worship of Hades. It is the Greek equivalent of the Egyptian *nofri* or "excellent" which is found on most Egyptian tombs together with the cross and circle, the sign of life. Among the Egyptians *οι Χρηστοι* were "the justified."¶ The Gnostics, the eclectic religionists who antedate the rise of Christ, also worshipped Chrestos, "the good god," a being quite distinct from either Jehovah or the Messiah of the Jews. Christianity, as a system, is an amalgam of Judaism, Mithraism and Osirianism in its latest form as the worship of Serapis. As the Messianic idea developed in Alexandria, the Jewish Hagadists who, like the Christian fathers, were fond of playing upon words, gradually amalgamated their expected Messiah as Christos, the anointed, with the Gnostic Chrestos, the good**; as also their Memra or Word with the Logos of the Platonists.

It would be going too far to say that Christianity (like the claim of supremacy by the Romish Church) is founded on a Greek pun, but there can be little doubt that this double meaning not only greatly helped to popularise the Christian name, but to modify the conception of the Christian religion. The Christ who in Mark appears mainly as a dangerous wonder-worker—drowning pigs, cursing figs, and requisitioning a colt to fulfil a prophecy, in the much later John has developed into a more gracious and amiable ideal and finally is taken, without any historical warranty, as a model of all that is good and excellent. Another instance that much lies in a name.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE JEWS.

FROM the Jews the Christians derived nearly all that is valuable in their religion. They have added much of pernicious fable. So far from honoring Jews as elder brethren, Christians slandered and persecuted them, with scarcely a pause of ferocity, for a full thousand years, and with varied injustice for some centuries more, in the greater part of Christendom. How many English martyrs has England cruelly slain, in parallel to the single Jewish martyr (if such Jesus was) with whom Christians taunt the entire Jewish nation scattered abroad before Jesus was crucified! In my opinion (and therefore, I cannot doubt, in Jewish opinion), the four Gospels are one long slander of the Jews; but that is of secondary importance, in comparison to the incessant wickedness of mediæval Christianity, and the tenacious gripe of unjust Christian laws, which the efforts of Free Thinkers have scarcely at last wrenched away.—*Prof. F. W. Newman.*

TUESDAY'S London *Echo* printed two paragraphs together. One was about the hair of North American Indians, which grows over ten feet long. The other was longer still. Yale University, in 1759, had only five students who were Church members, while nearly half hold membership to-day; and Princeton, in 1813, had only three professing the Christian faith, while now it has about one-half, and among them the best scholars! Our contemporary has been hoaxed. A newspaper editor who seriously believes that there were, at any time, only three professed Christians in any American University, is really too simple for this wicked world. Still, the paragraph implies that Freethought is declining in America, and such a "glorious" fact (though it isn't true) excuses a little imbecility on the part of rejoicing Christians.

* See my article "Christ and Serapis," *Freethinker*, May 5. See Sir G. Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii, p. 69.

** The Epistles ascribed to Paul copy many Gnostic terms. Thus they speak of the depth of the riches both of Sophia and the Gnosis of God, and profess to reveal the mystery hid from the Æons that Christ is the Pleroma of the Theotetos, etc.

* Our own "Chrestomathy" comes from the same root—the X P or X P (joined together as a monogram), was put on the manuscripts to signify "good," hence a selection of passages was called a chrestomathy. The so-called monogram of Christ, taken by Constantine as the *labarum*, was this same pagan sign.

† Bk. i., chap. 4, p. 9, vol. ii. Ante Nicene Christian Library.

‡ Bk. ii., chap. 4, p. 11: vol. xii., Ante Nicene Christian Library.

§ Chap. iii., p. 422: vol. xi., Ante Nicene Christian Library.

|| Bk. iv., chap. vii., p. 222: vol. xxi., Ante Nicene Christian Library.

ACID DROPS.

Christian bigotry has succeeded at Middlesborough. A majority of the County Council has decided that its vote to build a public crematorium should be rescinded. Thus the decent disposal of corpses is defeated, and the gospel of rot triumphs. The Middlesborough Freethinkers should make use of this phrase. Christianity in their town is literally "the gospel of rot."

So bitter is the bigotry of the orthodox party at Middlesborough that Councillor Snow has had to resign. In his letter to the town clerk he says "the treatment I have been subjected to on account of my action on the cremation question has compelled me to take this step." He has been asked to allow himself to be renominated, but declares that he cannot afford to hold a position which exposes him to the risk of ruin for merely acting on his convictions.

Well-nigh incredible nonsense was talked at the meeting in the Temperance Hall on Friday, May 24th. The chairman, Dr. Ellerton, J.P. (Jack Pudding), read a letter from the Catholic Bishop of Middlesborough protesting against so "wicked and revolutionary a change" as cremation. Dr. Ellerton himself protested against the assertion that cemeteries were sources of contagion! Then he went on to say that burial was a Christian method, while cremation was Pagan. He quite forgot, or perhaps he didn't know, that the early Christians were generally cremated, according to the Roman custom.

Dr. Ellerton was followed by the Rev. J. S. L. Burn, the Vicar of All Saints'. He looked upon cremation as "an act of brutal violence," as though it was proposed to make cremation compulsory. "No man," he said, "who expected that the very identical body we laid in the earth would be called again from the grave at the resurrection, as Jesus told us, could be in favour of cremation." What a clerical jackass is this Burns, who objects to burning! The four-legged jackass whose mouth the Lord opened was nothing to him. Fancy an "educated" man at this time of day imagining that corpses lie in the grave until the resurrection! Why, as the gravedigger in "Hamlet" says, even a tanner will only last you nine years. Bodies decompose in the grave, exactly as they do in a crematorium; only the one process is quick and clean, while the other is slow and dirty. Where are the corpses of all the countless millions who have been buried during the last fifteen hundred years? Gone to dust, vanished into the elements. If there is to be a resurrection, it must in any case be a miracle. But the Middlesborough Christians don't see it; it is too far off their noses. So they howled down all opposition, and carried their resolution. Dozens of hats were flung up, and one old lady waved her open umbrella till it broke.

We called attention, a few weeks ago, to a sapient utterance of the Archdeacon of Montgomery, who stated that God's judgments, in the shape of death, accident, and loss of live stock, had fallen upon the anti-tithe agitators. Since then the Rev. R. Temple, one of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools, has addressed a letter to the Archdeacon, in which he protests against such foolish teaching, and declares that if it should receive the authoritative sanction of the Church of England he would "leave her communion that instant." This protest is very natural, but after all the Archdeacon's teaching is warranted by scripture.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, says the Bible, and perhaps this accounts for the epidemic illness among the bishops. Ripon is laid up, Peterborough is gone to the continent, Durham is back but still very weak, and St. Albans is dangerously ill at Danbury Palace. Prayers are *not* being offered up for their recovery. The lower clergy see a chance of promotion.

Talmage has a project for converting the world in ten years. We have already criticised it, and we don't want to repeat ourselves. We must not forget to state, however, that the New York *Independent* thinks the project fantastical. Before it can succeed the Church must "turn over a new leaf of generosity." Talmage's Tabernacle has 4,126 members, and during last year the whole blessed

lot subscribed £30 to home missions and £27 to foreign missions.

