

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—III.

ON "THE ATONEMENT."

To the Bishop of Peterborough.

MY LORD,—Like your brother in God, the Bishop of Carlisle, you have contributed a volume to the "Helps to Belief" series; and as that volume is necessarily addressed to as many of the public as it chances to reach, I need not apologise for writing you this letter.

According to the law, my lord, I am a member of the Church of England, and I have a right to look to you, as one of her Bishops, for spiritual guidance; and certainly you should be able to give it, for you are paid the magnificent salary of £4,500 a year, which is only a trifle less than that of the Prime Minister of the British Empire. I can hardly suppose you take such a salary without feeling you deserve it, especially as it was part of the prospect before you when you declared your belief that you were called to your bishopric by the Holy Ghost. It is to be presumed, therefore, that you will not resent my approach, or feel aggrieved at my criticism of the *help* you have offered—at the cost of ninepence—to my *belief*.

First, my lord, let me deal with your Preface. You remark that the Atonement is "a subject the literature of which would fill a library." True, my lord; the blood of Christ is nothing (in quantity) to the ink which his priests and prophets have shed in explaining it. After so many volumes on the subject one is surprised at the necessity for another. Ordinary blood does not require such a colossal literature. But the blood of Christ is a peculiar article, and its physiology and chemistry seem to change like the combinations of a kaleidoscope.

In one respect your Preface is an apology. You observe that the "large subject of the Jewish and Pagan sacrifices in their relation to the sacrifice of Christ, could be only very inadequately dealt with." But in an age of Evolution, my lord, when everything is being explained by the law of continuity and progression, this is simply evading your principal duty.

You further observe that it was impossible to "discuss the exact force and value" of such terms as "ransom," "redemption," "payment of debt," and "reconciliation." Now these terms, my lord, are found in the New Testament, which, as you frequently assert, is the *sole* authority on the Atonement or any other Christian doctrine. Why, then, did you avoid what, as a preacher of the Word, you are chiefly bound to unfold? It is not true, as you allege, that you have confined yourself to the task of answering the "most common and salient objections to the doctrine of the Atonement," for you devote but one chapter to that object, and four to general exposition. This excuse, therefore, fails utterly; indeed I can scarcely understand it, except on the supposition that your Preface was written before the volume.

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Your readers, my lord, are "entreated" to believe that you have "endeavored to deal honestly with objections." Why should you "entreat" them to believe this? Does an honest man beg the world to acknowledge him as such? Does he not rely on his character speaking for itself? You have written and published your volume, and why should you protest your sincerity in the Preface? Had you a shrewd suspicion of its necessity? I admit the difficulty of a man in your position being honest—I mean intellectually. You provide, not proofs, but excuses for faith. You confess that you seek to help those who "only doubt and yet would fain believe." Is not the very suggestion immoral? Why should we *desire* to believe anything? I do not deny the fact; it is a frailty of our nature; but a public teacher should not pander to our infirmities. Writing for those who would "fain believe" is an easy occupation. Feeling ekes out the deficiencies of reason, and premises are distorted to justify impossible conclusions.

That you have "dealt tenderly with doubts and difficulties" I cheerfully admit. You smooth down the feathers of doubt with a loving hand, and deal tenderly—oh, *so* tenderly!—with every difficulty. I shall not emulate you, my lord, in this respect; and perhaps you will find eventually that difficulties are like nettles, that if you cannot grasp them will sting.

Your first chapter, my lord, opens with a piece of advice, namely, that those who explain a Christian doctrine should first "state it in the very words of Scripture itself." But you do not follow your own recipe. You select a passage in which "atonement," "redemption," or "propitiation" does not occur. I admire your prudence and *tenderness*, but I wish you had more courage. The passage you select is as follows:—

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Ep. St. John i, 8, 9).

Now, my lord, I ask you frankly whether any theologian, except one who deals tenderly with difficulties, would ever select this as his text for expounding the Atonement. The passage does not contain a reference to the doctrine. Would it not have been braver, and more honest, to select a strong, downright passage from Paul or Peter, to explain it, defend it, and stand by it to the death? Why should Revelation require the assistance of the most dexterous special-pleading? Why should God's truth be championed with subterfuges? Why is it necessary to present the teachings of infinite Wisdom and Goodness in the least offensive manner? To my mind, you had better leave the "difficult, abstruse mystery," as you call it, to take care of itself, than defend it by such specious arts.

Let me, however, follow your divagations. You ask, *What is Sin?* and you define it as "that tendency in our nature which induces it to resent and rebel against law"—a definition which would delight the Czar of Russia or the late King Bomba of Naples.

You say that man is "essentially lawless, and he is, moreover the only being in creation that is so." Other creatures live in harmony with their environment, but in man there is a struggle between conscience and desire.

There is little struggle, my lord, between conscience and desire among the lowest savages. A Thug has been known to feel remorse at having missed an opportunity of assassination, but this illustration will not serve your turn. As man ascends in the intellectual and moral scale, he is able to perceive the law of reason, his sympathies are developed, and his imagination "looks before and after." He forms ideals, which he more or less strives to realise; and the conflict in his nature, to which you point, is simply an incident of his upward struggle. It is the antagonism of past and future in the arena of the present. To the Evolutionist it is perfectly intelligible. Tiger passion, or monkey lust, is no more a mystery than our rudimentary tail. They are marks of our descent. And our ideals and aspirations are foregleams of the goal to which we are ever advancing.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

FUNNY CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

"CHRISTIAN Evidences cannot be made entertaining" according to this year's report of the Christian Evidence Society. Certainly Messrs Engstrom, Waterman, and Co. ought to know something about the special line of business in which they are engaged, but at the risk of coming into collision with these eminent authorities, I must state my own experience that the study of Christian Evidences is vastly entertaining. Almost every item is full of palpable absurdity or subtle humor, and bright coruscations of the ridiculous meet you at every turn. It is only when one studies the history of Christianity that its sombre character appears, and the smiles evoked by its absurd evidences give place to sighs at its atrocious practices.

For what do the Christian Evidence mongers seek to establish? That God Almighty, the presumed creator of the universe, came down to earth at a particular time and was born of a mortal woman who remained a virgin, although she had a family of at least six bouncing boys and girls,* and that dreams and angelic visits were employed to induce a carpenter to father God's son, who is made out by contradictory genealogies to be the descendant of Jewish kings, while he was yet the offspring of the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from Father and Son, all three being co-eternal. And the necessity for this illegitimate birth arose from another woman having eaten some forbidden fruit, tempted thereto by a serpent about four thousand years previously. God born thus strangely lived most of his days unknown, and after a brief career, was betrayed by one of his own disciples and put to death by his own chosen people, although, at the same time, he died on purpose to satisfy his father with an atonement of his blood. Was there ever a richer field of comical absurdity?

And what are the evidences? Miracles which are said to have happened a long way off and a good while ago, but which cannot be duplicated now when they are more needed. Most of them dependent on the exploded farcical belief in the agency of devils, some, too, but third-rate conjuring tricks, such as turning water into wine for guests well drunk. The only evidence that of partisans, in a superstitious age, of whose competence we have no information, nor any evidence of their reputation for veracity among their neighbors, and who are uncorroborated by any heathen or Jewish writer. Of the partisans themselves we have not the testimony of a single

eye-witness. We have not even one authentic word from the generation in which the miracles are said to have been wrought, but only their record in later documents ascribed without evidence to disciples, but which bear traces of their later origin, often contradicting each other, and not even written in the language of the people among whom the miracles are said to have occurred. Could anything be more execratingly funny than the idea of God sending a revelation of his will to his people in a language they couldn't read? And what story in the *Arabian Nights* is more funny than that of the Creator of the universe employing his power in the bedevilment of two thousand pigs?

Then there is the great miracle of the resurrection. A spook story attested by four unknown gossellers, each of them at loggerheads with all the rest, and all of them with Paul, who knew nothing of the other miracles. Jesus, after much fuss in dying, rises from the dead only to slink about among his own disciples, some of whom even doubted. To convince them he was no spirit he ate broiled fish and honeycomb, and presumably with this strange mixture inside him, made an aerial ascent from two different places to heaven, where he sits on the right hand side of an infinite spirit! Is there anything funnier in the legends of the Buddhists?

Moreover there are prophecies, some easily made to fit, like the one fulfilled by the simple process of taking two donkeys and riding on them to be literally exact to the text, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," the gosseller mistaking the meaning of the Hebrew repetition as meaning two animals. This was an easy way to fulfil a scrap of the prophecy, though the meekness didn't exactly come in when Jesus took the whip of small cord and drove out the money-changers. But Jesus was, of course, the Messiah, although he did not restore the Jews, and they have always rejected him. Is there not the one clear palpable prophecy that the world would come to an end, and although this did not happen in the lifetime of the disciples as promised, still it is coming by-and-bye. Meantime be punctual with your pew rents.

