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The

Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

ANOTHER MURDERER GONE TO GLORY.

WILL DUKES, the murderer, just hung at Manchester, was a very commonplace villain. He killed his employer like a beast, and tried to conceal the crime like a fool. During the trial he imitated the unhappy example of Mrs. Maybrick, and made a voluntary statement, in which the jury showed their disbelief by bringing in a verdict of wilful murder. But before paying the penalty of the law he was prepared for kingdom-come by the professional soul-saver of the gaol, and so efficacious were this gentleman's services, that Dukes went to the scaffold with the sure and certain hope of a glorious passage to heaven. At any rate he "died happy," to use his own last words, and it is to be presumed he is now in glory, twanging his hallelujah harp, blowing his hallelujah trumpet, joining in the chorus of all the menagerie of the Apocalypse, and consorting with all the hung and unhung scoundrels who have left the earth for a more genial locality where their characters are better appreciated. May God, if there be a God, forbid we should ever join their holy crew, for we would rather take a villa or a flat in Hell than be for ever disgusted with such neighbors in Heaven.

Like all the rest of us, Dukes was what he was because he was constructed that way. When a man has the sense of a fool and the savagery of a beast, it is no wonder that he commits a murder; just as a tender-hearted man might weep that such creatures ever existed for their own misery and the world's affliction. We do not intend, therefore, to waste our time in denouncing the poor devil. Our object is to show the beautiful effect of the Christian doctrine of repentance, particularly on the very natures for which it was especially designed.

Cardinal Newman, in his marvellously eloquent lectures on the *Difficulties of Anglicans*, gives his whole genius to a picture of a murderer and his execution. The affair is the talk of the town. There is an hourly bulletin of the culprit's spiritual state. Some say he is obdurate, some that he has yielded. The women cry out that Jesus and Mary will see to it. The excitement is at its height, the suspense is intolerable. At last the news is circulated that the culprit has confessed, asked pardon of God, and made up his mind for a long spell of purgatory. Then arises a shout of joy and thanksgiving for "the grace vouchsafed to one so near eternity."

This is very interesting, but not very edifying. Such pious resignation on the part of the condemned murderer does not sensibly affect the statistics of crime. Throats are still cut, property is still unsafe. The dying may profit, but it brings little benefit to the living. The fact is, religion makes death an opportunity of appealing to the imagination. The criminal is "near eternity," but so are hundreds of others in every great city. He will not die alone. Some other life will expire at the same moment; not that of a murderer, but perhaps of a father who has toiled hard, and brought up his children honorably;

No. 440.

or a poor widow who has worn herself to death to find her little ones bread. No excited crowd is making a fuss about *them*. Such exits from life are common and do not inflame the imagination, and of course religion is a matter of imagination from beginning to end.

The culprit himself is simply appealed to on his selfish side. What is to become of *him*? Where will *he* go? His victim is entirely lost sight of. Yet, if a man's heart were touched, that is the only thing he would think about. What of the man I wronged, robbed, murdered, and hurried into the next life? What is his fate? What will become of his widow and children? What can I do, slight as it may be, to ease their burden or lighten their grief? Such are the questions he should ask, but such questions do not trouble the scoundrels who walk to the scaffold and swing into heaven. Religion says to them "Look after your immortal soul," and they look after it, just as they formerly looked after silver spoons, cash boxes, and other unconsidered trifles. They repent; that is to say, they are sorry—in the circumstances. A reprieve would damp their piety, a pardon would extinguish it. They square it with God because they think he has power to plague them. Their repentance is only a desire to escape the lash.

Dukes made an edifying end. He died happy. Heaven opened as earth slipped from his feet. The night before he exchanged the prison cap for a crown of immortality he wrote a longish letter to a friend, full of maudlin self-pity and unctuous cant. He recommends "religion and temperance," quotes Scripture, believes he can suffer hanging as Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion, reproaches the friends who had not called upon him in prison, but magnanimously forgives them, though with a warning to "be careful." Not a word about poor Gordon whom he murdered. Not a word or a sigh of regret, except for his own plight and the sorrow of his own wife. Such "repentance" is detestable, and the religion which inspires it is accursed.

