

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES'S CONVERTED ATHEIST. A LIE IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

DURING the month of August the *Methodist Times* published in five chapters the story of "The Atheist Shoemaker: a Page in the History of the West London Mission. By the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes." Probably it was reckoned good copy—something to tickle the ears of Methodist readers, who are always strong on "conversion;" and something to tickle the purses of the wealthy subscribers to the new and costly experiment of evangelising the West End. Anyhow the author had to undergo no very close editorial scrutiny; no questions were asked as to the truth of the story, in case anyone should make inquiries; for, in fact, the author and the editor were the same person—the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

From the little we know of this gentleman we should not be disposed to accept his bare word on any matter in which "religion" or "morality" is in question. We had to report a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society he attended in Exeter Hall on May 20, 1887, at which he told a monstrous false story about a Freethought lecturess, and promulgated a most ridiculous fable as to the proceedings of the Council of Nice.* More recently we had occasion to animadvert on his appalling looseness of statement at a great "purity" meeting in St. James's Hall, where the reverend gentleman, trusting to information he never took the trouble to examine, perpetrated a gross libel on the Aquarium; a libel which he was subsequently obliged to eat every word of, under a threat of prosecution. Mr. Hughes may be honorable enough in private. As to that we know nothing, and care as little. But we believe his mind is easily perverted by sentiment, and a pretty extensive acquaintance with the history of his Church convinces us that the best of Christians have not been very particular about "stretching" for the glory and honor of God.

It is not our intention to assert anything worse of Mr. Hughes's story than that it *looks* a lie. This may sound as good, or as bad, as calling it a lie straight out. But a little reflection will show that we make a reservation. If Mr. Hughes furnishes us with *proofs* we will confess our mistake, and apologise for throwing a doubt upon his honor. But until then we can only judge upon the evidence before us, and we say deliberately that we never met with a story which bore more obvious marks of concoction.

To begin with, the interests of Methodism are kept very carefully in view. When the Atheist shoemaker goes with his pious young wife to an Afternoon Conference, he finds himself sitting next to a parson. Now the parson, of course, belonged to a rival Church, and it was a good stroke to make him jealous. The Atheist remarks, "It's really wonderful to get such crowds as these at the West End. This Mission is a

great success." Whereupon the parson "lifting his eyebrows and sniffing in the air" remarks that "It costs a great deal of money." To which the Atheist rejoins, "Why, sir, if I believed in God, I should not think all the money in the Bank of England too much to carry on a work like this." Capital! Mr. Hughes is anything but a fool. It is a clever touch, well brought in. The Mission *does* cost a good deal, the money had to be raised by vigorous begging, and perhaps there were subscribers who hardly thought the results commensurate with the outlay. How judicious, then, to put this financial reflection into the mouth of an Atheist—a most impartial witness!—and in reply to a parson, belonging to a Church that spends a great deal more money than Methodists have the luck to lay their hands on!

Curiously enough, again, when the sick Atheist shoemaker, after finding Jesus by the aid of a Methodist Sister, goes to a Convalescent Home, it turns out to be a High Church establishment, and Sister Agatha nearly undoes all the good work of Sister Beatrice. She asks him to join her gospel-shop, tells him "There is only one Church in this country," and says that "Dissenters are going to heaven by the back stairs." Could there be a shrewder way of suggesting that Methodist Sisters are better Christians, and better worth supporting, than High Church Sisters? Sectarian bitterness reigns in the Convalescent Home. Sister Agatha gets at him, the inmates get at him, and they get at each other; so that he has a two-hours' agony and bloody sweat in wrestling with the Devil, who asks him whether it is worth his while to remain with this happy family of Christians. He pulls through, however, by turning his mind from the *High Church* Sister and thinking of the *Methodist* Sister. More business, Mr. Hughes, more business! and very good business, too.

Here is another bit of business, rather more subtle and delicate, thrown in with rarer skill, and apt to escape a superficial reader. The Atheist's young wife, who goes first to the Sunday afternoon meetings, is of Celtic origin, and "by birth and early training a Roman Catholic." After hearing Mr. Hughes preach about "the living Christ and present salvation," she silently resolves to "trust that Christ more fully than she had even trusted him before." This is one of Mr. Hughes's master-strokes. How soft and insinuating is the suggestion of the religious superiority of Methodism over Catholicism! It is these nice hints and flying touches that reveal the artist.

Then again—and this is a bolder stroke of policy; a blow from a bludgeon, so to speak, rather than a thrust of a fine rapier—Mr. Hughes guards himself at the very outset against the embarrassment of prying sceptics. The Atheist shoemaker, who is happily dispatched to glory—not by "the back stairs"—in the fifth and last chapter, willingly consented to the publication of all the facts of his case, and indeed "there is no reason for concealment." Here the unsuspecting reader would imagine that he

* See *Freethinker*, May 29, 1887.

was going to get all the facts. But Mr. Hughes is not so simple as that. There is a "But"—not too much "But" but just "But" enough. "Some of those who must appear on the scene shrink from publicity," so fictitious names are given to all the characters, including the converted Atheist, and all the clues are discreetly cut away with a single snip of the artist's scissors. It is the old, old story. Names, dates, and places are carefully withheld. Investigation is baffled, and everything is left to faith.

Mr. Hughes has been pressed on this matter. Freethinkers, we understand, have written to him. We have seen his reply to Mr. Robert Forder, the secretary of the National Secular Society. Mr. Hughes refers him to the introductory paragraph, which explains why he is unable to give information. Any other information as to the mission work is at Mr. Forder's service, but not this. Of course not!

Were there a substratum of truth in the story, clear proof would remain of its having been cooked. "One dark night last winter," as an opening sentence, is enough to satisfy an intelligent reader. Conversations are given, not in substance, but verbally, although they took place in circumstances in which it was impossible for them to be recorded. The Atheist's tones, gestures, and expression are described, although nearly everything happens in the writer's absence. In short, we have every characteristic of a pious invention.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

RICHARD CARLILE

ENGLISHMAN boast of their palladium of liberty, a free press, too often with but little knowledge of the struggles by which it was conquered, and with no remembrance of the heroes and martyrs who suffered in those struggles and made victory possible. Among these none deserve to rank higher than Richard Carlile.

The son of a shoemaker, Carlile was born Dec. 8th, 1790, at Ashburton in Devonshire. As a boy he collected faggots to burn in effigy "Tom Paine" (the Guy Fawkes of all the parsons and squires of that time), whose writings were afterwards to influence him greatly, though it was not until 1810, when he was twenty years old, that he first saw in the hands of an old man in Exeter, a copy of the *Rights of Man*.

Like the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, whom he resembled in the single quality of unswerving courage, Carlile became a tinman, followed that business till his twenty-sixth year, when the distress of the time, the result of the expensive wars against Napoleon, and the high-handed measures of Government, induced him to eke out scant employment by the sale of Cobbett's *Register*, Wooler's *Black Dwarf* and other Radical periodicals which the authorities were anxious to suppress. The spirit with which he entered on their sale attracted notice.

Mr. Sherwin, then starting *The Republican*, offered Carlile the publishing of the paper. Premises were taken at 183 Fleet Street, afterwards occupied by Cobbett, Carlile guaranteeing Mr. Sherwin against arrest, which left him free to be bold without danger. Here Carlile soon built up a little business. He published Southey's *Wat Tyler*, of which he sold twenty-five thousand. Other prohibited works such as Paine's Political Works and the defence of Wooler for his *Black Dwarf* followed. When Hone was prosecuted for publishing three political squibs, on parts of "The Book of Common Prayer," a compromise took place on the ground that the parodies should be suppressed. Carlile reprinted and published the parodies, and was immediately arrested (Aug. 1807). This forced on the case of Hone, after whose three memorable trials and acquittals, Carlile was liberated, having no remedy for eighteen week's

unjust imprisonment, but with the satisfaction that a step had been gained in the struggle for the right of free publication.

This right he determined to uphold by publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*, for issuing the first part of which, Simmons and Crossby had been prosecuted in 1794 and Thomas Williams sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 1797. Daniel Isaac Eaton, too, had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment and to stand in the pillory for issuing Paine's "Examination of the Prophecies" under the title of *The Third Part of the Age of Reason*, and that work, though frequently denounced, was not publicly sold till re-issued by Carlile in 1818. The Attorney General took proceedings, and the Society for the Suppression of Vice, more commonly and more fittingly known as the Vice Society, added an indictment.