Talmage says the Christians *may* do it, for they have the men and the money. "Right you are," reply his congregation, "here's threepence." And having shelled out the three bawbees, they await the world's conversion. It is to be done in ten years, and will cost them half-a-crown each! Cheap salvation!

According to a paragraph in the newspapers, Mr. Charles Spurgeon, son of the great Spurgeon, has been thrashed by a jealous husband who resented the preacher's too marked attention to his wife. The flirtation is said to have been carried on during the voyage across the Pacific. Perhaps the good living, fresh air, and idleness made the preacher frisky.

The United Methodist Free Churches have been lamenting a great decrease in the number of Sunday scholars and teachers, and the churches have been recommended to consider the causes of the decline.

At the meeting of the London City Mission it was stated that if all the churches were filled with as many as they could accommodate there would still be a million inhabitants unprovided for.

The *Law Times* discusses the question whether the new Oaths Act will apply to children who either do not understand the nature of an oath, or for other reasons do not wish to be sworn, while at the same time they cannot be said to object either that they have no religious belief or conscientious objections to taking an oath. Common sense would say that since men are no longer to be compelled to go through the mummerly, neither should children. If the law is not clear upon the subject, it should be made so. Indeed, the question suggests that the sooner Christian nations obey the injunctions of their Master and "Swear not at all," the better.

It sometimes costs more to get missionaries home from heathen lands than it cost originally to send them out. The Revs. Taylor, Edwards, and Hooper, who were captured by Bushiris and held for ransom, have been released on the payment of £1,000, the sum demanded by their captors, in default of which the cannibals of Zanzibar would have eaten them. As an exchange remarks, it is a high price for meat.

J. Christ is the name of a man who keeps a wayside house on the San Bruno Road, San Francisco. When he turns water into wine, the process is not regarded as miraculous.—*Freethought*.

Stewart Headlam will have to answer the Rev. C. Musgrave Brown, of St. Luke's Church, Liverpool. This gentleman has been "slating" the Church and Stage people. He reckons four kinds of houses to be shunned—public-houses, bawdy-houses, workhouses, and play-houses. The stage only flourishes, he says, when the Church is corrupt. Well, in that case, the Church must be rotten.

Mr. Brown's four houses are really only three, for churches and theatres are both play-houses. The clerical tribe all hold forth in artificial tones. Why? Because they feel that if they went through their parts in a natural tone of voice they would break down through laughter. When a man talks professional nonsense he must do it with a professional face, or the cat would be out of the bag in a minute.

Cardinal Manning preached at Bayswater on Sunday, and remarked in the course of his sermon that "Christianity was the making of England, and nothing but the loss of Christianity can unmake England." Gentlemen, there's nothing like leather.

They are speculating already who will be the next Pope, so we may conclude that Pecci is pegging out. Cardinal Manning is mentioned, but he is a very old man, and may die before the vacancy occurs.

At Queensbury a village near Bradford, Yorkshire, Mrs.

Sharpe, wife of a music teacher, was struck by lightning, on Thursday, and killed. Many sheep and cattle were killed and much damage to property was caused by the storm in other parts of the country. The way of the Lord is perfect, and his merciful Providence extends over all his works.

The Rev. David Williams, described as "formerly a clerk in holy orders," but "once a priest, always a priest," was sentenced to two months' imprisonment at Cardigan for his over-fondness for the Holy Scriptures. He attended a funeral at the Crown Hotel, and pocketed the Bible. Possibly he felt that "the Lord had need of it," or he may have desired to look up the passage about the Jews spoiling the Egyptians. But our magistrates are ceasing to show regard for this kind of piety.

The Rev. Biscoe Hale Wortham has got an order for £2,400 damages against the Rev. Lyndhurst Buxton Towne for breach of contract with regard to the sale of a school. Libel and slander were alleged on both sides.

Professor Monier Williams contrasts Buddha "The Light of Asia," with Christ "The light of the World." This is pretty cheeky, considering that at least two-thirds of the world are unconverted Buddhists or Heathens.

Young Bombastes Furioso, Emperor of Germany, is unable to enjoy a Jew-Hunt in his own country, so he subscribes for five years to the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. We suppose they will send the Emperor their first convert, but as one in five years is a heavy catch, they may require a few years' grace, and the subscription might run on meanwhile.

The Jews could stand this amiable sort of persecution if the cash found its way in their pockets. The Society's officers convert the Jews, but they convert the cash to their own uses.

General Booth is progressing. Speaking at the fourth annual meeting of his rescue work, he said he was "not quite sure whether the arrangements on the Continent were not more deterrent to the spread of the evil than the freedom of this country." Precisely so, Booth would like to have brothels registered, prostitution legalised and prostitutes licensed, just to make his work easier, and still easier the collection of cash. Sooner or later these religious reformers sail for the north-west passage of compulsion. Their ideal is a public department of All the Vices, so that the filth of the kingdom might be gathered together for the use of their deodorising machines.

Harry Truss attended a Salvation Army meeting on Sunday morning at Pembroke Road, Kilburn, and heard the captain say that unless they fell at the feet of Jesus that very moment they need not expect salvation. Poor Harry looked wildly round, left the room, hurried to the Carlton Bridge, and was heard to say, "Well, here goes to find out," as he jumped into the Regent's Canal. His rescuers had a tough job to bring him to dry land, for he was bent on finding J. C. or the other party, but finally they got him on the bank and took him to the hospital. Poor Harry's problem is still unsolved.

"From battle, murder, and sudden death, good Lord deliver us," says the Prayer Book; but somehow the good Christians who pray thus do not seem specially protected by Providence. Last Sunday morning Charley Head, the notorious bookmaker, died suddenly at his London residence. He had recently returned from Monte Carlo. The next day Archdeacon Sanctuary died suddenly at Powerscourt. He had officiated at church the previous day.

Mr. Kelly, the member for North Camberwell, who induced the London School Board to persecute Mr. Moss, is now blocking the Bill for Preventing Cruelty to Childrer. Good old Kelly! For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Some one has sent us a cutting on The Effects of Infidelity by I. P. Hutchinson. A dreadful picture is drawn. Infidelity extinguishes hope and love. "Under its blighting influence, benevolence cannot live; in its poisonous atmosphere philanthropy is unknown," etc. Purely a fancy

picture utterly unwarranted by facts, and contradicted by the evidence that many of the greatest benefactors of the race have been unbelievers.

The consternation of some good people at the supposed ruination of the foundations of morality if Christianity is relinquished reminds us of the argument with which the Jesuit Sizzi met Galileo's announcement of his discovery of the moons of the planet Jupiter. Sizzi told him he must be mistaken, because God had divided the week into seven days after the seven planets and if there were more planets the division of time into weeks would have to be given up!

Robert Buchanan and Andrew Lang have had a pretty quarrel. Robert charged Andrew with coming back to Scotland and proclaiming that he had found out there was no God, and that religion was simply an evolution from the anthropoid ape's fear of thunder. Andrew replied that he never said anything of the kind. He holds that the origin of religion is unknown, and doesn't know how apes behave in thunder.

Robert Buchanan's father was a thoroughgoing Free-thinker, and the son seems bent on purging the family reputation from heresy.