Let us not forget the final and complete evidence to all good Christians. They feel it is so. A sort of internal admonition—a very superior article, of course, to that which confirms the power of the Virgin and the saints to the Catholics, and of Buddha to the Buddhists—assures them that Jesus Christ has washed away their sins with his own precious blood. This internal witness, curiously enough, always assures the believer that he is in the right, and that all others are in the wrong. It warrants him in believing that contradictory statements are equally inspired, and that endless felicity is provided for the faithful whilst a loving God dooms the mass of his creatures to eternal torments in hell fire.

Verily Christianity would supply an inexhaustible source of merriment to those who care to smile at the follies of their fellow-creatures, were it not that its absurdity has been outrivalled by its atrocity.

J. M. WHEELER.

POOR SHEPHERDS.—Cardinal Gangibaner no doubt holds a position of signal honor in the American Empire as Archbishop of Vienna. However, he is decidedly the poorest of the prelates. His income hardly amounts to 75,000 florins, or £6,000 a year. The Archbishop of Olmutz has £10,000, the Archbishop of Prague £15,000, the Bishop of Linz, £24,000. These incomes, however, are cast into the shade by those of the Hungarian Episcopacy. The Archbishop of Gran and Primate of Hungary has a rent roll of 2,000,000 florins, or £80,000, Cardinal Haynald has £50,000 a year, and the Archbishop of Erian £60,000. And in their dioceses you not seldom find priests passing rich on £24 a year. —London *Echo*.

* See Matt. xiii., 53, 56.

GOOD OLD RELIGION!
THE REAL ORIGINAL ARTICLE.

From New Calabar comes news of a most revolting sacrifice. It seems that a few months ago the old King of Eboe died, and, as is customary in that part of the country, the traders from New Calabar went up to pay their respects to the new monarch. The traders were aware that for a short time after the old King's death the "Iu Iu" rites are performed, but they thought that these were over. The deceased monarch's name was Imbhy, and, to the horror of the English traders, the "Iu Iu" ceremonies were at their highest when they entered Eboe Town. The rites had been in operation for about two months, and already about forty people had been slain to appease the "Iu Iu" gods. The old King was then lying in a grave which had been dug for him. The hole was a large one and deep. Lying in the same grave were nine of the King's youngest wives, and their deaths had been brought about in the most cruel manner. Each of the poor creatures had both of her wrists and ankles broken, so that they could neither walk nor crawl. In this state, and suffering the most excruciating pain, the unfortunate creatures were placed at the bottom of the grave, seven of them lying side by side. The body of the King was then laid on them in a transverse direction. The two remaining women were laid down by the side of the King, lying exactly like the monarch's body. No food or water was given to the poor creatures, who were left in that position to die. It is said that death did not, as a rule, take place for four or five days. Four men were stationed round the grave, armed with clubs, ready to knock back with these weapons any of the women who, notwithstanding their maimed condition, were able to crawl to the side of the grave.

In other parts of the town further human sacrifices were taking place. Suspended from various trees were the bodies of several men. These poor fellows were also enduring the most agonizing death. In most instances holes had been bored through their feet just by the ankles. Through the holes ropes were drawn, and the men were then tied to a high tree. Their heads were, of course, hanging downwards. The men were there left to die. The traders, as they were proceeding along, were unwilling witnesses of a frightful sacrificial execution. They saw a number of natives in a group, and went to the spot to see what was taking place. To their horror the white men saw a native tied by the feet and neck. The rope to the neck was thrown over a tree in one direction, and the rope attached to the feet was tied to a tree in the opposite direction. The ropes were then drawn tightly, and when the body was distended to its utmost length, another native with a hatchet struck the neck, and severed the head from the body. The head was taken to the grave where the King was lying, whilst the body was eaten, by the cannibal natives. The white men could do nothing to stop the barbarous practice, as to interfere with these "religious customs" would not be tolerated by the natives, and the lives of the traders would have been in peril. They therefore made as quick a retreat from the town as they could. The traders learned that for each of the following ten months there was to be a sacrifice of seven men.

GLEANINGS FROM FOREIGN FREETHINKERS.
COLLECTED BY J. M. W.

IN matters of religion it is easy to deceive mankind and very difficult to undeceive them.—*Pierre Bayle*.

Whoever had need of a religious motive in order to do well has advanced no further than to the vestibule of morality.—*David Frederick Strauss*.

Faith is so far dead that even pious journalists keep its features as much out of sight as possible.—*Célestin Demblon*.

The God of the Christians is a father who sets great store by his apples and very little by his children.—*Denis Diderot*.

There is in every village a lighted torch, the schoolmaster; and a mouth to blow it out, the parson.—*Victor Hugo*.

In Rome in 1849 I visited myself every convent. I was present at all the investigations. Without a single exception we found instruments of torture, and a cellar with the bodies of infant children.—*Giuseppe Garibaldi*.

Help yourselves, for heaven will not help you.—*Oscar Beck*.

As the intelligence of any race increases, their religious fervor grows more timid and parsimonious.—*Charles Letourneau*.

Religion says Humility. Humanity says Dignity.—*Emile Leclercq*.

Take away the fear of hell and the power of the clergy will vanish.—*Lamennais*.

Monotheism in Western Europe is now as obsolete and as injurious as Polytheism was fifteen centuries ago. The discipline in which its moral value chiefly consisted has long since decayed, and the sole effect of its extravagantly-praised doctrines is to degrade the affections by unlimited desires and weaken character by slavish terrors.—*Auguste Comte*.

There are priests who, while defrauding the state of taxes, mount the pulpit and preach that when Materialists and Darwinians do not commit all sorts of crimes, it is not from righteousness, but from hypocrisy. Let them rage! They require the fear of punishment, the hope of reward in a dreamt-of beyond, to keep in the right path. For us suffices the consciousness of being men amongst men, and the acknowledgment of their equal rights.—*Karl Vogt*.

Irreligion is the end towards which we are hastening. After all, why should not humanity do without dogmas? Speculation will replace religion. Among the most advanced nations dogmas are already decreasing; by inward toil the incrustations of thought are bruised and destroyed. In France we are already for the most part without religion; the man of the world believes no more than the scholar, he has his small fund of ideas more or less simple or profound, on which he lives without feeling the want of addressing himself to the priest. In Germany the work of decomposition of dogmas is also very advanced. In England it only commences, but it goes fast. Christianity seems everywhere to be followed by Freethinking. With Buddhism and Hinduism it is the same. In India the majority of intelligent men are Freethinkers; in China there is no national religion. Yes, it will be a long time yet, but religion is passing away, and we can already imagine the time when Europe will be quite without it.—*Ernest Renan*.

FRUITS OF PIETY.

At a recent meeting of the Protective Association of Warehouse, Stores, and Shop Assistants, the following tale was told by a speaker, for the accuracy of which he vouched:—"I was in the employ some years ago, of a man who was a regular slave-driver. There was a young lady there who was worn out—really worn out with work. I have seen her drop down behind the counter, and have carried her out myself twice in one day. Well, one day I saw her looking very white, and I said to her: 'Sit down, you'll drop,' and I brought her a stool, and she sat down. And just then the employer came up and saw her sitting down; and he said, 'We can't have these lazy ways here,' and he kicked away the stool from under her, and she fell on the floor. I saw it myself, and she managed to keep about till the end of the week. She had a widowed mother depending on her; they had nothing but what she earned. And on the Monday morning she was ill, and her mother went up and told her it was time to go to the shop and she said, 'Shop! Oh, mother, I can't go; I can't do it.' And her mother said: 'Well, you know what it means if you don't; you'll be turned off, and we shall have nothing.' But then she saw how ill she looked, and she said: 'There, lie down a bit again, and I'll come up by and by; never mind if you are late.' And she went up half an hour after and found her lying dead. And that man goes on, and has a large business, and he goes to church on Sundays and hears read out: 'Thou shalt do no murder.'"

FAITH CURES.

All well-attested "faith cures" are either of purely nervous diseases or of organs closely dependent upon the nervous system. Of the four authentic cases of cure at Old Orchard, two were spinal affections, one sciatica, and one heart disease. But most so-called heart disease is a mere nervous derangement, and if this case were such, all four cases were nervous affections. All nerves centre in the brain, and may be acted upon through the brain. This is best shown in mesmerism, but the fact is indisputable. A very powerful brain stimulus, an idea or conviction, an expectation even, or disappointment, will communicate itself to the whole nervous apparatus. The idea that the Great Spirit of the universe is exerting itself in his or her behalf must create a powerful excitation in a credulous mind. Bones are not set by prayer nor by any nervous stimulation. No contagious disease is ever cured by miracle. Diphtheria, fevers, small-pox, and malaria are not influenced by faith. Freckles and sunburn, any disease of the hair or nails, in fact any portion of the body not supplied with sensitive nerves, refuses to yield to the most devout faith.—*Boston Transcript*.