Carlile met these attacks by spreading the *Age of Reason* broadcast, and publishing as many more works of the kind as his means would permit. *Watson Refuted*, *The Doubts of Infidels*, *The God of the Jews*, and tracts by Voltaire were issued, as well as some political pamphlets arising out of the Peterloo massacre, at which Carlile was present in company with Orator Hunt. In Oct. 1819, the case was tried. Carlile in his defence read to the Court the whole of Paine's *Age of Reason* and thus outwitted his prosecutors, for he had arranged to print it in twopenny sheets as part of the Report of the Trial—a privileged publication. Of these more were sold in a month than of the volumes in a year. Carlile was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, a fine of £1,500, and to find £1,200 recognisances for good behavior during life.

His wife proceeded to carry on the business, but under pretence of seizing for the fines, the sheriff took possession of his house, furniture and stock-in-trade. At Carlile's request his wife and sister carried on the business at 55, Fleet Street, but they were also proceeded against. His wife, Jane Carlile, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, and his sister, Mary Ann Carlile, to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £500. She suffered two years' imprisonment and paid no fine. Carlile refused to pay any fine or give any promise to discontinue the publications, and after six years' confinement was liberated unconditionally. The spirit in which the prosecutions were resisted is shown by the fact that while Carlile, his wife and sister were in gaol, his business was successfully carried on by a succession of brave volunteers whom he had never seen, and who were only related to him in public spirit. Some like James Watson and Humphrey Boyle came up from Yorkshire for the purpose, and altogether between twenty and thirty persons received sentences varying from three years to six months' imprisonment for selling Carlile's publications. But they tired out their persecutors. Books were sold through an aperture, so that the buyer was unable to identify the seller. Afterwards they were sold by clockwork. During all his imprisonment Carlile edited the *Republican*, and prefacing the report of the trials of his shopmen he was able to say: "All the publications that have been prosecuted have been and are continued in open sale."

In 1828 when the Rev. Robert Taylor was sent to Oakham Gaol for "blasphemy," Carlile started the *Lion* to afford him the opportunity of communicating with the outside world. At this time, too, he used a large room in his house, 62, Fleet Street, for a Sunday Free Discussion Society then a novelty in England.

Twice again was Carlile imprisoned; from Jan., 1831 to '33 for publishing No. 3 of the *Prompter*, and for ten weeks in 1834-5 for refusing to pay church rates, suffering altogether over nine years' imprisonment in resistance to unjust law. He died Feb. 18th, 1843, and wishing to be useful in death as in

life, bequeathed his body to Sir William Lawrence, author of the materialistic *Lectures on Man*.

Carlyle was essentially a fighter, and in his self assertiveness and tenacity reminds one of Cobbett. At a time when England was ruled by a corrupt court, and a powerful party desired to see popular freedom crushed, such a man was invaluable. His intrepidity and the alacrity with which he courted danger animated others to follow in the path in which he boldly trod. Whoever glories in the advantage of a free press should remember how much is due to the spirit and sufferings of men like Richard Carlyle.

J. M. WHEELER.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

BY COL. INGERSOLL.

(From the "North American Review.")

THE world for the most part is ruled by the tomb, and the living are tyrannised over by the dead. Old ideas, long after the conditions under which they were produced have passed away, often persist in surviving. Many are disposed to worship the ancient, to follow the old paths, without inquiring where they lead, and without knowing exactly where they wish to go themselves.

Opinions on the subject of divorce have been for the most part inherited from the early Christians. They have come down to us through theological and priestly channels. The early Christians believed that the world was about to be destroyed, or that it was to be purified by fire; that all the wicked were to perish, and that the good were to be caught up in the air to meet their Lord—to remain there, in all probability, until the earth was prepared as a habitation for the blessed. With this thought or belief in their minds, the things of this world were of comparatively no importance. The man who built larger barns in which to store his grain was regarded as a foolish farmer, who had forgotten, in his greed for gain, the value of his own soul. They regarded prosperous people as the children of Mammon, and the unfortunate, the wretched and diseased, as the favorites of God. They discouraged all worldly pursuits, except the soliciting of alms. There was no time to marry or to be given in marriage; no time to build homes and have families. All their thoughts were centred upon the heaven they expected to inherit. Business, love, all secular things, fell into disrepute.

Nothing is said in the Testament about the families of the Apostles; nothing of family life, of the sacredness of home; nothing about the necessity of education, the improvement and development of the mind. These things were forgotten, for the reason that nothing, in the presence of the expected event, was considered of any importance, except to be ready when the Son of Man should come. Such was the feeling, that rewards were offered by Christ himself to those who would desert their wives and children. Human love was spoken of with contempt. "Let the dead bury their dead. What is that to thee? Follow thou me." They not only believed these things, but acted in accordance with them; and, as a consequence, all the relations of life were denied or avoided, and their obligations disregarded. Marriage was discouraged. It was regarded as only one degree above open and unbridled vice, and was allowed only in consideration of human weakness. It was thought far better not to marry—that it was something grander for a man to love God than to love woman. The exceedingly godly, the really spiritual, believed in celibacy, and held the opposite sex in a kind of pious abhorrence. And yet, with that inconsistency so characteristic of theologians, marriage was held to be a sacrament. The priest said to the man who married: "Remember that you are caught for life. This door opens but once. Before this den of matrimony the tracks are all one way." This was in the nature of a punishment for having married. The theologian felt that the contract of marriage, if not contrary to God's command, was at least contrary to his advice, and that the married ought to suffer in some way, as a matter of justice. The fact there could be no divorce, that a mistake could not be corrected, was held up as a warning. At every wedding-feast this skeleton stretched its fleshless finger towards bride and groom.

Nearly all intelligent people have given up the idea that the world is about to come to an end. They do not now believe that prosperity is a certain sign of wickedness, or

that poverty and wretchedness are sure certificates of virtue. They are hardly convinced that Dives should have been sent to hell simply for being rich, or that Lazarus was entitled to eternal joy on account of his poverty. We now know that prosperous people may be good, and that unfortunate people may be bad. We have reached the conclusion that the practice of virtue tends in the direction of prosperity, and that a violation of the conditions of well-being brings, with absolute certainty, wretchedness and misfortune.

There was a time when it was believed that the sin of an individual was visited upon the tribe, the community, or the nation to which he belonged. It was then thought that if a man or woman had made a vow to God, and had failed to keep the vow, God might punish the entire community; therefore it was the business of the community to see to it that the vow was kept. That idea has been abandoned. As we progress, the rights of the individual are perceived, and we are now beginning dimly to discern that there are no rights higher than the rights of the individual. There was a time when nearly all believed in the reforming power of punishment—in the beneficence of brute force. But the world is changing. It was at one time thought that the Inquisition was the savior of society; that the persecution of the philosopher was requisite to the preservation of the state, and that, no matter what happened, the state should be preserved. We have now more light. And standing upon this luminous point that we call the present, let me answer your questions.

Marriage is the most important, the most sacred, contract that human beings can make. No matter whether we call it a contract, or a sacrament, or both, it remains precisely the same. And no matter whether this contract is entered into in the presence of magistrate or priest, it is exactly the same. A true marriage is a natural concord and ageement of souls, a harmony in which discord is not even imagined; it is a mingling so perfect that only one seems to exist; all other considerations are lost; the present seems to be eternal. In this supreme moment there is no shadow—or the shadow is as luminous as light. And when two beings thus love, thus unite, this is the true marriage of soul and soul. That which is said before the altar, or minister, or magistrate, or in the presence of witnesses, is only the outward evidence of that which has already taken place—to the uniting of two mornings that hope to reach the night together. Each has found the ideal; the man has found the one woman of all the world—the impersonation of affection, purity, passion, love, beauty, and grace; and the woman has found the one man of all the world, her ideal, and all that she knows of romance, of art, courage, heroism, honesty, is realised in him. The idea of contract is lost. Duty and obligation are instantly changed into desire and joy, and two lives, like uniting streams, flow on as one. Nothing can add to the sacredness of this marriage, to the obligation and duty of each to each. There is nothing in the ceremony except the desire on the part of the man and woman that the whole world should know that they are really married and that their souls have been united.