There was something like a row at the Stratford-on-Avon Vestry when the Vicar was asked to explain how it was that the sum of £40 devoted to the relief of the poor was expended in defraying the cost of mother's meetings, meetings of guilds, cleaning the parish room, and recouping the loss on the *Parish Magazine*.

"Don't tell me of your piles of books, don't tell me about your pyramids of dogmas, but tell me whether you have got a religion that will put a stop to this horrible bloodshed between man and man. If you have not, then your religion is not worth much." These words were addressed by Mr. Handel Cossham, M.P., to the Christian ministers at the annual meeting of the Peace Society.

The Christians evidently mean to make a big fight for Sunday Tyranny. At Stockport the Rev. H. Ward Price's congregation has petitioned Parliament to stop the sale of drink on Sundays, not only in public-houses but also in clubs. The gospel-grinders want the day absolutely to themselves, and if people *will* get intoxicated it shall be with the *holy* spirit.

Spurgeon is getting on. His orthodoxy, and his noble defence of such fundamental truths as hell and damnation, have won the praise of the Rev. W. C. Robinson, an Oxford convert to Rome. Spurgeon and the Pope are drawing nearer every day.

There are several kinds of orthodoxy, and according to some of them Spurgeon himself is a damnable heretic. One American sect has just issued a blast against tobacco, declaring "the use of it, in any form, is a filthy, pernicious, and degrading habit, imperilling the health of the body and the welfare of the soul alike," and promising not to accept any man as a minister who is "a victim to this degrading habit." Spurgeon wouldn't get a pulpit in that body. His sixpenny Laranagas would stand in his way.

A Devonshire curate, the other day, called on a Dissenting farmer and announced himself as a representative of the Apostles. "Think of that now," said the farmer, "come thy ways in sir; to think that ever my house should be honored like this." The curate stepped into the parlor, the farmer exclaiming "I never looked to see one of the Blessed Apostles under my roof." Then came a string of questions—"Who be you? Be you John, or Peter, or perhaps Thomas!" The curate looked embarrassed, and the farmer added "Oh, maybe thee's only Judas Tableau! The curate didn't call again.

The Lower House of Convocation recommends that there should be a Court of Final Appeal in matters ecclesiastical, in order to displace the Privy Council. They have further the effrontery to ask that the court shall consist of five lay judges and eleven bishops—seven from the Province of Canterbury and four from that of York—so that the lay element shall be effectually swamped. But who heeds

Convocation? They ought to call on J. C. to come down and act as the Court of Final Appeal.

"Christopher Crayon," of the *Christian World*, tells some plain truth about the native population in Australia. One old Man said to him: "Take my word for it, sir, the blacks were a harmless, good-natured lot till the cruelty of the whites made 'em bad and revengeful, poor things, and who can blame 'em?" Heaps were shot off, and others disposed of by mixing arsenic with their flour. Now the blacks are all gone, the whites have all their land, and sing hymns to their God in churches built on the scenes of robbery and murder.

The Rev. S. Rogers, of Bath, has left his congregation in a fiery manner, *à la* Elijah. In his farewell sermon he eased his mind on the subject of his numerous enemies in the congregation. One of them "was supposed to be the missing link in Darwin's theory," another owed him £25, and another was living in adultery. A pretty congregation, if it is all true, and the reverend gentleman seems cut out for their pastor.

While praying to the Almighty, Mr. Rogers gave his enemies a few more digs in the ribs. He had forgiven them, as a Christian should, but he was glad to know that the Lord had said "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," and that "the furnace of everlasting burnings shall be seven times heated." Evidently some of them will get it hot. They have made it warm for Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Rogers' deity will make it warm for them.

The Rev. John McNeill, the "Scottish Spurgeon," has a reputation for wit. Here is a specimen. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Railway Mission he said that "those who said he was rough, rude and vulgar, evidently forgot that he was once on a railway, which was the most civil service, for even the engine driver was a civil engineer." This is what passes for wit in religious circles! Had such a feeble joke been perpetrated on a Secular platform the audience would have shouted "Where's your bib?"

The Bishop of Ballarat spoke at the Christian Evidence Society of what the Lord had done for him. It reminded us of a picture in the *Sydney Tribune*, in which the average colonial bishop is depicted arriving in the colonies very thin. The next picture represents "The same, after months of arduous toil, embarking for Great Britain in search of health." He is now so fat that he has to be hoisted on board with a crane.

The same bishop informed the old ladies at Exeter Hall that a Buddhist paper had actually been published at Melbourne; and we see from the *Sydney Tribune* that Archdeacon Gunther said there was a company of young men in Sydney studying the principles of Buddhism, and he expected there would be a Buddhist Church there soon.

The Mormons have been recruiting at Portsmouth, but, from the report of an interview with two elders, do not appear to have had much success, despite their power of working miracles. They say that faith will not only cure disease, but bruises and injuries. All the elders could perform the cures if there were faith on the part of the suffering one, and where it was unsuccessful there was want of faith. Like Jesus Christ, they could do no mighty work because of unbelief. Where miracles are most necessary they are always inefficacious. They only happen where people are already disposed to believe in them.

It was stated that two hundred Mormon elders are engaged in mission work in England. Considering they can hold out the secular inducements of a good climate and high wages, their success in this country is by no means astounding. Yet they boast, and probably with truth, that they have done as much as Christianity in the first half-century of its existence.

The Scotch ministers are so frantic at the opening of the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens that they actually sign petitions against it in far distant towns. At Hawick, the Rev. W. Johnman did this on the ground that the Sabbath was

being destroyed. If the study of plants was permissible on Sunday, he said, so was the study of pictures, of antiquities, of music, and other things of the same class. Right you are, Mr. Johnson.

The new Christ in America is profanely known as the Rev. G. J. Schweinfurth. His followers are known as Beekmanites and the cardinal tenet of their church, which is mostly composed of women, is that Christ has re-appeared in the person of Schweinfurth. This alleged Christ, it appears, set up in his new business at Chicago a few years ago, when he was not worth a cent. The ladies, however, ministered to him of their substance and he has now one of the finest farms in Illinois and is worth over fifty thousand dollars. The Messianic line appears to pay better in America than it did down in Judee.

The color controversy still rages in the Southern States and the prevailing ill-feeling has just been intensified by the action of the Council of the Virginia Episcopal Church, who have refused to strike from the constitution of the Church the words which debar colored persons from entering its communion. Formerly all the Southern Churches found this strict separation of races quite according to scripture. Did not God declare that Canaan should be a servant of servants?

Dr. Woodrow, who has been prosecuted for alleged heresy, was nominated as Moderator of the Southern Presbyterian Church at Chattanooga. The nomination occasioned a scene. Dr. Woodrow was hotly opposed, and he vehemently denounced as a falsehood the assertion that he was an evolutionist. He was not, however, elected.

The Rev. N. C. S. Poyntz writes to the *Church Times* pointing out that "prayer for and of the departed" are both sanctioned by an Act of Parliament of Edward VI. "Prayer of the departed" is a good phrase and the rev. gentleman says many would gladly seek its aid if they felt sure it was allowable for them to do so. Much good may it do them.