ACID DROPS.

Where was the heavenly Father of all those poor little Sunday school children from Armagh who were crushed to death in the appalling railway accident last week? Human assistance did its utmost to relieve the suffering, but the divine helper in time of trouble was strictly a minus quantity. Nature gives fearful lessons that there is no providence outside science and humanity.

We wish the Lord would just leave off the flood-volcano-and-pestilence business for a while, and assist our Detective Department at Scotland Yard. It is very uncomfortable to know that women's bodies can be cut up and distributed in the river with impunity, and still worse to know that there is a villainous house of business in London, where abortion is supplemented with murder. The Lord missed a great opportunity last autumn when Jack the Ripper was abroad, and he should seize this chance of retrieving his reputation.

The North German Lloyd steamer "Saale" had a narrow escape. On June 11, in a fog, she came into contact with an iceberg, and, according to the report, only "the greatest precautions which the captain was taking at the time saved the steamer." The Lord doesn't seem to have had any share in it, unless he sent the iceberg; yet on the following day a thanksgiving service was held. Still, the captain was not forgotten, for the passengers presented him with an address. But if the Lord saved the ship, why thank the captain? And if the captain saved her, why thank the Lord?

Dr. Pressensé, the Paris correspondent of the *Christian World*, accuses the Municipal Council of "forgetting the neutrality of the civil power." And why? Simply because it took the initiative in raising a monument to Etienne Dolet the Freethought martyr. Dr. Pressensé forgets that burning a man alive is not an "opinion." It is an act—a murder. This is how the Municipal Council regards it, and the statue of Dolet is a tardy reparation. Besides, Dolet, as a printer and editor, occupies a foremost place in the French Renaissance, and deserves a statue even apart from his martyrdom.

There is only one hospital in the metropolis—the London Temperance Hospital—which admits any but members of the Church of England to the nursing staff. Yet, despite this insolent exclusion, the Nonconformists go on meekly collecting every hospital Sunday, and when one Nonconformist church ventures to raise a practical protest, the leaders of the body are ready to declare that cutting off the supplies is not the best remedy. We should have thought it was; and, what is more, the *only* remedy. Stop the cash, and these beastly bigots will learn a much-needed lesson.

According to the *Baptist*, a gentleman has just been admitted to a pastorate in a London suburb after having "just suddenly resigned from a certain post when called upon to answer the gravest charge that can be laid at the door of a responsible man."

"God bless you," writes W. H. Jasper to his wife before jumping over Battersea Bridge to the grave, thus showing that he at least was not one of those wicked Atheists, from whose ranks, according to Talmage, suicides are recruited.

Lord A. Cecil, who has been evangelising in Canada, has not been well looked after by his heavenly father, but while sailing in a boat, in order to hold a series of meetings, fell overboard and was drowned.

The Rev. Charles Spurgeon, son of the distinguished London divine, preached in San Francisco last Sunday. As Mr. Spurgeon during his trip to the Yosemite had paid ministerial attentions to another man's wife had been threatened with a thrashing by an angry husband, his arrival here was attended with considerable *eclat*, and he drew a large audience to listen to his sermon on salvation.—*Freethought*.

Even the workhouse fails to subdue religious strife. Elizabeth Doolan, whom the reporter describes as "a pic-

turesque old lady of 65," entered into a violent quarrel with another woman at the Chelsea Workhouse on the respective merits of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The result was that Elizabeth was brought before the police court and discharged with a caution against further theological controversy.

"Whoso calleth his brother a fool is in danger of hell-fire," said Jesus. "I consider you to be about the most unutterable fool in existence," says the Rev. E. Smythies, of Loughboro', to Mr. Gibson, one of his parishioners.

The Rev. C. J. Voysey is a curious little man. He doesn't like orthodoxy and he hates Freethought. Still, he need not be downright rude to Freethinkers when he happens to be in the chair. One of our readers attended a lecture by Professor Blake the other evening in the Theistic Church, Piccadilly, and at the close he offered some criticism. He was cut short peremptorily at the end of five minutes, though a Christian soon afterwards was allowed nine minutes. This was pointed out to Mr. Voysey, who grew very red and excited.

Shall we know each other in heaven? is a question now occupying the colossal mind of the Rev. Dr. Rentoul, of Plumstead. Considering where most people are going, it is a far more important question, Shall we know each other in hell?

Dr. Rentoul is very learned on what, from the nature of the case, he can know nothing about. He has been telling a large congregation that children won't grow till after the resurrection, so that they and their parents may recognise each other before being glorified. And the same with young men and women. Alfred and Angelina part to meet again, and talk the same dear old nonsense, and indulge in the same sweet old kisses, before they become angels caring for none of these things.

But that isn't all. Dr. Rentoul is great on what happens before birth as well as what happens after death. Some children, he tells us, go through their "second birth" before they are born into the world. How's that for quick? Edison couldn't beat that.

Under the heading "The Folly of Atheism" the *Echo* reprints the hackneyed quotation from John Foster to the effect that unless a man is omnipresent and omniscient he cannot know but that there may be a deity somewhere. Now this often-quoted extract really does not touch Atheism at all. No Atheist ever thought of denying the possible existence of some sort of a something somewhere. He only denies the Deity affirmed by the theologians, and as that Deity is a bundle of contradictions his denial is warranted by reason.

It rests with the affirmer of a proposition to prove it. If the evidence is insufficient the case falls to the ground without the questioner entering on the troublesome task of disproof. But the argument of Foster may be turned against himself. All the works of nature on the Theist's supposition are confessedly finite. How can they prove an infinite Deity? If our ignorance of the whole warrants the affirmation that there *may be* a deity, why should it not warrant the affirmation that there *may not be* a deity? The truth is our ignorance is a good reason for our silence but not for our affirmation either way.

What is truth? asked Pilate, and Bacon says he did not wait for an answer. All the same if he had, perhaps. Mr. St. George Mivart, however, could give Pilate an answer. He has just published a big book on *Truth*, and the volume has so pleased the Pope that he has sent his blessing to the author. Curiously enough, Mr. Mivart throws overboard nine-tenths of the Bible as uninspired, including the parts that Giordano Bruno was burnt for disputing and deriding, and those for impugning which Galileo was imprisoned and tortured.

The *Catholic Times*, in an article on "The Desecration of Rome," finds it "intolerable that the centre of Christianity should be converted into a theatre of irreligious propagandism." Probably it would like to preach a holy crusade against the Italian Freethinkers; but as a call to

arms would find little response, it resorts to the time-honored weapons of calumny and vituperation. Bruno's career was "infamous"; he "did no useful service to his kind"; "he sinned against the light, and so scandalous were his doctrines that the 'Reformers,' who seized almost every opportunity of vilifying the Papacy, were shocked and scandalised by his profanity." We have heard it all before. From the earliest ages of the Church it has refused to recognise anything but utter vileness in heretics, and against them every allegation is justifiable for the glory of God and his Church.

The belief in petitions offered to our Lady in Lourdes is so strong among Irish Catholics that it pays priests to go round to collect petitions and take them to Lourdes, where, after being exposed in the grotto, they are all faithfully burnt.

Miss Stirling, who is grandly styled "the modern prisoner of Chillon" because she is in jail there, will be released to-day (June 23). She is a Salvationist, and her sentence was one hundred days' imprisonment. Considering that her offence was proselytising children against the wish of their parents; that she did this in a foreign land, where she was only a guest; and that her imprisonment is a very mild affair, being nothing but detention; considering these things, it is amusing to hear this loud talk about Miss Stirling's "martyrdom," especially when it comes from people who maintain Blasphemy Laws in England to punish Freethinkers for ventilating their opinions in their native country.

Our pious contemporary, the *Christian World*, is disappointed—yes, *disappointed*—with Professor Huxley on account of his recent article in the *Nineteenth Century*. "We hoped," it exclaims, "that he would have glowed into some warmth of enthusiasm for Christ;" but, instead of this, he "looks down with severe disdain" on the "immense majority of Christians of all confessions." How sad! And how soft! Fancy the editor of a Christian journal expecting the champion of Agnosticism to print little puffs for Jesus!