"I feel prepared for my doom," he said, "through the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ." Poor Gordon was less lucky. He was not prepared for *his* doom. Dukes murdered him without warning; did not even send him a coffin and cross-bones as a gentle reminder. Poor Gordon had so little of the "mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ" that he had to leave the world in too great a hurry to settle his spiritual accounts. While bashing his head with the hammer, Dukes might have cried with Gloucester, "Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither." But Dukes himself was more fortunate. He had ample room and verge enough to prepare to meet his God. The chance denied to his victim was given to him. And if there is any truth in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Dukes may sit and see Gordon cooking in Hades. "A mad world, my masters," where men believe such things. This Christian superstition is fit for knaves and fools. Honest, sensible men should hiss it out of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

S A C R I F I C E . *

PROF. ROBERTSON SMITH'S new book is decidedly the best he has yet put forward. It contains more genuine learning and far less truckling to the orthodox than his *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. Prof. Smith has not quite got rid of his fear of the kirk and we continually come across passages in which he softens down the result of his own researches. When we remember how even Prof. Huxley demolished the Genesis account of creation under the name of the Miltonic hypothesis, and how Prof. Smith was hunted out of the Free Kirk for his heresy, we may pass over his timidity and express for ourselves the conclusions to which his investigations lead us.

There is very much in the volume well worthy of discussion. Indeed, it is likely we shall return to certain items in regard to totemism and taboo, for they strongly corroborate a thesis we have upheld in these pages, viz., that the early Jews were savages. But the chief interest of the book centres round the fundamental institution of sacrifice. The origin and meaning of sacrifice constitute a central problem of ancient religion. That question connects the stronghold of Christianity, its doctrine of the Atonement, with the most barbarous customs of primitive savages. Much has been written upon it, and certainly Professor Smith's contribution is one of the most remarkable.

At the outset Prof. Smith has some noteworthy remarks on the fact that ancient religion was more largely concerned with practices than beliefs, and that with them mythology took the place of dogma, the myths being derived from the ritual, the latter being fixed, but the myths being variable. Prof. Smith very properly illustrates the religious practices of the Jews by those of the Arabs and other Semitic nations. There is a double advantage in this, for not only is the one illustrated by the other, but the nature of such a practice as that of sacrifice is much more clearly seen by the Christian reader when exhibited by other nations than as it appears among God's chosen people. The sacrifice of the first-born appears in its true light when related of the King of Moab (2 Kings iii., 27), but when told of Abraham or of God the Father himself, the horrible character of the proceeding is veiled in all sorts of disguises.

To understand early customs, we must study early Sociology and it is exactly because Professor Smith has given so much of his attention here that his book is a distinct advance upon any previous one upon the subject. It is not hard to understand how sacrifices arose. The Hindoos who placed upon the grave of an English officer the brandy and cheroots which he loved in life in order to propitiate his spirit illustrated a prominent aspect. Just as men were appeased with gifts, usually of substances which minister to life, so were spirits supposed to be, and the general form which the offering took, was something in the shape of what the Americans call a square meal. The Romans never sat down to eat without placing a portion aside for the Lares and Penates, and Prof. Smith gives abundant evidence that the early sacrifices of the Semitic people were animals offered at a meal partaken by the worshippers. The sacrifice, he holds, was originally a nourishing of the common life of the kindred and their god by a common meal. Eating and drinking together were primarily a sign of fraternity. Only to his own kin did early man owe duty, and his god was always of his own kin. Jehovah was as we are often told, the god of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was their father and their king. When Ruth said to Naomi "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God," the exclamation showed that taking

up new kindred involved a change of worship. Prof. Smith says. "It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the idea of kinship between gods and men was originally taken in a purely physical sense." The Christian's explanations of Biblical anthropomorphisms may be dismissed as unfounded assumptions. The story in Genesis of the sons of God going with the daughters of men is one of the remnants of early myths unexplained by later editors.