The preface to *Crockford's Clergy List* exhibits some of the dodges adopted by the black fraternity to obtain credit to which they are not entitled. False or bogus degrees are by no means uncommon among clergyman who describe themselves as Ph. D. or M.A. of German Universities where degrees are purchasable. One worthy described himself as A.B., and being pressed as to where he was made Bachelor of Arts explained that he came from St. Aidan's, Birkenhead. Another who advertised himself as B.A., Oxford, coolly replied he had "once been in Oxford." One sky-pilot described himself as "London University, General Honors." The editor took the trouble to search the Calendar and found he had obtained the 37th place out of 40 in the Matriculation List.

The Paris *Figaro*, a reactionary organ, has been disgracing itself by an attack on the character of Dolet, the Freethought martyr, to whom a monument has been erected. Lies directed against infidels pass as virtues in the eyes of the clericals.

The Christian Blind Relief Society has held its annual meeting, and the wicked composers set it up as the Christian Blind Relief Society.

"More money!" is the one cry of the missionary societies at their May meetings. Why doesn't the Lord subscribe for his own work? He is immensely rich. He owns the earth and the fatness thereof. The cattle on a thousand hills are his. More money has been wasted upon him than on any other object under the sun. Why does he not support his own, instead of having all his followers known by their incessantly rattling the begging-box?

The old women of Convocation have been discussing the recent increase of Bishop Suffragans, and the system appears to receive general condemnation. Of course, the Bishops do not see relinquishing their large dioceses, and prefer to have subordinates in their own pay, while the clergy at large want more Bishoprics, each Bishop to have his own separate authority.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

June 9, 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. 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.

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.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We shall bring out a Christmas Number as usual. The Summer Number was never a financial success. HOPELESS.—You quite misunderstand us, or we quite misunderstand you. Better let the subject drop.

COGITO.—Thanks for the copy. Pleased to find that you regard our enlargement as a great benefit to the Freethought cause. Our circulation increases, as you wish, but of course slowly, as we have to create the appetite for what we provide.

F. M.—Some of your lines do not scan. Otherwise the verse is fair.

C. S. P.—We do not know of any Branch of the N.S.S. near Hammersmith. The nearest is at Westminster or Battersea. You might join the N.S.S. through the general secretary, Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. Glad to hear that you appreciate the "improvement" in our paper, and that you take three copies weekly for distribution.

J. MERCER.—It is not surprising that the Godites howled Mr. Williams down. Judging from the book of Revelation there is little else but howling in heaven, and the Bristol pietists were only rehearsing for the celestial concert. We thank you for circulating a dozen copies of the *Freethinker* every week.

J. BROWN, secretary of the North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges parcels of literature from D. Tyne, a Berliner, and J. White; and subscriptions from the following:—J. White, 1/6; Jas. White, 6d; W. A. White, 1/6; G. Maines, 6d. Freethinkers in outlying districts desiring to assist in the work of organisation should communicate with Mr. Brown.

W. M. KNOX.—Your verse would be really good if the lines were not all sorts of lengths. You should master the laws of versification.

J. KEAST.—Sorry we have no space. Those who have "seen" God have had a treat. We haven't.

PHONOGRAPHICUS.—We have no time to send answers to the *Echo*, and must leave that duty to our readers. The copy of the *Freethinker* you refer to was July 23, 1882. None were sold, but there is one in the British Museum. Thank you for taking an extra copy weekly for "the heathen."

G. TAYLOR.—The bits don't strike us as brilliant, but they show that profanity is spreading in the press.

IGNORAMUS.—(1) Michelet was a great French historian. An estuary is an arm of the sea, and is fed by the ocean. Everything in Protestantism is derived from Catholicism. The Protestant rejects something, but adds nothing. Protestantism, as such, is a modern movement; but, of course, there have been "heresies" of some sort from the very beginning. (2) The *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* is printed sheet by sheet, and the type is distributed. The sheets for the volumes are exactly the same as the sheets for the parts. The "several works" you refer to must be creatures of your own imagination. The only work we published in parts, and printed again for the volume, was the *Crimes of Christianity*, but that was after all our stock had been destroyed by fire. (3) We thank you for taking six copies of the *Freethinker* weekly.

HOPEFUL.—Mr. S. Standing has been trying to do something of the kind in the neighborhood, but there are twenty people who will give advice for every one who will help. West Green would doubtless be a good field for outdoor lecturing, but the London Secular Federation must have more financial support before it opens fresh stations.

B. STEVENS.—Glad you found our answer of some service. Mr. Foote may issue his articles on James Thomson, with some additions, in pamphlet form as you so much desire.

STUPID AWE.—Thanks for the Cuttings.

R. W. FEWKES.—The joke has already appeared in a slightly different form.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Arme Teufel—Twentieth Century—Thinker—Islington Gazette—Bulletin des Sommaires—Freidenker—Polytechnic Magazine—Open Court—Truth-

seeker—Secular Thought—Freethought—Scotsman—Western Weekly Mail—Edinburgh Evening News.

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.

WE ran out of print last week, and scores of customers had to go without copies of the *Freethinker*. This week we have printed a still larger number, which should meet the demand. Regular subscribers, who *must* have last week's number, will be able to get it from Mr. Forder this week out of the returns.

Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Fear of Death" drew a capital audience to the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, despite the wet weather. In the morning Mr. Foote delivered an open-air lecture at Station-road on "The Devil." There was a large meeting although the rain fell a little now and then. The sum of £1 was collected, mostly in coppers, for the London Secular Federation.

FURTHER subscriptions to the London Secular Federation, acknowledged by Mr. R. O. Smith, honorary treasurer, 142, Old Street, E.C.:—W. Hunt, 10s. 6d.; R. C., 5s. More wanted.

THERE is to be a dinner given to the N.S.S. country delegates after the Whit-Sunday Conference. It will take place at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, on the Monday at 6.30. The tickets are priced at 3s. 6d. The cost of the country delegates' tickets will be defrayed by a subscription which is being raised for the purpose in London. We have had to ferret out this information in consequence of the committee neglecting to furnish us with any particulars—which is bad business.

FROM the report which appears in another column it will be seen that the Christian Evidence Society intends to send one of its agents round after Mr. Foote when he lectures in the provinces. We are delighted to hear it. Mr. Foote likes a bit of discussion, and his audiences like it, and the Christian Evidence Society is going to provide it "free, gratis, for nothing."

WE don't incline to cannibalism, and we are pretty temperate in eating as well as drinking. Still, we venture to promise that we will eat—with their consent, of course—all the converts the Christian Evidence Society man makes out of Mr. Foote's audiences. Our "Sub" says he'll go shares.

The *Bible God* and the *Philosophy of Secularism*, two of Mr. Foote's new pamphlets, are now on sale. The *Defence of Free Speech* is binding, and *Darwin on God* is nearly ready for the trade. The last pamphlet should have a wide circulation.

MR. BRADLAUGH is appointed a member of the Royal Commission on Vaccination. He has spent very many hours on Committees of the House, which is a pure labor of love. There is, we believe, some emolument attached to Commissions; and, however little it may be, we fancy it will be welcome, as Mr. Bradlaugh's parliamentary duties, to which he attends so assiduously, must be a considerable financial loss.

LORD HERSCHELL is the Chairman of the Commission, and there could not be a better selection. We venture to think that the odious Vaccination Laws are doomed. The medical aspect of the question cannot be discussed in our columns, but we are concerned with every violation of liberty. Doctors have no more right to force their nostrums upon the public than have priests. Compulsory vaccination is just as intolerable as compulsory baptism.