Prof. Huxley happily does not know the lengths to which the Christian Evidence mongers go in defaming their opponents but he has a pretty good general notion of the nature of the animal. Commenting on Dr. Wace's criticisms he says, "It would appear that 'evasion' is my chief resource, 'incapacity for strict argument,' and 'rotteness of ratiocination' my main mental characteristics, and that it is 'barely credible' that a statement which I profess to make of my own knowledge is true. All which things I notice, merely to illustrate the great truth, forced on me by long experience, that it is only from those who enjoy the blessing of a firm hold of the Christian faith that such manifestations of meekness, patience, and charity are to be expected."

At Chipping Norton there has been a serious schism in the Salvation Army. A "lieutenant" has resigned and established an opposition army, taking away with him a number of his old followers, and, under the patronage of members of the Town Council, he has been proclaiming to a public meeting how the "General" misrules his followers. Booth has got his organisation too well in hand to care much for a few secessions, but when he departs to glory there will probably be splits on a larger scale.

We heard a story the other day from a gentleman who had visited a spiritist *seance* at New York. The result was so ridiculous that the sceptics laughed. "Ah," said the female mejum, "you may laugh; but at this very moment I see the spirit of your dead mother leaning on your shoulder." The spectators looked, but, as Arsenius Ward said, didn't see any mother, and the party addressed explained that he had just left his mother at home that very evening.

Newton and Darwin are nowhere. Don't laugh, it's a fact. The most wonderful discovery of all the ages has just been made, and a gentleman called "Phadrig" communicates it to the *Sheffield Telegraph*. There has been a correspondence in that paper on the Confessional, and it

is with regard to this question that "Phadrig" announces his thrilling discovery.

"Voltaire," he says, "the great enemy of nearly all sects of Christianity, did not believe the Confessional 'degrading' when sending his wife monthly to that tribunal, which is a powerful antidote to the Divorce Court; neither did he prevent his daughter, but he did prevent her entering his library that contained the foul works of his imagination."

"Phadrig" has an imagination as well as Voltaire. The great French Freethinker lived and died a bachelor, but "Phadrig" gives him a wife, and, to keep up the fun, supplies him with a daughter. It is sheer invention, of course, but the *Telegraph* inserts it without suspicion, and the readers will swallow it as gospel.

We have heard "Phadrig" on Voltaire; what a treat it would be to hear Voltaire on "Phadrig."

Whitfield's well-known Tabernacle in the Tottenham Court Road, is a good emblem of Christianity. A fine looking building, with a good congregation, who at length discover to their dismay that the foundations have been gradually sinking, and that there is danger of a total collapse unless the whole edifice is taken down and a new one built in its place.

Talmage says the whole world will be converted before 1900. This is good news for shippers of rum to heathen lands. As they won't have to carry missionaries, they will have more space for rum.

A Connecticut Theological Seminary announced that its courses were open to women on the same terms as to men. Women in future if they want to know anything on theology will not have to follow Paul's advice to ask their husbands, but can take lessons at the Seminary on the usual terms.

High Church and Low Church are quarrelling as violently in Australia as in England. The latter party have made the Bishop of Sydney surrender the reredos of the Cathedral which they looked upon as idolatrous, and have stoutly protested against the appointment of Archdeacon Davis as coadjutor Bishop of Brisbane, on the ground that he was "for ten years a member of an outrageously Romanistic and secret society, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, whose sole work was the propagation of the blasphemous fable of the Mass, and the idolatrous doctrine of the Real Presence."

The editor of the *Brighton Gazette* is very much exercised over the Secularist propaganda at Brighton. He calls Mr. Ball's lines "Because the Bible Tells Me So" the miserable travestie of the Bible given in doggerel verse, and says it is the trump card of "the philosophers of the Level." He declares that Secularists "are not honest searchers after truth," and laments that "this plague of mocking ribald infidelity" is suffered to spread. Yet he says it is easy to answer "the pestilent rubbish of the Secular Society."

By way of answering their "shallow literature" he says, "I have had a number of flimsies thrust under my notice lately. They present a comparison between the Pagan Emperor, Julian, and a certain Christian parent, in which the purple-clad Apostate is represented as being more merciful than the parent, whose backsliding son had reeled back into idolatry. The inference suggested is that Paganism is more tolerant than Christianity. And yet this very Emperor was one of the persecutors of Roman Christians." If the editor is "a searcher after truth" let him turn to any standard history or encyclopædia and he will find that Julian was no persecutor. Gibbon says, "He extended to all the inhabitants of the Roman world the benefits of a free and equal toleration, and the only hardship which he inflicted on the Christians was to deprive them of the power of tormenting their fellow subjects, whom they stigmatised with the odious titles of idolaters and heretics." But we do not suppose the editor of the *Brighton Gazette* reads Gibbon.

The *Christian Commonwealth* treats its readers to some second-hand Carlylean invective against those "who seem in doubt as to whether this world belongs to God or the Devil." Now, St. Paul seems to have been in this very predicament. At one time Satan is spoken of as "the God of this world," and at another, "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

When religion comes in at the door logic always flies out of the window. Here is Mr. F. W. Richardson writing on "Is Tobacco Smoking Injurious? Yes!" and he has something to say on this side of the question. But he apparently thinks his scientific and other reasons insufficient, so he says: "Can you picture to yourself Jesus Christ smoking a meerschaum or a churchwarden clay, or even a cigar. No, you start; think me blasphemous. Then I say, break your pipe, throw away your cigar, if you would be true to your title." But can Mr. Richardson any more easily picture J. C. with a tall hat and an umbrella. Will he urge that followers of Christ should wear but one single garment?

Canon Knox-Little, who calls himself an Aglican but not a Protestant, uses the old "wheeze" that the Devil was the first Protestant, for he protested against God. The saying is common in Catholic countries, where the Devil gets associated with ideas of intellectual freedom, and Satan becomes, like Prometheus, a type of the human spirit unsubdued even in the presence of almighty power.

The decree of the Pope against boycotting has not been of much effect, judging by the proceedings in Donoughmore Roman Catholic chapel, which has had to be closed because the congregation absolutely deserted the gallery where Michel Ryan, who is accused of land-grabbing, has his pew. More than this, they broke open the church and completely cut away and carried off Mr. Ryan's pew.

Religion cultivates a large field whence any humbug seems to reap an easy harvest. Here is a new monthly called *The Pentecostal Power*, in which miracles of faith-healing wrought by the aid of the Rev. B. Dinnick, who has had to leave Oldbury, are as coolly chronicled as though they were gospel. Probably they are just as true as gospel, neither more nor less.

The Bishop of Durham desires it to be known that he gave no permission for any band to play in Auckland Park on Sunday, and that in point of fact the band did not play in his grounds but somewhere else. Dr. Lightfoot is not as liberal as Mr. Labouchere fancied.

The Canadian Protestants are not permitting the Jesuits to absorb so much of the public lands and revenue without protest. Their attitude is watched with keen interest throughout North America. The policy of the Church in encouraging early marriage and population is likely to bring on the old contest of numbers against brain power in the New World no less than in the Old.

The appeal of the Free Methodist church at Rishton for exemption from payment for street improvements has failed. Religious edifices are always a tax on the general public by their exemption from taxation, and they usually try to increase the burden wherever possible.

The Rev. C. Lloyd Engstrom, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, is again the Boyle lecturer this year. He took as his subject "Human Nature and non-Christian Systems." In the hands of Mr. Engstrom, Christian evidences are certainly far from entertaining, unless his congregation were entertained by such stale platitudes as that "materialism was an insult to the intellect." Herbert Spencer was "as nearly religion-blind as a man could be"; his philosophy "robbed the heart of the worthiest object of love, deprived conscience of its eternal sanction, withdrew from responsibility all semblance of meaning, and left room for only the ghost of religion," etc. We fancy we have read it all over and over again before, probably in the writings of St. George Mivart or W. S. Lilly, consistent Catholic opponents of Mr. Spencer.

There is a rumor that Richard Holt Hutton, of the *Spectator*, has gone over to the Catholic Church. We

should say he had found his rightful crib at last. He has never run straight since he lost the guidance of Walter Bagehot.

The *Scotsman* commenting on the annual report of the Church of Scotland Jewish Mission says "In some years there have been accounts of one Jew or two Jews and a half converted by the mission. This year there is not even the fraction of a Jew." Yet of course there is the usual appeal for funds.

The Gallery Cricket Club, which is composed of London journalists, played a clerical team at Dulwich on the 15th instant. Result—the press won. Poor pulpit!

Our smug Home Secretary can "see no reason"—as usual—why he should shorten by a single hour the five years' imprisonment of poor George Harrison, who got into trouble over the Trafalgar Square *fracas* on November 13, 1887, a date known to London Radicals as Bloody Sunday. Harrison is said to have "attacked" the police, though, as a matter of fact, he lost his head and struck out when the police attacked the people. There seems very little doubt now that the police acted illegally. They were within the law on the following Sunday, but on that day they were only covered by Sir Charles Warren's proclamation, which, so far as it related to Trafalgar Square, was not worth the paper it was printed on.