Every marriage, for a thousand reasons, should be public, should be recorded, should be known; but, above all, to the end that the purity of the union should appear. These ceremonies are not only for the good and for the protection of the married, but also for the protection of their children, and of society as well. But, after all, the marriage remains a contract of the highest possible character—a contract in which each gives and receives a heart.

The question then arises, Should this marriage, under any circumstances, be dissolved? It is easy to understand the position taken by the various churches; but back of theological opinions is the question of contract.

In this contract of marriage, the man agrees to protect and cherish his wife. Suppose that he refuses to protect; that he abuses, assaults, and tramples upon the woman he wed. What is her redress? Is she under any obligation to him? He has violated the contract. He has failed to protect, and, in addition, he has assaulted her like a wild beast. Is she under any obligation to him? Is she bound by the contract he has broken? If so, what is the consideration for this obligation? Must she live with him for his sake? or, if she leaves him to preserve her life, must she remain his wife for his sake? No intelligent man will answer these questions in the affirmative.

If, then, she is not bound to remain his wife for the husband's sake, is she bound to remain his wife because the marriage was a sacrament? Is there any obligation on the

part of the wife to remain with the brutal husband for the sake of God? Can her conduct affect in any way the happiness of an infinite being? Is it possible for a human being to increase or diminish the well-being of the Infinite?

(To be continued.)

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Where is the seething fiery lake
Which makes the godless sinner quake,
And turns to ice the coldest blood
That courses through the human veins?

Where are the caverns of the damned
Which human thought has never spanned,
Where endless sobs and wails arise
But fail to penetrate the skies?

Where is the mystic fiery world
Where myriads of the race are hurled
For evermore to grill and roast?—
No chance of yielding up the ghost!

Where is the power that reigns above
Adored as source of primal love?
Alas! with heart as cold as stone
He smiles while wretched victims groan.

In all thy power, Oh! man arise!
And heed thy fellow creature's cries;
Thy power display, usurp the throne
And cast the ancient tyrant down.

Advance! press onward in thy pride,
Each power mysterious cast aside.
And prove thyself to be above
The priestly vaunted "God of Love."

T. BREE.

ACID DROPS.

That long letter from one of the Mahdi's generals calling on Emin Pasha to surrender is a curious document. "Who follows him," the general says, "goes to eternal blessing, and who denies him denies God and his Prophet." This bears a great resemblance to what Jesus Christ said of himself. "No man cometh unto the Father save through me." "He that denieth me denieth the Father who sent me." Evidently the tone of prophets does not vary, and its predominant note is "cheek."

Apparently in perfect good faith, the Mahdi's general claims the attestation of miracles. "The spears carried by the Mahdi's followers," he says, "had a flame burning at their points, and this we have seen with our own eyes, and not heard only." No doubt the Christians will laugh at this, but their own miracles are just as absurd and far worse attested.

Perhaps the Mahdi is a Theosophical adept, with a supernatural control over matter, and is able to work these seeming miracles for the success of his holy cause. The Theosophists might look into the matter, and even send out Madame Blavatsky to inquire on the spot. Of course the lady would be perfectly safe, for she has herself a wonderful power over matter, extending, as Mrs. Besant says, to the very life of other persons. Happily, however, she is very chary about exercising her powers; so we breathe freely again, despite *The New Cagliostro*.

FACT.—Scene, Winter. Bitter cold. Laborer's home. Enter wealthy clergyman in thick top-coat. "Not got any work yet, James?" "No, sir." "Is your wife's rheumatics as bad as ever, James?" "Worse, if possible, sir." "And the children?" "They've all got colds, sir; and the fact is, we're well-nigh starved to death, sir." Pious Clergyman: "Well, trust in God, James. Good morning." *Exit*.

A Methodist minister at Hulme is reported as praying, "Oh Lord, we thank thee for the goodly number who are here to-night to listen to Thy praises, and that Thou art here also, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather."

Christians appear to think there is some dire mark of "the Fall" upon an Atheist's face; and in some cases they sniff at sight of him, as though suspicious of sulphur. For this reason, we suppose, the chairman of one of Dr. Sexton's meetings in South London made such a funny mistake the other night, when Mr. J. H. Ellis rose to oppose. Mr. Ellis is an elderly gentleman of prepossessing appearance, bearing lustily the snows of many winters, and looking out upon the world with kind, shrewd eyes from under a spacious, thoughtful brow. Seeing Mr. Ellis, the chairman concluded he must be a Christian, and explained that they only wanted opposition. He was informed that the genial gentleman before him was bent on offering some, and before Mr. Ellis had spoken two minutes the chairman found he had made a very big mistake.

The Catholic Church still endeavors to incite Italians to hostility to their government by denouncing its heavy taxes, while the necessity of defence against that Church itself is in great part the cause of the taxes.

An American exchange says: "The condition of the Pope's health indicates that when he takes his next journey his destination may be some other place than Spain."

"All days are alike holy" is good secular doctrine, but it seems that religiously the sentiment is equally true. Thus the Christians observe Sunday; the Greeks, Monday; the Persians, Tuesday; the Assyrians, Wednesday; the Egyptians, Thursday; the Turks, Friday; the Jews and some Christians, Saturday. The Christians, we believe, are the only sect bigoted enough to try to enforce the observance of their holy day upon all the others.

Dr. Barnardo well exemplifies the unscrupulousness of so much of "Christian philanthropy." A short time ago he was compelled by the courts to give up a girl, Martha Tye, whom he persisted in keeping away from her parents, and he has been again ordered to produce on a writ of *Habeas Corpus* a child named Henry Gosage, whom he says he gave into the custody of a Mr. Norton, from Canada. He did not even ask Mr. Norton where he might be found, refraining from any such awkward questions, and sent the child away, knowing that the mother had revoked her sanction. And all apparently because the child's parents were Roman Catholics. Dr. Barnardo seems to think the world will sanction anything done in the name of piety and benevolence.

That most successful humbug, George J. Schweinfurth, of Illinois, who has deluded many people with the belief that he is God incarnate, is a serious problem to the Christians of this country. They can easily prove him to be mistaken, but the trouble is that in doing so they perform the same service for his Galilean predecessor.—*Freethought*.

The *Jewish Chronicle* is of opinion that the scandal about the converted Jews being ejected from Palestine Place, in the East End, by their converters, has but commenced. The proceedings have given rise to great bitterness. Some of the converted Jews will need baptising again before they are fit for the holy land of heaven. Several clergymen and missionaries have, moreover, been called upon for explanations, and the upshot will probably be a complete exposure of the peculiar methods adopted by the Conversion Society and its agencies to gain converts.

The London *Echo* reports Edison as saying, "I have no religious creed, but, like every scientist, I know there is a God." We very much doubt if Edison said anything of the kind, but if he did, it was a most impertinent utterance. Darwin did not "know" there is a God, and he was something of a scientist, although born in this effete old country.

There was a sensation in a Washington church recently. The Rev. F. Hershey delivered a lecture on "Infidelity a Failure." To point his remarks he made the assertion that Colonel R. G. Ingersoll sought the repeal of a law prohibiting certain literature to be sent through the mail, and added that Mr. Ingersoll was thus on record for the despoilment of the young women of America. At this point Mr. A. Thornette, occupying a back seat, arose and said with vigor: "You are a liar! Mr. Ingersoll is a personal

friend of mine." The incident gave rise to considerable commotion, and sympathy was by no means entirely with the sky-pilot in his coward's castle.

Really it seems as though the ordinary Christian mind were soft enough for anything. Here is a little sixteen-page magazine emanating from Bromley Road Baptist Church, Lee, S.E., which contains a marvellous paragraph about "thirteen infidels" who used to meet together every Saturday evening. Five were hanged, seven were transported, and one became a Christian. On the whole, the fate of the thirteenth seems the worst of all.

The *Sanctorale Catholicum* or Book of Saints compiled by the Rev. Robert Owen (Church of England), begins with Jan. 1; "The circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; when the first drops of his Precious Blood were shed for the sake of us sinners and for our salvation." A truly pious way to speak of the snipping process so strangely proscribed by the Jewish deity after the fashion of savage mutilators.