THE Thinker of *Madras*, still keeps our writings before the notice of its readers. The number before us reprints Mr. Foote's articles on Pigottism and Mr. Wheeler's Decay of Christianity. We are always pleased to see that our attacks on superstition are appreciated in India.

Secular Thought of Toronto reprinted. Mr. Uhlenburg's questions, entitled "An examination in Theology," from our columns.

Lucifer, for May 15, has some comments on the lost Bill for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws—It says that for any such laws to be impartially administered the jury would have to be a mixed one and consist of six Christians and six "infidels." The laws should be applied too against the missionaries, for "of all the foul-mouthed blasphemers against God and the gods of other nations they are the foremost. Why should they be allowed to break the law against Vishnu, Durga, or any fetish, against Buddha, Mahomet, or even a spook, in whom a spiritualist sincerely recognised his dead mother, any more than an 'infidel' against Jehovah?"

A BUDDHIST journal published at Japan with the title *Bijou of Asia* gives a number of injunctions headed Don't. Among them we read, "Don't ask a Buddhist to accompany you to a prayer-meeting, a slaughter house, a grog shop, or any other bad place." "Don't for pity's sake send your children to Christian schools or to any place where Christian influence prevails."

M. CILWA, the editor of *Le Danton*, has sent us a copy of an address on *Etienne Dolet: his Life, his Works, and Martyrdom*, made by citizen Bourneville, deputy of La Seine, on the occasion of the inauguration to the Statue to the Freethought martyr, and published by the Freethought Society of the 5th Arrondissement of Paris, which calls itself "Groupe Etienne Dolet." M. Bourneville gives a very good resumé of the life of Dolet, as found in the lives by M. Boulmier and the fuller work in English of Mr. Christie.

WE have also received from our friend of *Le Danton* a handsome volume entitled *Mémorial du Centenaire*, by Hippolyte Gautier illustrated with 60 reproductions of engravings of 1789. For frontispiece there is the memorable declaration of the Rights of Man. Other pictures illustrate the taking of the Bastille and other memorable events of the great year. Portraits from steel engravings of Marie Antoinette, Louis XVI., Neckar and the leading deputies to the *States General* are given. Altogether a valuable memorial of men and events, memorable not only in the history of France but of all the world.

A SERIES of lectures on evolution are now being delivered weekly in Brooklyn, New York. The first was on Herbert Spencer, his life, writings, and philosophy by D. G. Thompson. Others followed on Darwin, Solar and Planetary Evolution, Evolution of the earth, of vegetable life, of animal life, the descent of man, evolution of mind, of society, of theology, and of morals. Each lecture is by a different evolutionist and they will be published together in a cheap form.

SUNDAY football matches are growing common in a certain part of Ireland; so common, indeed, that the clergy are alarmed. The Catholic Bishop of Clogher has publicly condemned them as causing "neglect of mass on Sundays, and a total forgetfulness of the holiness of the Lord's Day."

PAINÉ'S *Age of Reason* has been translated into Arabic for circulation in Egypt. The translator asks us to print it, but we have not the type. We trust, however, that he will find a publisher nearer Port Said.

WE are glad to see that the Swedish prosecutions for blasphemy are drawing attention in America. The Kansas city *Weckobladet* gives a full report of the case at Lindköping which is translated into the New York *Truthseeker*. The *Truthseeker* also reprints our own remarks on the subject. We have not yet heard from Sweden as to the further progress of the cases against Mr. Lennstrand.

OBITARY.—It is my painful duty to inform you of the death of Henry Nixon, at Barton Regis, Bristol, on Wednesday, May 22nd, aged 66 years. He had a long and a painful illness, and died as he had lived, a profound Freethinker. He talked up almost to the last on religious questions, and he told me he had no fear of death. He was quite ready and willing to die the death of an honest Freethinker. He enjoyed the *Freethinker* up to the last.—John Keast.

THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.

THE eighteenth annual meeting of this society, in the smaller hall at Exeter Hall, was noticeable for the great gun secured in the person of the chairman, Sir William Thompson. The great gun, however, did not explode with any opening address, and altogether looked as much like a fish out of water as possible, surrounded as he was by white-chokers and with an audience mainly composed of elderly women of both sexes. Proceedings began with a doleful harmonium solo, after which Mr. Engström, the chief secretary to the society, who enjoys in addition to that fairly well-paid office, the rectorship of St. Mildred's, Cheapside, led in prayer. Our reporter joined in with as much fervency as the rest of the reporters, that is to say, he sharpened his pencil and scanned over the abstract of the report. The audience having thus been brought to a fitting frame of mind, Mr. T. T. Waterman, Congregational secretary without any other lucrative post, then read the report and balance-sheet in most feeling terms. Under the blessing of God, there had been less indoor lecturing in the Metropolis. Halls were too dear, "and Christian Evidences cannot be made entertaining." We beg to differ. We know of but few more comical subjects. The return of Mr. Harrison to England has led to a course of lectures which were highly appreciated. Mr. W. T. Lee, of Plymouth, boasted the conversion of many whose names are (ask him), and "has good reason to believe" that his lectures resulted in a spiritual change in the case of fourteen men and women. At the suggestion of Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., whose donation of £50 made it practicable to commence operations, Mr. Wise has been sent to Liverpool, and has followed from town to town "one of the most prominent advocates of Freethought—Mr. Foote—who as the representative of a new Federation [some little mistake here] has been seeking to quicken into activity local branches of the National Secular Society." Letters were quoted to the effect that Mr. Foote was pinned and pulverised by his opponent, about which also there may be possibly some little error. Then the Hyde Park Mission was referred to, and it was stated that in the summer of '88 the Secularists "scarcely put in an appearance," which is surely another little error, casting doubt upon the subsequent statement that "one of their ablest speakers has renounced his atheism." The report then congratulated itself upon one of the ablest speakers of the C.E.S. leaving them to study for holy orders. The proposal made in the last report to raise the income to the much-needed level of £2,000 had not met much response, though the committee secured the services of a competent canvasser for contributions. The report concluded with a request for prayer, "knowing that the silver and the gold are the Lord's," and with the implied query why the deuce does he deal it out so stingily to his faithful servants. The balance-sheet was then read. It showed an income of £1,133 odd, of which the Secretaries—who the meeting were led to suppose had most arduous duties, including "interviews with sceptics," which we suspect must be the most trying of all—take £490 17s. 3d. So that the firm of Engström, Waterman and Co. seems on the whole fairly flourishing.