George Harrison's wife (we had almost written *widow*) and children are being supported by the London Radicals. Up to the present enough has come in to pay her the weekly allowance, but there is a good deal of the sentence yet to run, and enthusiasm is apt to cool off in time. Any of our readers who would like to assist may take our assurance that the Fund is in trustworthy hands. There are some collecting sheets at our publishing office, where Mr. Forder will receive subscriptions, and transmit them to the treasurer of the Committee at the West Southwark Radical Club.

"There are some people, perhaps more especially found in London than in the country, who may be called 'religious gypsies.' They have no home, but wander from place to place, using the king's highway, pilfering as they go, and avoiding the king's taxes." This is how the Rev. P. Turquand, secretary of the Surrey Congregational Union, talks of the Established Church. Let brotherly love continue! And let the Blasphemy Laws chastise the infidels who pretend that the Christians are not a happy family!

Prof. B. Labanca has, ament the Bruno monument, called attention to the fact that forty-four years before the execution of Bruno, a youth named Pomponio Algeri, also from Nola, was burnt alive at Rome in the Piazza Navona, near the Campo dei Fiori, on a charge of Atheism.

A story which General Sheridan was fond of telling at the dinner-table, after the coffee had been served and the ladies had retired, went somewhat like this:—"There was a zealous chaplain of the Army of the Potomac, who had called on a colonel, noted for his profanity, to talk of the religious interests of his men. After having been politely motioned to a seat on the chest, the chaplain began:—"Colonel, you have one of the finest regiments in the army." "I believe so," said the colonel in reply. "Do you think" pursued the chaplain, "that you pay sufficient attention to the religious instruction for your men?" "Well, I don't know," doubtfully replied the colonel. "A lively interest has been awakened in the ——— Massachusetts, the parson went on to say. "The Lord has blessed the labors of his servants, and ten have already been baptised." "Is that so?" excitedly cried the colonel, and then, turning to the attendant, added, "Sergeant major, have fifteen men detailed for baptism immediately; I'll be blanked if I'll be outdone by any Massachusetts regiment."

A new religion has sprung up in Toungou Burmah—a sort of mixture of Buddhism and Christianity. The founder is a timber merchant, Koh Pai Sah. The initiatory rite is a handful of rice from the hand of Koh Pai Sah, for which 30 rupees is exacted from a man, 20 from a woman, and 15 from a child. The new religion seems a good deal like the old ones in the main essential, of the believers contributing to the support of the preachers.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 23, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 7.30, "The Fear of Death."

June 30, Hall of Science, London.

July 28, Camberwell.

Aug. 4 and 11, Camberwell.

Sept. 18 and 25, 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.

W. KING.—There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in Dover, though the town contains a good many Freethinkers. This is to be deplored. Mr. Forder, the N. S. S. secretary, will be glad to hear from any Doverites willing to start a Branch.

J. FRESHFIELD.—The *Defence of Free Speech* is printed in good readable type. The special Introduction and Footnotes make this speech of Mr. Foote's before Lord Coleridge perfectly intelligible in the minutest detail. Now the Blasphemy Laws are to the front again this pamphlet might be usefully circulated.

No 12.—Pleased to hear from you again. You are doing an excellent work in distributing Freethought literature.

DARWINISM.—Ingersoll has replied to the Rev. Dr. Field, Judge Black, Mr. Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning. Why should he be afraid to deal with Father Lambert? This priest struck us as being very pert and superficial, and his insulting manner may account for Ingersoll's leaving him severely alone. Ingersoll is a gentleman, and we don't blame him if he only discusses with gentlemen.

G. THACKRAY.—Thanks. We have dealt with the matter again.

C. SAUNDERS.—The references to Krishna's birth and other similarities to the Gospels are found in the Bhagavat Purana, which no Western authority considers pre-Christian. Some similarities to Christian teaching may be traced in the Bhagavat Gita, but the date of that work is also uncertain, most authorities dating it in the first three centuries of the Christian era, though the Brahmins hold it to be much earlier, and Mr. Telang, a Hindu translator, gives good reasons to show it has not been affected by Christian influences. Hindu chronology is a difficult subject, but Gita is clearly a misprint for Purana in *Roots of Christianity*.

H. CALASCA.—You have taken much useless trouble. The "Parson's Idol" you send us has for years appeared in our list of tracts. Mr. Forder will supply any quantity at 6d per 100.

JOSEPH BROWN.—We are glad to hear that the N. E. Secular Federation has a promising future. The two dates are booked. Let us know quickly if a change is desired.

J. COLE.—We certainly agree with you that something should be done in Finsbury Park now the County Council has devoted a space to meetings. Are you willing to start a station there if you are supported?

QUIZ.—(1) The massacre of Protestants in 1640 is an historical fact. There were also gross outrages on Protestants recorded in 1795. Still, the Irish Catholics have not done much persecuting. They haven't had the chance. Over in America they are helping the Catholic Church to become a danger to the Republic. (2) You might try a second-hand bookseller. That is your only chance.

A. JACKSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. B. writes:—"That was a splendid lecture you gave at Woolwich on Sunday afternoon. Along with another member of the Nottingham Branch I thought that after such efforts to organise the party you should have your train fare paid. Hence this order (3s.) which we hope you will accept. We attended Dinmore's coffee tavern and were pleased to see so many signing to become members." Mr. Foote accepts what is so kindly tendered. He delivers these outdoor lectures gratuitously and pays travelling expenses as well.

H. RICHARDSON.—It is said to have been done in the Middle Ages.

C. E. FORD.—Glad to hear you are making the bigots "sit up" at Brighton. You should feel complimented by their alarm.

J. COX.—Cuttings are always welcome.

HAPPY INFIDEL.—Thanks for the jokes. Pleased to hear you find the *Bible Handbook* so useful. Probably the Deceased

Wife's Sister Bill will be brought before the House next year. It was lost in the Lords by 147 to 120. It is doubtful if it will be passed while the Conservatives are in power. You can help the advance of Freethought by circulating our literature.

C. HENDRICK.—See "Acid Drops."

R. DAVISON.—The piety of the *Detroit Free Press* is like rice powder on a red face. A good revival injures the circulation of humorous papers, and we can understand that two or three of your acquaintances, having been bitten by a fierce revivalist, refused to look at a copy again. Yes, the *D. F. P.* is indeed silly to run down Ingersoll.

ENQUIRER.—Perfect nonsense! It is rightly signed by "Tom Tit."

FREETHINKER CIRCULATION FUND.—Spent by the editor in advertising and circulating this journal. R. A. 1s.; M. Stimpson, 2s. 6d.

W. CHIPPERFIELD.—Thanks. But the fact is rather old for comment now.

S. A.—Your jokes will appear, in whole or in part, in due course. We always have a good stock in hand.

AGNOSTIC SYMPATHISER.—Received with thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Menschentum—Le Danton—Le Centenaire de 1789—Open Court—Le Mot d'Ordre—L'Eclair—Secular Thought—Ironclad Age—Freethought—Bulletin des Sommaires—Lucifer—La Lanterne—Fair Play—Der Arme Teufel—Daily Chronicle—Catholic Times—Der Lichtfreund.

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.

The *Freethinker* ran out of print again last week. Any subscriber who was disappointed will be able to get a copy of that number out of this week's returns. We beg to repeat that we are now issuing a weekly contents-sheet. Any newagent or other person who undertakes to exhibit one (or more) can have it posted weekly by applying to Mr. Forder.

OUR next number will contain a series of Four Sketches on Moses killing the Egyptian. They are prettily drawn, and illustrate the "meekness" of this Bible hero. We shall print for a large demand.

MR. FOOTE ran down to Woolwich on Sunday afternoon to deliver an open-air lecture at Beresford-square, near the Arsenal gates. Prior to the hour announced—three o'clock—the Salvation Army turned up with a big band and occupied the square, forming a hollow circle so as to cover as much ground as possible. There was about ten minutes' tootling, singing, and shouting, and finally Brother Somebody was dragged out by the Captain to make his first public speech. This he got through like an old stager. His object was to get a good collection, and as that was his maiden effort, he hoped the folks would encourage him by shelling out handsomely. Alas! they didn't. All they subscribed was three or four shillings. However, the captain thanked the donors, said the Lord would return half-a-crown to every one who had launched out a tanner, and hoped to have a bigger collection next time. Thereupon the army marched off to its gospel-shop, with enough spoil of the Egyptians to buy teetotal lotion for the band.