Mary Ann Turner, who had been brought all the way from Staffordshire as a recruit for the Training Home of the Salvation Army at Clapton, does not like her treatment. She told the magistrate at Dalston that she was unkindly used, and had to pawn her clothes to keep herself in food. The magistrate said he had recently had another similar case from Bury St. Edmunds, and he thought Mrs. Booth should not bring girls up from the country unless she was prepared to send them back again. The case was adjourned for a week, the girl being committed to the care of the relieving officer.

The name of John Huss, who was burnt alive for heresy by order of the Council of Constance in 1415 still suffices to arouse fanaticism in Bohemia. A proposal to have his portrait placed in the National Museum excited a tumult in the Diet, the proposal being rejected in scornful terms by the clerical party, while the Czechs shouted, "You would burn Huss over again if he lived to-day." Prince Schwarzenburg said he would be proud if his banner became the sign of battle against the new Hussites. Such are the fruits of the religion that came to bring peace to men of goodwill.

Parson Lloyd, late vicar of Fotheringhay, is bankrupt. Like so many others of the cloth, he lived beyond his income, which he had tried to improve by "backing a horse or two." The prophets, however, deceived the parson, and he lost his money, and has resigned his living and declared himself bankrupt.

A "London League for Stopping the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday" has been formed. It is likely to prove a powerful auxiliary to the Radical clubs.

Dr. Cuthbertson, LL.D., died last Sunday morning in Saint Augustino's Church, Highbury New Park. There is no moral.

On Monday morning a man shot himself before the tomb of Victor Emmanuel in the Pantheon at Rome. This will necessitate the reconsecration of the church. The Holy Ghost has gone out of the place, and will have to be coaxed back with prayer and Holy Water.

Readers of *Crimes of Christianity* know what a terrible chapter is the history of the persecution of the Jews. They know, also, that the followers of Jesus have generally raised some silly calumny against the Jews as a pretext for robbing and murdering them. The most persistent calumny, perhaps, was that the Jews caught Christian children, killed them, and used their blood in certain religious rites. Even now the lie is credited by millions of Europeans, and it is openly sustained in a volume by M. Henry Desportes—*Le Mystère du Sang chez les Juifs*. A copy of this work has been graciously accepted by the Pope, who sends the author his blessing, and instructs his secretary to say that "his Holiness greatly approves of your work on the horrible custom of the Rabbinical Jews." Thus the Vicar of Christ, true to the traditions of his Church, does his best to propagate

lies and foment bigotry and hatred between Christian and Jew.

Were the subject less grim, it would be laughable to see the Pope condemning the "blood customs" of the Jews. Christianity is a religion of blood from beginning to end, and the Church of Christ has shed blood enough for all the Jews on the planet to swim in. Talk about the crock calling the kettle smutty! Why, this is a man covered with dirt denouncing another man with a speck on his nose.

Eliza A. Corbett was found drowned in a pool at Ketley and an inquest has been held on her remains at Wellington with the usual verdict in such cases. She was to have been married at Christmas, but while waiting for the happy event she succumbed to a bad attack of religious mania. She was under the impression that she had sinned beyond forgiveness, and under the frown of her merciless God she rushed to a suicide's death.

"Sam Jones is quoted as saying: 'God Almighty made me just as I am, and I have never interfered with the job one particle.' Could not the same thing be said with equal truth of all whom the irreverent Sam is trying to convert?"—*Toronto World*. Perhaps; but it does not appear to us to be anywhere near the truth. Sam Jones has done his best to convert what might have been a clever and respectable man into a howling mountebank—and has succeeded fairly well.—*Secular Thought*.

Bishop Lightfoot urges the clergy of his diocese to discontinue the use of incense. We suggest that he should recommend those who hold out to burn cayenne pepper. On the score of economy it would be an advantage, for a little of it goes a long way. Besides, it would give pungency to a dull sermon.

"Every Christian man," says the Rev. G. W. McCree, "is a candle." Just so. They are dreadfully old-fashioned. Electric light is coming in now, and they haven't got up to gas yet.

Father Damien, who lost his life in ministering to the lepers, was a Catholic, and several Protestant journals—notably the *Independent* (New York) and the *Congregationalist* (Boston)—are trying to prove he was anything but a saint. How these Christians love one another!

From an *Academy* review of A. J. Duffeld's *Recollections of Travels Abroad* we gather a corroboration of what we recorded a few weeks ago as to the "brotherliness" between the Christian whites and the Christian blacks in America. Mr. Duffeld made the acquaintance of a scholarly, American-born negro, and strolled with him into a Young Men's Christian Association at New York. One of the young Christians, Bible in hand, met them at the door, and addressed them with "We do not admit negroes."

We dare say these Christian young men are as ready as our English Bible-bangers to dilate upon the way in which their blessed religion has emancipated the slaves, upon the doctrine of human brotherhood taught by Paul, and all the other wretched cant of their most hypocritical creed. But actions speak louder than words. They cry with their lips "All are brothers in Christ," and add in practice, "No negroes need apply."

American religious bodies, who will not touch a Christian negro with a long pole, nevertheless send out missionaries to bring the African blacks to Christ. Was there ever a greater farce? It is enough to make one vomit at the very sound of "Christian."

We observe that the English papers are reproducing that old story of how Ingersoll was discomfited by Ward Beecher. It is absolutely without a grain of truth. Ingersoll denied it first, and Beecher did so afterwards. The yarn was played-out long ago in America, but it is still doing duty in England. Thousands of people will read this circumstantial lie and believe every word to be true. Yet there are persons who wonder at a sceptic's believing that pious frauds could be so successful two thousand years ago!

The Archbishop of Canterbury believes in going slow in the missionary business. Speaking at the meeting of the Shoreham Deanery of the S.P.G., he said a little while ago he asked one of the bishops of China how many converts he had made during his nine or ten years' work, and the bishop replied, "God forbid we should be able to show one convert at present." They could show plenty of converts if they like to make it a man's interest to come over to them. But they will not precipitate the advent of Jesus Christ in that fashion.

Some noodle is paying for long advertisements in the *Standard*, announcing Prophetic Events from 1890 to 1901, including the loss of Ireland and India, as a prelude to the Second Advent. Evidently a disciple of the Prophet Baxter.

Baxter, by the way, discovers that the Brazil Revolution has a prophetic import. It is, it appears, part of the seventh vial, and Baxter refers to Rev. xvi., 18, which speaks of thunders, lightnings and a great earthquake, none of which have occurred in Brazil.

Mrs Baxter, wife of the prophet, presides at Bethshan, "the House for the Lord's Healing." She supplies the *Christian Herald* with reports of the wondrous things done there by the Lord. A recent case was that of a young girl who "was cured of fits before they came on." Perhaps this was the famous "Miss Baxter, who refused a man before he axed her."

Isaiah Kybert has been had up and fined again for disturbing the congregation at Croydon, of which he was formerly a member. Isaiah, it will be remembered, has a call from the Lord to attend this particular chapel, where he has no longer a sitting. Isaiah refused to pay the fine, and said he would go prison a martyr for Christ's sake.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Bolton Bible Society, the Bishop of Manchester said that the works of Paine and Ingersoll no longer did any harm. We agree with him. They never *did* any harm. All the same, however, they have done, and are still doing, and will continue to do, a great deal of mischief to Christianity. Bishop Moorhouse is not an accurate man. He talked the same sort of nonsense out in Melbourne, while Joseph Symes was making Freethinkers by the score and establishing a big prosperous society.

Bishop Moorhouse was followed by Mr. Henry Lee, J.P., who argued that the strength of England lay in its family Bible. Well now, we put it to Mr. Lee—does he believe his own children are improved by reading about Lot and his daughters, Tamar and Judah, the Levite and his concubine, the amours of David and Bathsheba, the voluptuous Song of Solomon, and all the dirt of Ezekiel? Or does he use a Bowdlerised edition of God Almighty's book? We pause for a reply.

A Spiritist mejum, named Reid, is in custody in New York for advertising that he sends answers from the spirit world to any person who remits him a letter to the dead person, together with a dollar. If he is punished, why should not the frauds who offer to get souls out of purgatory by saying masses also be prosecuted?