The Bishop of Ballarat, one of the Colonial bishops who seems to spend most of his time in England, in the absence of the Bishop of Ripon, who had been announced on the bills, spent the best part of an hour in moving the adoption of the report. He admitted there was danger in the work of the society. There was the danger of sinking into religious pugilism, and the excessive familiarity with sacred subjects may do harm. He knew the unscrupulousness, the hatefulness and bitterness of the unbeliever. There was the danger of descending to the same level. But terrible as he is, he must not be left alone. He is capable of great mischief. Christians must not despise the foe nor despair of the fight. We dare not despise the foe. We have hell against us. The Devil is on the war path, and he must be met with ability. "Deliver me from my friends" is what the Christian Church might usually say. It needed not only conscientious zeal, but also skill to meet the enemy. He was glad to see they were following the footsteps of Mr. Foote—they would excuse the pun. He had once read a tract, What becomes of Infidel Leaders? from which it appears they were mostly converted. In these days there were Agnostics who would come to church, and he had even known them present themselves at Holy Communion. He had called at Ceylon on his way home, and at the temple of Buddhism what did he see? Why he was shown a Bo-tree leaf "tendered as an offering at the shrine of Buddha by

Edwin Arnold," and he was shocked to see other offerings from distinguished Englishmen. Buddhism, although its ethics were noble and it anticipated much of modern science, was only a colossal failure. It was a benevolent atheistic pessimism. In Australia infidelity was wide-spread. They had even had a Buddhist newspaper at Melbourne. Their national arms were an emu who had lost the use of its wing and the kangaroo which, when pursued, dropped its little ones. He was afraid Australia would drop its precious things. The bishop said this as feelingly as if he meant that Australia would drop its bishops. At Melbourne there was "one Sime"—so the bishop called Mr. Joseph Symes. He attacked Christianity at the very citadel, the character of the blessed one, charging him with immorality and wickedness. Well, Sime was had up for charging for admission on the Sunday (Hear, hear, and loud applause). At Ballarat one of the infidels came and spoke against the blessed one. Some of the young men of the town said, "Now, look here, you must stop that, we won't have it, and we shall be under the painful necessity of making you." And (said the bishop, his face all beaming with smiles), they knocked him down, and he had to be swept up. Of course this was highly improper. "At the same time I was very glad they did not allow the blessed one to be attacked." (Loud applause and bishop beaming). After this exhibition of his muscular Christianity, the bishop wound up by speaking of what the Lord Jesus Christ had done for him.

The motion was seconded by the Rev. J. Vincent Tynms, an atrabilious looking sky-pilot who apologised for never having attended any of the committee meetings of the Society, although he was a member, and who sought to make up for this neglect by reading a dull and dreary paper for half an hour. The chief purport of his paper was that as the society had to endure being thought a special pleading society and its members interested professors, these shameful insinuations should be repelled by the Christian public generously planking down their coin to show their confidence and sympathy. In working this confidence oracle, the Rev. J. Vincent Tynms brought in sundry slaps at the infidels. Would Strauss have broken with Christianity if it had not been for the loss of his professor's chair? George Eliot ought to have known that Strauss was untrustworthy; it was time Prof. Huxley was relegated to the past; the infamous name of Renan, Welhausen, and other manglers of historic facts, etc., etc.

Dr. French, late Bishop of Lahore supported the resolution and spoke of Christian evidences being a great subject of debate in India, where religion is now discussed day by day in the bazaars.

After the motion was put and carried, a hymn was sung while the collecting boxes were assiduously handed round by the societies agents. We noticed that the Bishop of Ballarat took out a large and obviously well-filled purse, and we suppose put in something considerable. The Chairman, with Scotch hesitation, fumbled in his pocket, pulled out something very small between his thumb and finger—it may have been half-a-sovereign or a threepenny bit or a pinch of snuff—and dropped it silently into the box.

A decent speaker whose name we failed to catch, then neatly proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, and suggested that theologians had been to blame in their attitude to science. What more painful page was there in Christian history than that which recorded its dealings with science? They were all glad to have so eminent a man among them. The vote was seconded by a venerable individual whose name we took as Kitchen Poker, but who turned out to be Prof. Kichen Parker. He said he felt like an owl in the daylight, and he certainly looked like one. We fancy he must be the friend alluded to by Mr. Rossiter in his debate with Mr. Foote, who was a Darwinian before Darwin, or else that species must be pretty numerous for he asserted that he had written against the fixity of species before Lyell (he meant Darwin) wrote his *Origin of Species*. The vote was supported by the Rev. Mr. Redford, who pulled out a copy of the *Freethinker*, and read about the formation of the North-Eastern Secular Federation.

Sir William Thompson, in replying, said it was only after much hesitation and an understanding that he would not be called upon to give an address that he consented to preside. He would just say that he wished to show his sympathy. He thought that the scientific man who says there is no God does not faithfully express his own mind. He is out of his depth. We are all out of our depth when we approach the great question of life, but this we could say: there is some-

thing beyond the laws of dead matter. He remembered saying to a distinguished German physiologist, who held that there was nothing more than the interplay of natural forces, that science too had its miracles—the miracles of geology. Whatever we prophesy of the future, it was sure to be unlike the facts. There is no periodicity. The age of the world is definite, be it a hundred thousand or a hundred million years. We are then brought face to face with the commencement of life, even though life came to this world carried by moss-grown stones and fragments from another world, this does not diminish the miracle of life and the further miracle of man.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES, A LA MODE.

Scene: NO MAN'S LAND. Time: SUNDAY MORNING.

Chairman: Brethren, this morning our dear brother, Hookey Walker, will lecture, by divine permission, on "Secularism, a Soul-blighting Sirocco." May the Lord bless his words, and cause the good seed to, etc., etc. (Brusquely aside: Now, then, Hookey, hurry up!)

Hookey Walker: Brothers, I say Seklerism is a soul-blighting sirocco. I don't quite know what a sirocco is, but I'm sure Seklerism is one of 'em. What does its leading advercates say? Look at Dr. Drysdale. In his address at the Annual Meeting of the Malthusian League, on May 15, he said: "The number of illegitimate children in this country is far too small." There yer are! There's no getting out of that—its printed in the June *Malthusian* and I defy conteradication. There's teaching for yer! I say Seklerism is a soul-destroying thingumybob. [And so on for three-quarters of an hour.] Now, I challenge any Seklerists to deny wot I've said.

A Freethinker (diffidently): I think the speaker has left out an important part of Dr. Drysdale's statement. He says: "The number of illegitimate children in this country is far too small to cause much of the evils of over-population." This seems to me an important part of the sentence, which Mr. Walker judiciously omitted. That is all I have to say.

Hookey Walker: These Secklerists are orful shufflers! You never know how they will twist and wriggle when you git hold of 'em. But I say Seklerism is a soul-blighting sirocco, and— [Left saying it]

HOW TO COOK A REVIVAL.

A writer signing himself "Freethinker," writing in *Free-thought* of San Francisco, April 20th, from Corvallis, Oregon, says:

The evangelical alliance has just closed a three weeks' attempt at a revival, but failed to revive for reasons I shall endeavor to explain. A friend and I took it upon ourselves to cook that revival, as I have done before, by putting on our most sanctimonious look, going to church, walking forward and taking a front seat; listening to the preacher with the most marked attention, and both eyes, as it were, riveted upon his, and at the same time thinking, "What lies, what lies!" which is not hard to do by any intelligent woman or man. By so doing we break that magnetic influence which some men possess so powerfully, and as a result there is no excitement; and revivals without excitement amount to naught. There were seven preachers here, and they preached, prayed, exhorted, threatened with hell in its worst form, and went through the audience, pulling and hauling, but all to no avail. One of them came to me one night with the most heavenly smile and inquired:

"Are you a Christian?"

"No, sir."

"Have you a desire to be?"

"No, sir."

"Do you not want to make peace with God?"

"I never had any racket with him and have nothing to make peace about to the best of my knowledge."