PRESENTLY a waggon rolled up with three chairs, and the lecturer felt that this must be his platform. But where was the chairman? After waiting some time in vain, a substitute was found in the President of the West Ham Branch. By this time a big crowd had collected, and Mr. Foote had the pleasure of a larger and more attentive audience than had been expected. The lecture on "Bible Blunders" lasted an hour, and the interruptions were comparatively few. One elegant Christian threatened to become a standing nuisance, but he retired at last, discharging a final volley of adjectives, in which the sanguinary fluid of his Redeemer played a leading part. There was no opposition, only a few questions; and after a vote of thanks to the lecturer the Branch adjourned to a coffee shop, nearly opposite, where several new members were enrolled.

MR. FOOTE'S visit to Woolwich stirred up the zeal of the Christian Evidence Society. Three lecturers were sent down specially to hold the fort in relays. According to the reports we have received, they amused themselves after the usual fashion of Engstrom's underlings, spending

their time in defaming Freethought leaders, and putting their own filth into the *Freethinker*. A copy of the famous Christmas Number for 1882 was mysteriously produced and referred to, as though it contained something "orful"—something that would beat the Bible hollow and make the story of the Lot family seem a beautiful idyll. "I hold it in my hand," exclaimed one of the trio *à la* Samuel Smith. A thrill of horror went through a few of the elect. They didn't know what was in it, but he "held it in his hand!"

SINCE the 18th of Dec., 1520, when Luther burned the Pope's bull at the gates of Wittenberg, it is doubtful if the imagination of the Catholic World has felt such a shock as that produced by the inauguration of the monument to Bruno in Rome on June 9th. The English papers have given it little attention, but the continental Catholic press is horrified at this insult to the Pope under his very nose.

THE Catholic *Tablet* seeks to show the anti-Christian character of the demonstration. It says of Bruno's opinions, "As far as can be gathered they were distinctively anti-Christian, and none of the leaders of the so-called reform party, Calvin, Luther or Melancthon, claimed him as their disciple." In one part of the paper it says he was burnt as "a dangerous conspirator against the whole established order of the world." In another part it seeks to cast doubt on the execution as insufficiently attested, although it was chronicled in the official Roman paper two days after the occurrence.

The *Weekly Register* (R. C.) has an article entitled "Mourning at the Vatican," in which it quotes the Pope's words "A day far more fatal is this than that of September, 1870, when Rome was taken," and deplores that after ten o'clock on this mournful Whit Sunday every church in Rome was shut, and especially that Roman women took part in the procession four abreast, and laid a wreath at the feet of the statue. All the Catholic papers regard the event as a triumph for infidelity, and their anger is intensified by the evidence that the Roman people do not want any return of the temporal power.

L'Epoca has in successive numbers devoted three full page lithographs to the occasion. The first was an allegory representing Fame crowning the statue of Bruno, while chains and instruments of torture lie at his feet; the second depicted the scene in the Campo dei Fiori and the third is another allegory "Il trionfo del libero pensiero," in which Signor Crispi stands before the statue holding the flag of Freethought, while at his feet are howling priests with their protest against the monument.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON writes to us from Sweden, thanking us for the support we gave to his friends, Messrs. Lennstrand and Lindkvist. He also informs us that he has translated *Infidel Death-Beds*, and asks leave to publish it. He has likewise translated some *Freethinker* articles by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler for the new Swedish organ of Freethought.

ON Sunday evening the band played for the first time on Peckham Rye. Thousands of people were present, family parties being very noticeable. A letter from Sir Arthur Sullivan, who is a subscriber to the movement, was printed on the back of the programme.

The *Church Review* deplores the increase of aristocratic parties on Sundays, and says, "There is no use shutting our eyes to the gradual secularisation of Sunday." Yes, Mr. *Church Reviewer*, this is one of the signs that the kingdom of God is making way for the republic of man.

MR. R. O. SMITH, honorary treasurer of the London Secular Federation, 142 Old Street, E.C., acknowledges the following subscription: Miss H. Wilkie (Transvaal), £2.

WE regret to announce a hitch with respect to the Federation excursion to Brighton. The Directors decline to put on a special train for the "London Secular Society." What does Mr. Samuel Laing say to this? At any rate, it throws the arrangements out of gear for the moment. We hope to make a definite announcement next week.

AN important meeting of the North-Eastern Secular Federation will be held at the rooms of the Newcastle Branch, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, at 3 p.m. to-day (June 23). All delegates are requested to attend. Tea will be provided.

THE Committee of the Hall of Science Childrens' Party (London) meet this evening (June 23) to make arrangements. Subscriptions will be thankfully received by W. Cooke, 1a Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

WE hear that the Liverpool Branch is in urgent need of pecuniary support, and we appeal to the Freethinkers in the district to give it immediately. Mr. Foote has offered to run down and lecture early in July, when the friends of the movement might be gathered together.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH, M.P., is paying the expenses of a Christian Evidence agent in Liverpool, whose name is Wise. This is the gentleman who was sent round to follow Mr. Foote in the North. He was courteous enough on those occasions, but we regret to hear very bad reports of him since. Unless he is belied by our informants, he is now following the good old Christian Evidence policy of reckless defamation. This is a good reason why the Branch should be promptly and generously supported.

MR. WALSER reports that the infidel settlement at Liberal, Barton county, Missouri, is prospering. He says: "So far as Liberal is concerned it presents as fair a record as any town on earth, and to-day it is the glory and pride of all high-minded Liberals in the land. It presents a record that was never presented before—a town of seven hundred population; nine years old; two railroads; two coal banks—and has never had a priest, preacher nor church; and what is as equally striking, there has never been a resident justice of the peace nor a constable in the town, with the exception of an appointed justice for a few months after the town was started. I defy any other town to present as fair a showing. The merchants and everybody are doing well, while the adjoining town, Christian Pedro, with its two churches is dead and the principal men have sold out at auction and are going out to make a living by selling washing machines."

M. CLEMENCEAU, the leader of the French Radicals, speaks with no uncertain voice on the Church question. Replying in the Chamber recently to Bishop Freppel, he said:—"On this point there are only shades of difference among us Republicans. Whatever happens we shall all always be prepared to present a united front against the Catholic Church. Why? Because you, who uphold the Catholic Church, are actuated less by a religious idea than by a theory of government. You aim at re-establishing the most monstrous system the world has ever seen, a theocratic government. We, with all our faults, our infirmities, our mistakes, represent the principle of the sovereignty of the nation; that is to say, liberty as opposed to oppression, justice *versus* privilege. Therefore we two are for ever irreconcilable; there can be no peace or truce between us. Our fathers fought against your fathers; we are fighting to-day, and shall hand down our weapons to our children."

ACCORDING to the *Echo* Mrs. Besant is going to attend a Woman's Parliament in Paris towards the end of this month. Our contemporary breathes a pious "hope that other nations will not judge the views of English women by Mrs. Besant." Why? What particular heresy on the woman question does she hold to make her such a shocking representative? The *Echo* should explain.

THE *Freethinkers' Magazine* has been for over six years a worthy representative of the cause in America. The number for June gives a portrait and notice of Lucy N. Colman, one of the anti-slavery leaders, who, like Mrs. Stanton, Parker-Pillsbury, C. A. Bradford and others, left the Church, finding it the bulwark of slavery, and fought beside Mrs. Rose and other "infidels," and is now an avowed sceptic. We hope that Mr. Green, the editor of this magazine, who has kept the flag flying often under discouraging circumstances, will be sustained in his efforts to make the magazine a power in the States.

FRIENDLY congratulations to C. Hermann Boppe the editor of the *Freidenker*, who we see has led a bride to the hymenæal altar, or at any rate to the registrar of marriages.

De Dageraad, of Amsterdam for 15th June, 1889, may be called a Bruno-number. An article on the Bruno monument is supplied by Prof. Moleschoff, and a biographical sketch of the great martyr is translated by J. Van den Ende. In addition a picture of the statue is given, printed for *De Dageraad* by the *Freethinker*.

THE following extracts from the current report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts will show that Christianity has an active enemy to deal with abroad as well as at home. In Colombo, Ceylon, "The Buddhists have formed themselves into a strong party . . . they try to convert even Christians to Buddhism. . . They have also opened Buddhist opposition schools . . . they have instituted a society for the propagation of Buddhism, for publishing books and tracts on their own religion; but there is another society called the Buddhist Association, whose main object is to publish books and tracts against Christianity." Again, in Japan, "The Buddhists . . . have been stirred up . . . and now regularly send their most famous preachers to visit those parts where Christianity is especially making headway. Mr. Nanjo, who was for some time a pupil of Professor Max Müller, is now a priest stationed at the great temple of Hougnauji in Nagoya, and from thence he also visits the country districts in the neighborhood. The effects, however, of his preaching a reformed Buddhism are often more disastrous than otherwise, for when he tells the people that they ought no longer to worship or reverence the idols and shrines to which they have been for ages accustomed, he is very apt to bring both the priests and people about his ears."