Talmage has gone to spend his winter in the Holy Land. He may be expected to bring back some good sized "whoppers" from that country of legend and romance. He intends to utilize his visit to write a new life of Christ which he alleges will take the cake against anything published from the days of the evangelists to those of Baron Munchausen.

Just to show his impartiality, the Lord sent a fire from heaven to consume the upper storeys of the head-quarters of the Salvation Army. According to the *Star*, the Lord was not responsible, but "The Fire Fiend." Anyway, the fire threatened to be a very damaging one, and if it has consumed the "record" of the S.A. officers kept at head-quarters, a good number of them will be less displeased than the General, who we guess will have to make the occasion one for another week of self-denial.

Bishop Bagshawe of Nottingham comes out late with his groan over the Bruno statue. He refers to its inauguration as an "awful iniquity," he describes Bruno as "an impious and impure apostate," and alludes to the anti-clerical party as "a mighty army of children of the Devil." But who cares a snap of the fingers for this priestly thunder? It is perfectly harmless now, but it reminds us that the Catholic Church is as ready as ever to shed the blood of heretics and pile filth upon their graves.

The case of Jenkins v. Cook, so wittily dealt with by B.V. in an article on "The Devil in the Church of England" in *Satires and Profanities*, made it clear that a parishioner cannot be denied the sacrament, even if he disbelieves in Satan, so long as he (the parishioner) is not a notorious evil liver. Yet the Rev. Mr. Benson of Hoo, persisted in refusing a lady a drink of her Saviour's blood because she had been at a Wesleyan chapel, and only caved in when on the point of being committed for contempt of court. He now discovers that the ultimate responsibility for the cure of souls in the diocese rests with the bishop. It appears that the Rev. Mr. Benson might himself be legally refused the sacraments, since one of the causes of just refusal specified in the Canons is having "depraved her Majesty's sovereign authority in causes ecclesiastical."

Rev. J. A. Macdonald, one of our military chaplains at Dum Dum, Calcutta, is still on the war path. He has just issued an eight-page tract against Ingersoll, by means of which, we suppose, he hopes to win back the Atheists of his regiment to the "one true faith." Mr. Macdonald tries to be smart, but he has not yet mastered the rudiments of Freethought. For instance, he doesn't understand the difference between belief and conduct, and argues that because Ingersoll teaches that the will cannot affect belief he teaches that motives do not influence conduct. Mr. Macdonald cannot help his ignorance, though he might diminish it by study; but he can help rushing into print before he has anything useful to say.

Here you are—"THE BLOOD"—200th thousand, by C. H. Spurgeon, sixpence a dozen. The thing is got up in pink covers to suggest the sanguinary fluid in which Christians are to wash away their sins, and come out the color of boiled lobsters. Men like Spurgeon simply live on the atavism of their fellows. A good deal of their language is borrowed from the slaughter-house, and their sentiments are on a level with those of the bull-ring. Spurgeon pretends to save the world with a bucket of blood. Bah! Turn it into black puddings, or send it down the sewers.

A LOST FRIEND

An old negro stood near the roadside leaning in a deeply thoughtful manner, against a tree. A white man, whose attention was attracted by the old fellow's sorrowing appearance, stopped and inquired the cause of his seeming trouble.

"Er klamity has fell on de ole man's house-hol', sah."

"I am very sorry. I—" "Yes, sah; so's I." "Wife dead?" "No, sah." "Son?" "No." "Daughter, then, I suppose?" "No, sah. Dog's dead." "What! is that such a calamity?"

The old negro gazed half contemptuously at the white man. "You didn't know dat animal like I did, sah. He was almos' de s'port o' my famly, sah. Wheneber dar wuz any hog meat hangin' 'roun', in de neighborhood he knowed whar it wuz an' he'd go an' git it. Ketch chickens he would, too. Hadenter bin fur him I couldenter preached ter dese yere niggers fur half price. Had sense, dat dog did. He neber 'sturbed ligious wusship by barkin'. W'en he'd come home wid er j'int o' meat he'd tuck outen somebody's smoke house he wouldn't rush right in ef we wuz holdin' pra'rs, but would wait till we got through. He saved me er mighty heap o' trouble, sah, he did."

A story is told of an Irishman possessed of a donkey which he was wont to urge on its rather tame career with a darning needle fixed in the point of a stick. The minister met him one day maltreating the animal in this way, and ventured to rebuke him, asking him to remember who it was that rode to Jerusalem on an ass. "Sorr," answered Pat, "if He had bin on this wan He wouldn't have bin there yet!"

"Young man," said the bank president to an applicant for employment, "do you smoke?" "Yes, sir." "Chew?" "Yes, sir." "Swear?" "Under adequate provocation." "Play poker?" "Yes, sir? quietly among friends." "Drink?" "Occasionally." "Bet on horse races?" "When I get a good tip." The president scratched his head and looked thoughtful. After a pause he said: "Young man, you just turn in and try your hand at being cashier of this bank for awhile."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 8, Secular Hall, Beck Street, Nottingham, at 11, "Follies of Theosophy;" at 3, "Will Christ Save Us?" at 7, "Is There a God?"

Dec. 15, Portsmouth; 22, Milton Hall, London; 29, Hall of Science, London.

Jan. 5 and 12, Hall of Science, London; 19, Liverpool; 26, Camberwell.

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 23 and 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.

WALTER.—We have not compared the cheap edition of Clifford with the old edition, and cannot tell whether any omissions have been made. Bonwick's publisher is Kegan Paul & Co.; Stuart Glennie's is Longmans; Scheurer's is T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.

JOHN KING.—Modern criticism has not exploded Dr. Giles's contention. The Gospels "as we have them" cannot be traced beyond A.D. 160 or 150 at the outside. The common view is that the Synoptical Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—were compilations from tradition and pre-existing documents, while the fourth Gospel was written later by a better scholar of unknown identity.

W. S.—We don't know of any really good Secular hymn-book published in England. There is one compiled by Mr. Washburn, of America, and published at the *Boston Investigator* office.

IXION.—We copied from the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Farrar's article appeared first in a New York paper, we think *The Nation* cannot answer the question about Chalmers.

AT 'EM.—Jokes always welcome. Time will show.

G. WISE.—The internal affairs of the N. S. S. are no concern of yours.

W. CHELT.—They are little volumes, a shilling each. Order of Mr. Forder as above.

NEMO.—(1) What do you mean by "the ten numbers of *Infidel Death-Beds*"? If you mean the *Dictionary of Freethinkers*—Yes! The volume will be ready as soon as possible. (2) Cagliostro was a famous adventurer of last century. (3) Dr. Hardwicke lives at Sheffield.

H. H. DEAL.—Can you furnish us with a copy of the letter which you say Mr. Montagu, M.P., has been distributing? We should like to be sure of the facts before saying anything.

C. WARD.—We dealt with it when the reverend gentleman went wrong.

F. MARGETSON.—See paragraph. It is very indiscreet to have lecturers who are wanting in tact when you are breaking new ground.

S. STANDRING.—Why not establish the Edmonton scheme before trying one at Tottenham? We hear there was an indifferent attendance last Sunday. Glad to hear you tackled the black preacher, Edwardes, at Shoreditch. The hisses of his lambs should be taken as a compliment.

J. VAUGHAN.—We recognise the spirit of your offer, but we cannot undertake to rewrite your MS.

J. K. EAST.—(1) Wait awhile. The Organisation Committee has the matter in hand, and will move resolutely though considerably. Secularism in Bristol will not be left as it is. You may rely on that. (2) The New Testament manuscripts are all in Greek, and none is older than the fourth century after Christ.

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED—Philadelphia Public Ledger—New York World—Church Reformer—Freidenker—Nottingham Daily Express—Western American—Truthseeker—Open Court—Natal Advertiser—Christian Herald—Bulletin des Sommaires—Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt—Secular Thought—Evening Standard—Sevenoaks Chronicle—Sunday Chronicle—Freethought—Der Arme Teufel.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE event of the season has arrived. Our Christmas Number is now ready. A list of the contents will be found in the advertisement on our back page. Readers should order at once, and those who can afford it might take an extra copy or two for their friends. These special numbers are very expensive to produce, and we rarely do more than get back our investment.