With that he left me saying he was not there to argue. I almost failed to remark that the heavenly smile had changed to one of the blackest faces it has ever been my misfortune to see. I think a great amount of good might be done by Freethinkers by looking after the revivals in their localities.

Rowland Hill said, when he saw a boy on a rocking horse, "Like most Christians, motion enough, but no progress."

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S DAUGHTERS.

THEY HAVE NEVER ATTENDED CHURCH NOR KNELT IN PRAYER.

Both of the Young Women Hold Views on Religious Matters in Common with their Father—Miss Ingersoll Tells Why She is an Iconoclast—The Delightful Home Life of the Family.

"Yes, Miss Ingersoll is in," and the Empire-coated butler led the way to the drawing-room in the great iconoclast's stately home at No. 400 Fifth Avenue. The room, with its book-lined walls, bits of colored porcelain and carved silver—artists' dreams in marble and on canvas—was beautiful enough, but the slim, sweet, timid creature, in her silver-gray dress, was radiant. She might have been taken for a Quaker maiden, or a member of some new order of nuns, but for the daughter of Col. Robert G. Ingersoll—that alleged monster, commonly denounced from every pulpit, and by preacher in every tongue and creed—never!

But there sat Miss Eva Ingersoll in a little slipper chair, beaming in the loveliness of her youth and beauty, and this is what she had to say regarding the Rev. Dr. Peck's address before the General Conference of the Southern New England Methodist Societies:

"That is about the fifth time I have joined the Church, in print, and it is so ridiculous because neither my sister nor myself has ever attended service. Once Mr. Carnegie invited us to hear Henry Ward Beecher. It was in the evening, and the address he delivered was the only one we have ever heard. Another time we went to Dr. Collyer's church to attend a friend's wedding, and that is the extent of our knowledge of churches."

"But why haven't you gone out of curiosity?"

"Well, I don't know. I never had any desire, somehow. I have been told that the music might be entertaining, but I am sure that it can't compare with operatic music, and we go to some opera or concert three or four nights in a week. I have read a great many sermons, but never was sufficiently pleased or interested to care to hear one. Our parents are not responsible for our attitude. Indeed, sister and I are more radical than they. Father has always told us that he wanted us to realize the greatest happiness in life, and advised us to examine for ourselves and to act in accordance with our convictions. We have had books of all kinds and all sorts, and friends to exchange ideas with. Father has read with us and together we have looked up references, localities, and proofs, but the more we know about Christianity the less admiration we have for it."

"Just now we are studying the *History of the Inquisition*, and can't bear to think of church or creeds. My grandfather, you know, was a Congregational minister, but most of our relatives have been extremely Liberal. They all believed in religion, and so do we, but neither they nor we are Christians. This distinction often amuses the people we meet for the first time, and they in turn amuse us by almost demanding an explanation."

As she talked, her beautiful hands were playfully tying the long, silky ears of a magnificent hunting dog across his face.

"Rust is one of the family. We've had him five years. His temper is absolutely perfect. They tell us we have spoiled him, and perhaps that is a fact, but father is too kind-hearted to be a hunter. He wouldn't kill a bird or see one killed for pleasure, and that's why Rust has been allowed to live in the family and get spoiled."

Standing against her knee, with his face in her lap and the perfect golden brown of his coat contrasting with the delicate silver gray of her dress, the two were a picture for a Landseer.

"Did I ever pray? Never. We were never taught prayers as children, but when old enough to reason, mother selected the prayers that are considered most beautiful and touching, and told us, as she always did in making selections of poetry and prose, to read them carefully and learn the ones that pleased us. None pleased me, especially, and I didn't commit any of them to memory. I could not see the wisdom of praying for or against things I knew were beyond human influence."

"And I never prized a Bible, as most girls do, not even in silver or ivory covers. I don't like the book because there are too many improbable and impossible things in it, and, worse than that, it abounds in cruelties."

"We doubtless seem horrible people to you believers, but we are very happy together, and if my parents are as odious as some people fancy them, they must still have many very

redeeming qualities of mind and heart, because it is a tax for them to make new friends, the old ones are so numerous and so exacting in their affection. In all my life I have never heard a cross word spoken by my parents, either to one or the other or to my sister or myself.

"School? We never went to school a day in our lives. Mother preferred to have us trained at home under her own supervision, and father made out the course of study and allowed us to make optional whatever we liked. We are stupid enough, but it is all our own fault."

The modesty of Miss Ingersoll did not permit her to state that she is a close student and takes great pride in her lessons. Every day she learns a lesson from a French, German, and vocal teacher, finds time for several hours of practice, and personally cares for her wardrobe, not only designing, but actually making all her own dresses. Believing that much valuable time is spent in a miscellaneous toilet, each daughter has her own peculiar style. Miss Ingersoll always has two dresses—a silver-gray cashmere made with a round waist laid with cross plaits, between which is set a vest or "V" of soft white silk. About the neck and sleeves is a finish of gray ribbon, and the straight skirts are simply stitched. A long gray cloak, and a gray hat, with a gray silk veil and gray gloves complete the toilet in which she walks, visits, drives, goes to afternoon entertainments, studies and receives morning callers. Her evening dress is made of white silk or nuns' veiling, and in but one fashion, gathered skirts, round waist, with V-neck and half-sleeves.

Miss Maud Ingersoll, who is a decided brunette, wears a black lace. Neither daughter has ever been seen on the street alone, the mother or aunt always acting as—not a chaperon, but a companion. They know nothing about shopping, larks, slang, chums, or beaux, and there never has been a time so merry or a party so gay that these beautiful creatures were induced to leave the great infidel and his wife. Similar examples of family devotion there must be among "Orthodox" people, but greater devotion it would be impossible to find.

The entire family has a passion for music, and it is not an unusual thing for the mother and daughter to call at the lawyer's office and drag him off to some symphony or oratorio up town, or over in Brooklyn, leaving a group of clients in open-eyed wonderment. If there is anything they admire in people it is their talent—an ability to do something or say something just a little better than anybody else—and if there is anything they despise it is vicer. Show counts for nothing with them. It is never tolerated and never indulged in. There must be jewels in the caskets, but if so they stay there, for neither daughter is ever adorned save in the beauty of her own charming personality. So, Rev. Dr. Peck, of Taunton, Mass., "Bob Ingersoll's daughters have not joined the Church," and apparently have not thought of doing so.—*New York World*.

THE BETTER PART.

Better to know the truth, that maketh free,
Than revel in the treasures of the dead;
Better to open thine own eyes and see
Than blindly trust to what men may have said.

Better than dreams of heaven's future bliss,
Or phantom pictures of another life,
It is to live thy future life in this—
Bring heaven down into this vale of strife.

Better to touch with gentle hand a heart
That hath been wounded in the shade of death,
Than from the sinful turmoil stand apart
And gaze enraptured and with bated breath

Into a vision land that fancy weaves
Beyond the clouds that deck eternity.
Better than painting angels on the leaves
Of book or sermon, tale or homily

It is to show that angels walk the earth
Clad in the flesh of pure humanity;
To open well-springs in a land of dearth
And prove man's strength in his infirmity.

HARVY REESE.

HOW TRACTS ARE MANUFACTURED.