IN France, between 1882 and 1887 the number of ecclesiastically-educated masters and mistresses in public schools decreased from 11,000 to 9,000, lay teachers being gradually substituted. The schools with lay masters or mistresses have increased from 51,000 to 57,000 in the same period.

ONE of the characteristic touches in Prof. Huxley's article on "Agnosticism and Christianity," is that where he points out that the evidence of spiritists' miracles is far superior to that adduced for the Invention of the Cross, and then puts into a footnote "Dr. Newman's observations that the miraculous multiplication of the pieces of the true cross is no more wonderful than that of the loaves and the fishes, is one that I do not see my way to contradict." Prof. Huxley, like Gibbon, puts some of his sharpest observations into footnotes.

THE Congress of the German Freethinkers' Union at Chemnitz appears to have been a success. It was presided over by Dr. Ludwig Büchner, and addressed by Dr. Rudt, of Heidelberg, Konrad Ettel, of Vienna, and Dr. Specht, of Gotha.

SOUTH SHIELDS.—Last Sunday we made our second excursion to Holywell Dene. There was a large and highly-respectable gathering of members and friends from North and South Shields and Jarrow. The weather was exceedingly fine, and admirably suited to a ramble and picnic beneath the trees. Some scrambled about the beautiful dene, enjoying the picturesque scenery, while others danced or played cricket and various other games upon the green. Towards evening the whole party met together to hear an address from the still ardent Shields veteran, Mr. T. Thompson, who, after some appropriate remarks on the occasion, dwelt on the labors of past and present Free-thought workers in his usual able style. Several natives stood around listening to the old reformer, and looking with curious eyes upon their strange visitors. Capt. Duncan presided over a very attentive audience. Tea was supplied by the ladies in an excellent manner. The return home was enlivened by selections of dance music, etc., and what was unanimously decided to have been a glorious day was brought to a close with a song of "Auld Lang Syne."—R. CHAPMAN.

GIORDANO BRUNO.

JUNE 9TH, 1889.

I.

Not from without us, only from within,
Comes or can ever come upon us light
Whereby the soul keeps ever truth in sight.
No truth, no strength, no comfort man may win,
No grace for guidance, no release from sin,
Save of his own soul's giving. Deep and bright
As fire enkindled in the core of night
Burns in the soul where once its fire has been
The light that leads and quickens thought, inspired
To doubt and trust and conquer. So he said
Whom Sidney, flower of England, lordliest head
Of all we love, loved: but the fates required
A sacrifice to hate and hell, ere fame
Should set with his in heaven Giordano's name.

II.

Cover thine eyes and weep, O child of hell,
Grey spouse of Satan, Church of name abhorred,
Weep, withered harlot, with thy weeping lord.
Now none will buy the heaven thou hast to sell
At price of prostituted souls, and swell
Thy loveless list of lovers. Fire and sword
No more are thine: the steel, the wheel, the cord,
The flames that rose round living limbs, and fell
In lifeless ash and ember, now no more
Approve thee godlike. Rome, redeemed at last
From all the red pollution of thy past,
Acclaims the grave bright face that smiled of yore
Even on the fire that caught it round and clomb
To cast its ashes on the face of Rome.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

(Athenæum.)

THOSE PIGS AGAIN.

"THE Gardarene miracle either happened, or it did not. Whether the Gardarene 'question' is moral or religious, or not, has nothing to do with the fact that it is a purely historical question whether the demons said what they are declared to have said, and the devil-possessed pigs did or did not rush over the cliffs of the lake of Gennesareth, on a certain day of a certain year, after A.D. 26 and before A.D. 36, for vague and uncertain as New Testament chronology is, I suppose it may be assumed that the event in question, if it happened at all, took place during the procuratorship of Pilate. If that is not a matter about which evidence ought to be required, and not only legal, but strict scientific proof demanded by sane men who are asked to believe the story—what is? Is a reasonable being to be seriously asked to credit statements, which, to put the case gently, are not exactly probable, and on the acceptance or rejection of which his whole view of life may depend, without asking for as much 'legal' proof as would send an alleged pickpocket to gaol, or would suffice to prove the validity of a disputed will."—Professor Huxley, in *Nineteenth Century*.

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- (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.

THAT CONVERTED INFIDEL.

"How Tracts are Manufactured" was the title of a leaderette in our issue for June 2. The culprit was the Rev. P. B. Power, of Richmond, who, in a tract entitled "The Infidel Who Shouted Glory," gave a cock-and-bull story of a converted Atheist whose name and address he was unable to give, or even the date of the interesting event. Our criticism seems to have hit the reverend gentleman pretty hard, for he writes the following letter to the correspondent who furnished us with the information:—

"Richmond, S.W., June 11, 1889.

"Dear Sir,—Referring to your letter received some week ago, requesting to know certain particulars with reference to the person mentioned in a tract written by me, entitled "The Infidel Who Shouted Glory," I am now able to inform you that his name was John Hubbuck, of Cubitt Town. It was in the London Hospital that he met the man whose happy death was the means of his conversion from infidelity. No doubt it was at Cubitt Town that the accident happened which caused his own death.

"If you wish to pursue the matter further, you may possibly by investigations at Cubitt Town discover the family; though, considering the migratory habits of the London poor, and the natural difficulty of finding in a large place a person who has probably no claim to be especially known, your efforts would not be crowned with success.

"As many infidels have renounced their infidelity—and it is a very common thing for Wesleyans (of whom the man in question became one) to give vent to their feelings in expressions such as he used—and, moreover, as accidents are known to occur and take away life, there is no element of improbability in the narrative given.

"My attention has been drawn to a notice of our brief correspondence given in some paper, the name of which I do not know, as it is not on the said extract. Whoever has inserted this notice must have received his information from you. If you think it worth while you can make him acquainted with the contents of this letter. He will, perhaps, on reflection, see the absurdity of disbelieving that a certain thing happened because he does not know the surname and address of the person to whom it is said to have happened, e.g., John's leg was never broken because he does not know where John lived—nor did it happen because he does not know the locality where it occurred—nor is it to be believed, because it happened a few years ago; and its incredibility is clinched by the fact that the destiny of his widow and children, now that he is dead, cannot be traced in London with some millions of inhabitants.

"This gentleman undertakes to say that the story 'is a lie from beginning to end.' I will not exchange courtesies with him on this basis, but just observe that he makes this statement either from some authority on which he can reasonably rely—and if so what?—or out of his own head—in which latter case I need not follow it further. It is generally considered rather a hard thing to prove a negative, but he may be equal to the occasion.

"Although from the nature of the case I cannot give you the full information you desire, I have given you such as is at my command. I would only add that from the appearance of the type in which the anecdote came into my hands, I believe it appeared in the *Christian World*, a paper probably worthy of as much credit as the one from which I have received the extract alluded to above.—I remain, yours truly,
P. B. POWER."

Now we have a few remarks to make. No doubt Mr. Power is annoyed at finding his tract called "a lie from beginning to end," and we meant him to feel so. He gives a story as within his own knowledge, then says he knows nothing about it personally, then takes weeks to discover or invent his authority, and finally falls back upon a scrap of printed paper, which he *suspects* is a cutting from some undatable number of the *Christian World*. This is quite enough. We called the story a lie, and so far from being sorry we are astonished at our moderation.

Mr. Power doesn't understand that it is his business to confirm his own story. He stupidly exclaims "You can't disprove it." Of course not. If we said "A man swallowed three Sheffield knives and two pounds of gunpowder yesterday," how could Mr. Power disprove it? He would say to us "Produce your evidence." If we couldn't he would rightly call it a lie, and that is exactly what we call his wretched piece of imposture.

We are not going to seek for John Hubbuck of Cubitt Town. We are not told when he lived there or in what street. Mr. Power doesn't know how many years ago it happened. He has the incredible impudence to put his name to a tract narrating the conversion of an infidel, and on being taken to task he says, "I made it up from a scrap of paper that fell into my hands. I don't know what journal it came from. I don't know anybody who knew the facts. I don't know how many years ago it happened—perhaps twenty. The man's name was Hubbuck, and he lived somewhere in Cubitt Town. That's all I care about the matter. If you want to know more you must search for yourself."

Mr. Power calls this honest, and perhaps he thinks so. It only shows the degrading effect of religion, and especially the pulpit, on human character.

RELIGION AND PRIESTS IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Perhaps it may interest some of the readers of this paper to learn how religion is practised in this priest-ridden country. I am a soldier, and have been stationed in Ireland for some time, and being compelled by Queen's Regulations to attend some place of worship, I attend the church which I belonged to before becoming a Freethinker—that is the Church of Rome; and I have therefore an opportunity of observing how the people of this country are imposed on by the priests of that Church.