FOLLOWING the example of Mr. Seago, Mr. Ruse of the Camberwell Branch introduced the *Freethinker* to a local newsagent, who ordered a number of copies on condition that he was relieved of all unsold. Mr. Ruse has not had to pay for a single copy. Reader, go thou and do likewise.

THERE will be no lecture in the Camberwell Secular Hall to-night (Dec. 8). From all parts of London the "saints" will gather for a social tea, to be followed by an entertainment. The carnal part of the treat begins at 6, and the tickets are a shilling each. All profits are to accrue to the London Secular Federation.

THE London Secular Federation's annual dinner will come off at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge, on Tuesday, January 7. Mr. Foote will preside. The tickets (2s. 6d.) are now on sale, and can be had of any Branch secretary, or at 28 Stonecutter Street. The last dinner was a great success, but this one is expected to eclipse it.

THE *Church Reformer* has a kindly notice of the late Rev. W. Sharman, and says with truth it will not be easy to replace this honest worker for religious liberty, who sacrificed so much by his efforts to procure the abolition of the persecuting enactments against heresy and "blasphemy" which still disgrace the English Statute Books.

MRS. THORNTON SMITH lectures in the new hall at Edmonton to-night (Dec. 8), and we hope the Freethinkers of the neighborhood will support her against the kind of opposition that may be expected. Last Sunday evening a band of Christian rowdies turned up, under the leadership of two Evidence lecturers, and caused a disturbance. Mrs. Smith's subject is "The Uselessness of Prayer."

LAST Monday Mr. Forder was summoned before Lord Mayor Isaacs for non-payment of the vicar's rate for the parish of St. Bride. Mr. Forder urged that he had only paid the rate inadvertently in 1887, the rate being lumped with others in a manner to conceal its nature. As the publisher of the *Freethinker*, he objected to be called upon to support a clergyman in whose belief he did not concur. He had been unable to get a copy of the Act of Parliament as the Queen's Printers had none. The Lord Mayor adjourned the summons till Friday.

NOW the Central London Branch is dissolved, the Organisation Committee has taken the responsibility—at least for this year—of the Hall of Science Children's Party. Mr. R. Forder, the general secretary, will be happy to receive the assistance of any of the ladies and gentlemen who have hitherto participated in this work. A meeting, which he will attend, will be held at the Hall this evening (Dec 8) at 8.30. Subscriptions should be sent direct to Mr. Forder, and will be duly acknowledged in the Secular journals.

CREMATION is coming more and more into vogue in Germany, in spite of the expense and certain legal difficulties which render its performance in some parts almost an impossibility. At Gotha no fewer than one hundred bodies have been cremated during the present year.

THE *Truthseeker* reports the marriage, without religious ceremony, of Miss Eva Ingersoll and Mr. Walston Hill Brown, head of the banking firm of W. H. Brown and Brothers. Judge G. C. Barrett, a personal friend of Colonel Ingersoll, performed the ceremony, at which only members of the immediate families were present. The decorations were entirely composed of palms and La France roses. The newly married couple left for the West in a private car on the New York Central road. They will make

quite an extensive trip, lasting for several weeks, and on their return will live with the bride's parents. Colonel Ingersoll, as everyone knows, is devoted to his family, and enjoys nothing more than listening of an evening to his daughters' singing or playing. They are both accomplished musicians. Colonel Ingersoll has always said that his girls should marry whom they loved, with the condition, however, that they should afterward come home, as he was willing to gain two sons, but not to lose two daughters. They, in their turn, laughingly would say that he should pick out their husbands.

AN American gentleman bequeathed 10,000 dollars to Henry George with which to circulate *Progress and Poverty*. Chancellor Bird—who must be a legal *dodo*—decided that the bequest was invalid because Henry George's doctrines were subversive of established law. Fortunately this decision has been reversed on appeal.

MR. CHARLES WATTS will tour through Canada during the next four months. The Freethinkers at the places where he lectures will only have to bear the expenses of the hall and advertising. Mr. Watts's expenses will be borne by the Propagandist Fund, which was started at the Toronto Convention.

IN his third lecture on "Semitic Religion" Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen remarked that the solar character of Samson was evident, and compared the story with some Babylonian legends. He considered the similarity of features showed that the scribes of the Book of Origins (Genesis) and the Book of Judges were guided and influenced by local legends not strictly of Hebrew origin.

PROF. A. H. SAYCE has dis severed his connection with the Society of Biblical Archæology, owing to some sharp attacks to which he has been subjected. No doubt he will feel freer outside, and it will be well for his reputation if he ceases entirely from making his scholarship subordinate to bibliolatry.

MISS EDITH SIMCOX, authoress of *Natural Law*, is engaged upon a large and important work on *Primitive Civilisation*.

A NOTE in the *Twentieth Century*, of New York, edited by the ex-Rev. H. O. Pentecost, is enough to make our mouth water. A recent number of his paper was circulated to the extent of 10,000 extra copies by a gentleman who must have paid for the postage as well. We don't expect anybody to do that for the *Freethinker*, but many of our friends might take from one to a dozen extra copies for judicious circulation among their acquaintances.

G. W. FOOTE, editor of the London *Freethinker*, is making it lively for Madame Blavatsky in England. He calls her the new Cagliostro, and has published an open letter addressed to her, in which the claims of Theosophy are subjected to close scrutiny, and shown to have no foundation except in Madame Blavatsky's unsupported assertions.—*Freethought* (San Francisco.)

Freethought reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "Rome in America." The Americans are growing more and more alive to their danger, and that is an indispensable condition of their future safety.

El Motin (Tumult), a Spanish Republican and anti-clerical journal, edited by José Nakens, puts out a capital *Almanaque para 1890*. The little book is full of cuts directed against the priests, and has a lot of lively verses and paragraphs by some of the best anti-clerical writers in Spain. There is also a very able serious study of the origins of Christianity by Pompeyo Gener, author of a powerful work on *Death and the Devil*, which has been translated into French, with a Preface by Littré. Señor Don Gener holds that Christianity arose from the mixture of Hellenism and Judaism in Egypt, and that Chrestos, the good god, was the original of Christ. The personal existence of Jesus he evidently regards as dubious. The almanack is well got up, and will prove a powerful antidote to clerical superstition in Spain.

THE *Literary World* devotes a long notice to Mr. S. Laing's *Problems of the Future*, which it says possesses special attraction for all thoughtful readers.

DR. ROBERTSON SMITH in his just published lectures on *The Religion of the Semites* suggests that *Elohim*, the plural name of the Jewish God, is a relative of the jinn or genii of Arab mythology.

THE late M. Guyau, author of *The Irreligion of the Future*, one of the cleverest young men of the new French school, left a posthumous paper on *Education and Heredity*, which has recently been published with a preface by his eminent uncle, M. Alfred Fouillée.

MR. A. B. MOSS lectured at Hanley last Sunday, and we hear that his discourses were well appreciated. Does this mean that the Hanley Secularists are waking up? We hope so, for it is time they did.

"NUNQUAM," of the *Sunday Chronicle*, came out pretty strong, a couple of years ago, as a critic of religion and religionists; after which he made a fierce attack upon the *Freethinker*, so as to show he did not mean to go too far. Since then he has apparently changed his mind; for last week he pitched into the Christians and their creed, right and left, up and down, in a manner which shows as much "consideration for the feelings of Christian people" as we ourselves are in the habit of displaying. "Nunquam" is doing a good work for Freethought—in his way; and if he has now and then to bully the *Freethinker*, in order to keep within measurable distance of respectability, we must make allowance for his situation.

G O D S .

With all his arguments cut down,
The parson shook his head,
And, with a sad, reproaching frown,
In substance thus he said:
"Ah, yes! if there no God should be,
I know 'tis very well;
But if there be a God, you see,
Your unbelief means hell!"

Then, parson, search the pantheon
Of all the gods in state,
And him that wears the angriest frown
We all must venerate;
Of him who threatens direst plagu
On others' devotees
Must terror-smitten mortals beg
Forgiveness on their knees,
A jealous god or jealous spouse
Can make a hell below;
I scorn a creed and shun a house
That's built on hate and woe.
With bliss my heart tumultuous beats,
When reason bids me find
That all the gods in all their seats
Are figments of man's mind.