"The Infidel Who Shouted Glory" is the title of a Tract, written by the Rev. P. B. Power of Richmond, and published by the Religious Tract Society. It relates the conversion of a "regular seasoned, finished-off, settled-down, and out-and-out infidel." His name was John. John *what?* God only knows. Anyhow, John fell sick and went into the hospital. What hospital? God only knows again. While in hospital John's infidelity gave way, and he left it an "altered man." He was so full of religion, indeed, that he kept on shouting "Glory." But soon after he died, being killed by a beam of wood falling on him from a crane.

Mr. Power's tract fell into the hands of one of our readers, Mr. G. Thackray, whose curiosity was naturally excited. He wrote to the reverend gentleman asking him three questions:—(1) What was John's name and address? (2) Where did the accident happen? (3) What has become of his widow and children?

Will it be believed that Mr. Power is unable to answer these questions? He says he saw the story somewhere, perhaps twenty years ago, but cannot find the authority now. Yet he puts his name to the tract and writes in the first person. Instead of substantiating his story he writes Mr. Thackray a long rigmarole about Voltaire and "Tom" Paine. This is how tracts are manufactured! It is a lie from beginning to end. Mr. Power writes as though the case was within his own experience, but it turns out that he did not know the hero of the story, and is not acquainted with any one who did. Still, the tract will remain in circulation with Mr. Power's name on top. Whoever knew a Christian lie dropped simply because it was exposed? While it serves its turn it flourishes. It never dies till the very children laugh at it in the streets.

THE PRESBYTERIANS' APOSTLES' CREED.

PRINCIPAL CUNNINGHAM has made a sensation among the Presbyterians by declaring, in the General Assembly of the Established Church, that the Apostles' Creed was non-apostolic. He, moreover, affirmed that none of the ministers believed in every clause of that document, which, nevertheless, they were going to entrap innocent children into repeating. A number of ministers rose to affirm that their gullets were large enough to swallow every morsel of the creed without even mastication. Sir William Baillie excitedly called on Principal Cunningham to retract, but he persisted in his statement. Dr. Donald Macleod said he was sure they were all pained that Principal Cunningham expressed himself so plainly; and Dr. Milligan said he was trenching upon some of the most sacred feelings of the members of the House. Principal Cunningham explained that he referred in particular to the clause that Christ descended into hell. He did not believe it; whereupon Sir William Baillie said: "You are welcome to your unbelief." Principal Cunningham might have retorted that he was welcome to his belief that his Savior went to hell. Indeed, if Jesus took the punishment of sinners upon himself, it would be only logical to conclude that he must have gone to hell for ever.

A TEE-TOTAL MIRACLE.

THE *Chicago Tribune* reports that at Springfield, Illinois, there is a certain Mrs. Paul ne King, a colored woman, who has fasted forty days, and who advertised that she would turn water into wine. Unbelievers brought their jugs of water from a neighboring well, while a number of the faithful had bottles concealed on their persons to take away the more precious fluid. Mrs. King informed the congregation that she came at the instance of the Lord, who had appeared to her in a vision and told her he was going to take her to heaven and send her back again as an example to the world. She told her husband, but he would not believe it. Mrs. King then sank on her knees in prayer. She prayed that the water might be turned into wine, until the tears rolled down her cheeks. During her fervent appeal Mrs. King several times peeped to see if the water was turning, but her supplications were vain, until she was obliged to declare the meeting a failure because of their unbelief. The water was passed round and sipped, but no one was able to detect the least semblance of port, sherry, claret, or anything but water.

REVELATION.

IN the same way, again, God has been thought of as a king or master, somewhere outside the world we live in, and the Bible as the book of his decrees; as if God could make anything right by choosing to command it. This is the old meaning of revelation; that man had no way of knowing God's will, and so God had this book written to tell us what his will was, and we have to do everything that is commanded in this book. Of course this idea turns things upside down. Things are not right because the Bible says them, but the Bible says them, *if it does say them*, because they are right. And when we say now that anything is God's command, we ought to know that we are using a figure of speech, which means something quite different from the command of a person outside ourselves and having power over us.

And this makes an enormous difference; because, if you have a master in heaven, whose orders you must obey, and if he has had a book written to tell you what to do, then the most important people in the world are the people who spend their lives in interpreting this book. And in fact, as you and I have not time to be studying a book written in Hebrew and Greek all our lives, we should be under the thumb of these gentlemen, who say they know all about it, and some of them even say they have a special commission from God to tell us about it, and we are not to listen to any one else. This is plainly a mere dream. There is no great harm in talking of a revelation, but it means nothing in the world but our own common sense and reason, dealing with the circumstances of our lives.—*B. Bosanquet's "Essays and Addresses."*

FAITH-HEALING MISSION IN THE MIDLANDS.

THE Rev. B. Dinnick, the so-called faith-healer, finds (says a Birmingham paper) Oldbury congenial soil to labor upon, for he has returned again to the wooden church, and is reported to be performing greater miracles than ever. Sunday last saw the recommencement of his Pentecostal mission, and at every service remarkable manifestations are reported to have taken place. A new departure has been taken—at least so far as Oldbury is concerned—and the representatives of the press—not being willing to place implicit confidence in the preacher's power—are carefully excluded. Every night the doors are locked and bolted, and the "service" is continued until daylight, and in some cases long afterwards. The workpeople at Mr. W. E. Chance's glass-works, adjoining the wooden church, state that when the young women have been lying unconscious in the middle of the night the lights have been lowered and all has been as quiet as death. Then a slight muttering has been heard, followed with an outburst of singing, and such exclamations as "Look! look!" "He's coming, he's coming!" The excitement in the place is growing apace, and the proceedings are characterised as "scandalous" on every hand. The police have been requested by people living in the vicinity to interfere and stop the services, but they say they have no power to do so.

PROFANE JOKES.

A thief lately stole a contribution box from a church. He evidently went there to prey.

An old lady, sleeping during service in a church in Liverpool, let fall a book with clasps on it. The noise partly woke her up. She exclaimed aloud, "What, you've broke another jug, you slut, have you?"

A Minister approached a mischievous urchin about twelve years' old, and, laying his hand upon his shoulder, thus addressed him: "My son, I believe the devil has got hold of you." "I believe he has, too," was the significant reply of the urchin.

Two colored men took refuge under a tree in a violent thunderstorm. "Julius, can you pray?" said one. "No, Sam," was the reply "neber prayed in my life." "Well, can't you sing a hymn?" "No, Sam, don't know no hymn." "Well, see heah, honey, sumfin 'ligious is got to be done heah mighty sudden. S'pose you pass de contribution box."

It was a pungent answer given by a Free Kirk member who had deserted his colors and returned to the old church. The minister bluntly accosted him, "Ay, man John, an' ye've left us; what might be your reason for that? Did he think it was na a guid road we was gawn?" "Ou, I daursay it was guid eneuch road and a braw road, but oh minister, the tolls were unco' high."

A class being examined, one of the boys was told to repeat the parable of the Good Samaritan. He did it thusly: "A certain man journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves." Then he stopped. "Go on, sir," said the examiner. "And—" and stopped again. "And what? go on, sir." "And the thieves sprang up and choked him," triumphantly ended the youth.

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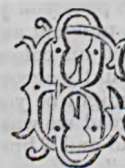
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