My idea before I came to Ireland of the Irish priest was taken from the works of Charles Lever, where he is always depicted as a jolly, good-natured, easy-going kind of individual, but that idea has been dispelled since I have become acquainted with, and found out what the average Irish priest is really like. I can easily imagine now how it is the priest has so much power in dispersing the people at meetings, as he is held in greater fear than the police; the people have such exaggerated ideas of his spiritual power, and think that he could strike them dead by only speaking a few words. Some of the stories I have had related to me by people here of the power of the priest are astounding. Here is one of them:—A man who was remonstrated with by a priest, rose his foot to kick him, when he was struck with his leg in a kicking position and has never been able to get his leg back to its natural position. I have been told such stories as these by people who are ready to swear that they are true. The priests do not neglect to make use of the hold they have on the credulity of the people to the fullest, and some of the sermons I hear preached here, if preached to an intelligent English congregation, would be laughed at. Not long back the priest was advising the people from the altar to always have a candle burning when anyone was sick in the house—"the bigger the better;" and if the person died while the candle was burning, it would insure the passage of the soul to heaven. One of the favorite subjects for preaching on is the injunction of Jesus to "take no thought for the morrow," etc.; and this lesson of universal improvidence they impress on the people. To use the words of one of them, "It's a beautiful argument," referring to how God feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field, and if the people only trust in God he will do the same for them. Such stories as this the people swallow, when they can see the evidence against it in the bare feet and rags, as well as the starving condition of the congregation, who trust only too much in God.

The priests are not satisfied with preaching from the altar such fallacious doctrines as I have mentioned, but they prevent every amusement the people indulge in. Only the other night, at a fair which is stepping in the town I am stationed in, I saw two priests hunting all the young women from off the swings and roundabouts and sending them home, to the ruin of the proprietors of the swings, etc., who lost most of their trade after all the fair sex had been so ruthlessly turned off. It was a wonder there was not some of the young women hurt in the stampede that occurred as the black coats and unprepossessing visages of the priests were seen approaching. Such is the awful dread they are held in by the people. I think this country will never prosper till, like Italy, they throw off the power of the priests; but I am afraid the time is a long way off, as the priest has too firm a hold on the convictions of the people.

G. FAHEY,
R.I. Rifles, Mullingar.

Why are mosquitoes the most religious of insects?—Because they first sing over you and then prey on you.

WAS SOLOMON THE WISEST MAN?

I READ considerable to Jim about kings, and dukes, and earls, and such, and how gaudy they dressed, and how much style they put on, and called each other your majesty, and your grace, and so on, instead of mister; and Jim's eyes bulged out, and he was interested. He says:—"I didn't know dey was so many on um. I hain't hearn 'bout none on um, skasely, but ole King Sollermun, onless you counts dem kings dat's in a pack er k'yards. How much do a king git?" "Get?" I says; "why, they get a thousand dollars a month if they want it. They can have just as much as they want. Everything belongs to them." Ain't dat gay! En what dey got to do, Huck?" "They don't du nothing. Why, how you talk. They just set around." No; is dat so?" "Of course it is. They just set around. Except may be when there's a war; they go to war. But other times they just lazy around, or go hawking and sp—Sh!—d'you hear a noise?" we skipped out and looked; but it warn't nothing but the flutter of a steamboat's wheel away down coming round the point. So we come back. "Yes," says I, "and other times, when things is dull, they fuss with the Parlyment; and if everybody don't go just so he whacks their heads off. But mostly they hang round the harem." "Roun' de which?" "Harem." "What's de harem?" "The place where he keeps his wives." Don't you know about the harem? Solomon had one; he had about a million wives." "Why, yes, dat's so; I—I don't forget it. A harem's a bo'd'n-house, I reck'n. Mos likely dey has rackety times in de nussery. En I reck'n de wives quarrels considerable; in dat 'crease de racket. Yit dey say Sollermun de wisest man dat ever live, I doan' take no stock in dat. Bekase why—would a wise man want to live in de mids' er sich a blimblamin' all de time? No—'ndeed he wouldn't. A wise man 'ud taken en buil' a biler-factory; en den he could shet down de biler-factory when he want to res'." "Well, but he was the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, her own self." "I doan' k'yer what de widder say, he wern't no wise man, nuther. He had some er de dad fetchedes' ways I ever see. Does you know 'bout dat chile dat he 'uz gwyne to chop in two?" "Yes, the widow told me all about it." "Well, den! Warn' dat de beatenes' notio in de worl'? You jes' take en look at it a minute dah's de stump, dah—dat's one er de woman: heah you—dat's de yuths one; It's Sollermun; en dish-yer dollar bill's de chile. Bofe un you claim it, What does I do! Does I shin aroun mongs de neighbours en fine out which un you de bill da b'long to, en han' it over to de right one, all safe en soun', de way dat anybody dat had any gumption would? No I take en whack de bill in two, en give half un it to you en de yuther half to ye yuther woman. Dat's de way Sollermun was gwyne to de wid de chile. Now I want to ast you; what's de use er dat half a bill?—can't buy noth'n wid it. En what use is a half a chile? I would'n give a dern for a million un um." "But hang it, Jim, you've clean missed the point—blame it a thousand mile." "Who? Me? Go 'long. Doan' talk to me 'bout yo' pints. I reck'n I knows sense when I sees it? en dey ain't no sense in sich doin's as dat. De 'spute war 'bout a whole chile; en de man dat think he kin settle a 'spute 'bout a whole chile wid a half a chile, doan' know enough to come in out'n de rain. Doan' talk to me 'bout Sollermun, Huck, I knows him by de back." "But I tell you you don't get the point." "Blame de pint! I reck'n I knows what I

knows, En mine you, de real pint is down funder—it's down deeper. It lays in de way Sollermun was raised. You take a man dat's got on'y one er two chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o' chillen; is dat man gwyne to be waseful o' chillen? No, he ain't; he can't 'ford it. He know how to value 'em. But you take a man dat's got 'bout five million chillen runnin' roun' de house, en it's diffunt. He as soon chop a chile in two as a cat. Dey's plenty mo', a chile or two mo' er less, warn't no consekens to Sollermun, dad fetch him; I never see such a nigger. If he got a notion in his head once, there warn't no getting it out again. He was the most down on Solomon of any nigger I ever see. So I went to talking about other kings, and let Solomon slide.—Mark Twain.

REVIEW.

On Faith as an Intellectual Function. By Robert Park, M.D. London: Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's Court.—The author of this essay calls it "a first contribution to a religion of eufidelity," and "eufidelity" he defines as "the positive aspect or status of the intellect in view of the Agnostic philosophy." He proposes a new Church, with a creed consisting of axioms "logically deducible by us as moral beings from the premises of our transitory existence on a fragment of a vast universe, apparently designed with purpose, but certainly ordered with precise laws." Anyone in want of such a Church may possibly derive benefit from what Dr. Park has to say on faith as an intellectual function.

HEINE ON RELIGION.

I got into many a scrape through *la religion*. I was once asked at least six times in succession: HENRI, what is the French for 'the faith?' And six times, ever more weepingly, I replied. "It is called *le crédit*." And after the seventh question, with his cheeks of a deep red-cherry-rage color, my furious examiner cried "It is called *la religion*!"—and there was a rain of blows and a thunder of laughter from all my schoolmates. MADAME!—since that day I never hear the word *religion*, without having my back turn pale with terror, and my cheeks turn red with shame. And to tell the honest truth, *le crédit* has during my life stood me in better stead than *la religion*. It occurs to me just at this instant that I still owe the laudlord of the Lion in Bologna five dollars. And I pledge you my sacred word of honour that I would willingly owe him five dollars more, if I could only be certain that I should never again hear that unlucky word, *la religion*, as long as I live.—Heine's *Reisebilder*.

PROFANE JOKES.

Master Ned (to the Rev. Dr. Trehern): "Wish I'd been here last night when you baptised the company." Rev. Dr. Trehern: "What do you mean, my son? I did not baptise anybody." "No? Well, mamma said that when you came in last night you threw cold water on everybody."

"What was it that David said to Solomon on a certain occasion?" asked a Texas Sunday-school teacher of his class. A boy with an anxious expression of countenance raises his hand. "What did David say?" "Tom Jones ran a pin into me clean up to the head, and it's in there yet!"

Mother: "And if I tell you the story about the babe in the manger and the wise men from the East, Bobby, will you go to sleep?" Bobby (after studying for a moment): "No, ma; you tell me the story about Jack the Giant-killer first, and I'll go to sleep while you're telling about the babe in the manger."—*Texas Siftings*.

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