J. K. P. BAKER.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Got your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, 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,

A TROUBLESOME GOD.

By EX-REV. H. O. PENTECOST.

(Concluded from p. 517.)

Now, this is the thing that is so difficult for many persons to comprehend. They cannot understand why the Church may not be made good, and why we may not be brought to believe in a really good God, who would be our helper and strength. And yet, if they will read history they will discover that the Church never was good, and that there never was a single person in the whole world who had a conception of God that was rational and at the same time good.

The very best of men have bad Gods. You all know how much I admire Jesus, and it cannot be denied that he had a conception of a Heavenly Father who was very amiable in certain respects. But even the Heavenly Father of Jesus was one who could and would destroy both body and soul in hell; he was one who could allow the rich man spoken of in a certain parable to burn in hell, hearing him cry for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, and not give him the water. I venture to say there is not a human being on earth to-day who could sleep o' nights knowing that his worst enemy was roasting in a quenchless fire, and not give him a drop of water to cool his parched tongue. No human heart is so hard but that all offences would be forgotten and forgiven under such circumstances. But the Heavenly Father of Jesus, good a man as he was, tender-hearted as he was, was so comprehensively wicked and cruel that he could see a man suffer in hell for ever because he did not treat a certain poor man quite right; because he was a rich man, in short. I am sure I think some rich people have a great deal to answer for; and I get very much enraged when I think of the way they treat the poor; but if I knew the sweaters and the grinding bosses and monopolists of all kind were to be punished for the wickedness by being turned into hell to burn for ever, I would say: "Not that; for pity's sake not that. They have, indeed, been hard and cruel and pitiless themselves, but they do not deserve so horrible a fate as that."

Well, if the God of Jesus was a bad God it is almost useless to hope that anybody's God can be a good one, and such is the case. Men are always tempted to invent Gods who agree with them in opinion and who will do what they want done.

For example: Henry George believes in the Single-tax. He also believes in some kind of a God. He is not a very definite kind of God, but he is a kind of God. That is why he was allowed to go into the Churches of England and Scotland and preach the Single-tax doctrine from the pulpit—because he believes in some kind of a God. The Church people are not as particular as they used to be. Time was when you had to believe in a very particular kind of God to get into a church pulpit, but the gods are receding so rapidly from human view now that all that is necessary is for you to believe in some kind of a God—definite or indefinite, it is of no consequence. You need not explain what kind of a God it is; all that is necessary is that you shall believe in some kind of a God. Well, as I said, Henry George believes in the Single-tax, and he also believes in some kind of a God. It is, therefore, not the least bit of a surprise to discover that Mr. George's very indefinite God is also a believer in the Single-tax. In the *Standard* of October 19, in speaking of the Single-tax system of taxation, Mr. George says it is the system that is "*intended* by the Intelligence which is behind natural laws." He puts the word "*intended*" in italics so as to make it very forcible.

Now, observe the point that I am making. Mr. George is a man of thinking power. He does not believe in a man-like God; he has no crude or savage idea of God. His idea of God corresponds to the most advanced theories of the Theistic school of thinkers. He believes in the God of the nineteenth century; a philosophical, an enlightened, an indefinite God, such as many large-minded persons believe in after it is no longer possible for them to believe in the Christian Jehovah. But do you not see where the harmfulness of even such an idea of God comes in? Mr. George has a theory of taxation, and instead of allowing that theory of taxation to be discussed upon its merits as something that has been devised by the brain of man, he declares that God believes in the Single-tax! If that is so, of course, all debate is cut off. If the "Intelligence which is behind natural laws" intended that the Single-tax should go into operation, that settles it. And it is equally true that, in so far as Mr. George can make his disciples believe that God is a Single-taxer, he will put an end to their thinking upon that subject. And that is always

the trouble with any kind of a God. You get people to believing that this, that, or the other is the will of God, and then they stop thinking upon the subject.

Mr. George is not the only man who is teaching that God is a Single-taxer. There is a minister down in Tennessee, the Rev. Mr. Converse, a Presbyterian minister, who has written a book to prove that the Presbyterian God is also a believer in the Single-tax. If he can make the Presbyterians believe that, of course the Single-tax then becomes an article of religious belief, and passes out of the realm of discussion.

I do not wish to be misunderstood in this matter. I do not wish anything I am now saying to be misconstrued as an attack upon Mr. George or the Single-tax. That is not my point. My point is that if anybody would be disposed to believe in a harmless God, a man with Mr. George's brain would be that man. He has freed himself from all the gross superstitions about God; but you see that even his very indefinite God, that he only goes so far as to speak of as the "Intelligence which is behind natural laws," is one who unfairly interferes in a discussion that is going on in this world, and decides in favor of the Single-tax.

Now, let me take another illustration, which I also hope will not be understood as being used against a man whose devotion to his fellow-men I very much admire and would like to imitate. Dr. McGlynn on a recent Sunday evening, when he was making it quite plain that the Anti-Poverty Society is a religious society, also declared that the Single-tax is in accord with the will of God for this world; but he went further than that. He said that the government of man by force was according to the plans of God for this world; that is, that policemen and sheriffs and soldiers, to say nothing of kings, presidents, aldermen and tax collectors, are God's agents upon the earth for carrying out his will.

Now, don't make any mistake about this. Dr. McGlynn is a good man. If it were possible to invent a good God, he would be disposed to do it. But Dr. McGlynn's God is a being who believes that clubs, handcuffs, and prison cells are necessary for the government of this world, and that if a majority of my fellow citizens decide that I shall do something that I do not wish to do, or that I cannot conscientiously do, it is God's will that I shall be made to do that thing by a fellow with a club and a revolver. All that I have to say about Dr. McGlynn's God is that I know persons who are far wiser and better than he. If there is a God, and if he cannot run this world without the use of locust sticks and hangman's ropes and gunpowder, I respectfully suggest that he stand aside and let someone else undertake the task.

I tell you that the idea of God, and the very word God, is what stands in the way of the emancipation of man, bodily, mentally and morally to-day, and always will so long as they continue to be used or have any influence, and they must be rooted out of common use.

It is not my intention at this time to argue the question of the existence of God. To my mind nothing is more positive than that it cannot be shown that there is any power or personality in this universe unassociated with matter. You will find power, cohesion and life in the universe, but when a man uses the word God he uses a word that describes nothing, and when he asserts that there is any intelligence behind the laws of nature he asserts something that he cannot prove. For every indication of intelligence in nature I can produce as strong evidence of lunacy. If a lot of millionaires build a dam above Johnstown for their own selfish pleasure, and neglect it because of foolish greed, there is no sense whatever in killing thousands of innocent people as a penalty for their pitiless wickedness. If a man ruins his constitution by drink, there is no intelligence in making his child suffer from weakness or imbecility because of the parent's wrong-doing. If a man jumps into the water to save another's life there is not the slightest sense in drowning him by natural law for his goodness. Sometimes it looks as if the universe had sense, and sometimes it looks as if it hadn't. When I saw fourteen cows belonging to a poor farmer killed by one stroke of lightning there did not seem to me to be much sense in the performance. When I look at this green earth there are some things that make me think there is intelligence in the universe, but when I know that some day, in all probability, it will be a cinder like the moon I don't see any particular sense in having its being here at all.

But I am not now interested in discussing the abstract question of whether there is a God or not, I only want you to see that the idea of God is a great hindrance to our getting

along toward final happiness and goodness. As long as you stop to inquire what the will of God, or the plan of God, is you will get nowhere. One man will tell you that God is a Roman Catholic, another that he is a Presbyterian, another that he is a Baptist, and so on. One man will tell you that he is a Republican, another that he is a Single-taxer, another that he is a Socialist, and so on. What we must come to see is that nothing is done in human society that is not done by men; that what is for the wealth of men is right, and what is for the poverty of men is wrong. There is but one social virtue, and that is general wealth. Every other virtue will proceed from that. There is but one social crime and that is poverty. Every vice is included in that. And this is true whether there is any God or not; and poverty must be destroyed not because it is God's will that it should be, but because it is best for the human race that it should be. And general wealth must be achieved not because it is God's will that it should be, but because it is best for the human race that it should be.

You may call me all the names you like for saying so, but I caution you to beware of those who tell you what is, and what is not God's will. In every case you will find a person who is intellectually asleep or half asleep, or mentally dishonest, or else you will find—and this is more likely—a priest or a politician; a person who wants to get you to not think about what he is teaching you. Beware of these men. We have been dragged through enough mire and blood and darkness doing things according to the will of God. It is now time that we began to think things out for ourselves.

A FREEHOUGHT PROSECUTION CRUSHED IN SPAIN.

ON the 23rd of February last year there appeared in the Madrid *Dominicales* an article entitled, "Advice to a Mother," from the pen of the valiant Editor, Ramon Chies. In this article the immoralities and absurdities of the Confessional were exposed. The vehement tone of the article greatly shocked the pious fiscal, to whom all newspapers must be submitted for perusal before publication. He denounced the number, and on the same day a prosecution was begun, with the result that the writer of the article was condemned to six years of imprisonment and a heavy fine. Before the carrying out of the sentence the case was brought before another tribunal, and after eighteen months' deliberation Ramon Chies was finally acquitted by the jury. The news of his acquittal was joyously received by all Spanish Freethinkers, but the Clericals swore black and blue, tore their hair, bit their nails, and kicked furiously with their heels like mules. The daily papers have swarmed lately with despairing letters, warning the Government that if the present Liberal party be not destroyed at once, a repetition of what took place in Brazil three weeks ago will be the immediate consequence. The Spanish Government may be powerful, but it will sooner succeed in catching the moon with the teeth than smothering the Republican and Freethought movement in the Peninsula.

WANTED TO SPEAK TO GOD HIMSELF.

HE is a good little boy; he lives on the South Side; he is five years old; he is accustomed to hear people talk through the telephone; he repeats his prayers every night, sentence by sentence, after his mother, and he has a mind of his own. The other night he somewhat astonished his maternal progenitor by objecting to the usual programme, and remarking that he "wanted to speak to God himself." Having obtained the consent of his mystified parent, who thought it a pity to thwart his early piety, he knelt by the side of his little bed, shut his eyes tight, clasped his little hands, and in a shrill little voice began his direct appeal to head-quarters. His mother's feelings may be imagined as she listened to the following:

"Hello, God! 'Yes, sir.' Take care of papa and mamma! 'Yes, sir.' Make me a good boy! 'Yes, sir.' An' send me a dog! 'Yes, sir.' All right! Good-night, God! Ring off!"

Wife: "I believe that more women than men go to heaven."
Husband: "You do? What makes you think so?" W.: "Women live better lives than men." H.: "I grant it, Mary; but there is one thing that leads me to think there are very few women on the other side" W.: "What is that?" H.: "It is spoken of as the silent shore."

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON OF THE REV. SIM GOOSEBERRY, 'POSSUM BOTTOM, W. V.A.

"I HAB ch'iced dese wo'ds for de tex':—'It am easiah fo' a camel to go troo de eye ob a needle dan' fo' a rich man to entah into de kingdom.' And dey am mighty oncouragin' fo' de rich man."

"I don't reekon it's likely dat any ob you bruddahs and sistahs sitlin' afo' me ebber seed a camel, 'less you been to de circus on de sly, an' hain't gib it in in yo' 'sperience in de class meetin'."

"Dar am nothin' 'bout a camel dat you kin put a p'int on. Ef yo'd sta't wid de tail ob a camel fo' to thread a ba'n do' wid, yo'd git fotech up wid a knot afo' you got two foot. Ef yo'd sta't wid the head fo' to pull him troo, you wouldn't git nowhar. You might jes' ez well try fo' to bo' a hole in a bundle ob wool wid an augah. Dat am de kind ob job yo'd hab puttin' a camel troo de eye ob a needle."

"All dem dat's restin' in der ca'nal secu'ity on dar piles ob money had bettah be a loosenin' de strings ob dar money-bags, an' gittin' de knots ob sin out ob demselves, an' rubbin' down de humps ob onrighteousness, and squeezein' in dar big feet ob wickedness, and gittin' de crook ob pride out ob dar necks, an' p'intin' dar tails ob contempsty fo' to git ready fo' de threadin' match wid dat camel on de great day ob judgment; or de camel's gwine to beat 'em threadin', shoor. De Lo'd's gwine to fu'nish de needle, an' de debble's gwine to fu'nish de camel, an' de rich man's gwine to stick."

"You sinnahs ob 'Possum Bottom ain't gwine to scoot troo dat eye ob de Lo'd's needle like a haiah troo a bodkin—lettin' on yo' too poo' fo' to match wid de camel. Yo' gwine to stick right wha' dat money's bulgin' out yo' pockets, dat yo' ought to gib yo' preachah fo' greasin' you wid fac's, an' 'ilin' you wid p'int's dat 'll beat de camel an' gib you a good show fo' de kingdom."

"Ef de perspicuity ob dis tex' am not cleah 'nough fo' to make yo' ondahstand dat de collection dis very mo'nin' 's got to get de bulgin' out ob yo' pockets fo' to pay dat fo' dollahs dat you owe me, I can make it mo' perspicuous."

"De fust time dat I rose in de pulpit fo' to preach, I was so skead dat I fo'got de wo'ds ob de tex'. Dey was de very same wo'ds dat I hab ch'iced fo' dis mo'nin'. De camel bein' a new crittah to me, I could'nt fotech its name nohow. Dar I stood afo' a whole sanctua'y full of sinnahs, a-squi'min' an' a-wrestlin' wid a dumb spirit dat had me by de tongue. I had de meanin' ob de tex' an' de kingdom, but de crittah an' de needle was funder. I saw de sin ob lebity creepin' into de sanctua'y. Dat riled me an' downed de dumb spirit. So sez I,—'Fellow-sinnahs and sco'nahs, it am easiah fo' a cow to climb a tree an' hatch her calf in a bird's nest, den it am fo' a pusson to get into de kingdom wid money a bulgin' him.' An' so it am."—*Tobe Hodge in "Puck."*

THE RAINBOW.

WHEN I first read of Sir Isaac Newton's experiments with the prism, and learned something of the laws of the refraction of light, I naturally reflected on the ingenious application of the rainbow as a sign that there should never occur another general deluge, and it struck me as being one of the clumsiest lies in the whole Bible. I asked myself questions like these. How is it that there is no rainbow to console people when the sky is dark, and the rain coming down in torrents for a dozen hours consecutively? How is it in tropical and other countries, where the rainy seasons last for six or seven weeks, that the inhabitants are not reminded of the divine repentance by the appearance of the covenantal bow? How is it that this eternal sign always appears in beautiful sunny weather, when the passing showers are welcome and needful? We often see a rainbow without having at our point of view a single drop of rain. What does the farmer think when his crops are being parched for want of rain, and the April and May weather is unusually dry and ungenial, and a small tantalising shower comes on, which yields about a single drop to every square inch, making the vegetable world feel all the thirstier, and when he looks in the opposite direction to the sun and sees the blessed bow which he looks upon as a divine message that he needn't trouble himself about his macintosh or umbrella as there won't be any more rain—not much.

INCOG.

PROFANE JOKES.

An Irishman asked in the confessional if he had ever wandered from the faith replied in the negative, saying he had always voted for Home Rule and the wearing of the green.

Master (examining class in scripture): "Brown, will you repeat me a text from the New Testament?" Brown: "And he went and hanged himself." Master: "Repeat another." Brown: "Go thou and do likewise." Master (amid smothered laughter from the class): "One more." Brown: "That thou doest, do quickly." It was noticed that Brown was careful to select a soft seat for some days.

A little Maine girl recently visited New York, and went to the theatre two or three times. On her return home she was reluctant to go to church on Sunday, and made the remark that "she liked those meetings best where the curtains rose." Her father, who was a leading church member, cautioned her about making that remark when any callers were present. Shortly after the minister was shown in, and the little girl entertained him awhile alone. When her father entered the room, she said, "Papa, I've told the minister all about my visit to New York; but I didn't say anything about the meetings where the curtain rose, and I ain't a going to either."

IRRELIGIOUS CIDER.

"Have you any good cider?" asked a rider of a boy whose father was a rigid Sabbatarian.

"No," answered the youth, "it got working on Sunday and pap wouldn't have it on the place."

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