The primitive tie being one of blood kinship, the offering of blood was thought to peculiarly cement the unity between the deity and his people. Herbert Spencer points out in his "Ceremonial Institutions," how blood offerings over the dead may be explained from the practice of establishing a sacred bond between living persons by partaking of each other's blood. The derived conception being that those who give some of their blood to the ghost, effect with it a union, which on the one side implies submission, and on the other side friendliness. Hence the worshippers of Baal, gashed themselves with knives (1 Kings xviii., 20).† Hence too, the frequent employment of blood in sorcery. The blood being the natural sign of life, or as it is called in Gen. ix., 4, and Deut. xii., 23 the life itself, it was reserved for Jahveh; as with the ancient Mexican and Central American gods, to whom was continually offered up the blood alike of sacrificed men and animals.

The notion that communion with the deity is effected by means of a meal in which blood—be it only the blood of the grape—forms an element, shows a survival in the Christian rite of Communion. The story that Jesus offered bread and wine saying this is my flesh and this is my blood, is an evident myth founded on the rite in which the sacred meal was supposed to cement the kinship with the deity. Prof. Smith says throughout the Semitic field the fundamental idea of sacrifice is that of communion between the god and his worshippers by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of the "sacred victim." The term communion is misleading if likely to give rise to thoughts of ideal devotion for it is abundantly clear that the only communion with deity dreamt of by early man was communion of food and consequent communion of blood and kinship. To the barbarous notion that deities are to be appeased by a blood communion, Christianity has added the absurdity that Christ was God, thus making God, in the famous phrase of Diderot, "sacrifice himself in order to appease himself."

We should have liked Prof. Smith to have entered more fully into the subject of substitutionary sacrifice and to have traced the steps which connect the primitive sacrifice of the mess with the sacrament of the mass, the supper where the deity eats with that where he is eaten. But this would be too much to expect even from this heterodox professor, whose work we heartily commend to our readers as a courageous and learned introduction to the study of the Semitic faiths, which, it has been boasted, have supplied the world with its principal religions.

J. M. WHEELER.

Theology is but ignorance of natural causes reduced to a system.—*D'Holbach*.

I do not believe that any two men, on what are called doctrinal points, think alike who think at all. It is only those who have not thought that appear to agree.—*Paine*.

The church that does not allow investigation, that teaches that all doubts are wicked, attains unity through tyranny, that is, monotony by repression. The boast of unity is the confession of tyranny.—*Ingersoll*.

There is in childhood a period measured by six, or at most by ten years, when any well-inculcated dogma, no matter how extravagantly absurd, is sure to retain its hold for life.—*Schopenhauer*.

The progress from deepest ignorance to highest enlightenment is a progress from entire unconsciousness of law to the conviction that law is universal and inevitable.—*Spencer*.

* "Lectures on the Religion of the Semites;" First series "The Fundamental Institutions," by W. Robertson Smith, M.A., LL.D. Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1889.

† Prof. Smith points out that the Syriac word *ethkashaf* "make"; "supplication," literally means "cut oneself."

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—VIII.
ON "PRAYER."

To the Rev. T. Teignmouth Shore, M.A.
Chaplain-in-ordinary to the Queen.

(CONCLUDED.)

INSTEAD of skulking behind ambiguous illustrations, I invite you to take a simple one, and see whether it confirms or contradicts your theory. Let us go to the Prayer Book of your Church. In the "Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea" I find a special prayer against storms, containing the following ejaculation: "O send thy word of command to rebuke the raging winds and the roaring sea; that we, being delivered from this distress, may live to serve thee, and to glorify thy name all the days of our life."

Let me ask you to explain how God's acting upon "the physical world indirectly, through his action upon human thought and will," is likely to make a storm subside. It seems to me that human volition cannot break or bend a single law of nature, and that human thought has no effect on the weather. The only way to save a ship in a storm is to handle her well, and throw overboard a few gallons of oil, which can be done by Atheists as well as by Christians. Superstition says that the will of God can control the winds and waves by some mysterious process. The doctrine is, of course, unintelligible, but you have undertaken to teach it. Yet you did not undertake to explain or defend it, and you are ill advised in attempting to do either. Your safest course is to say, "God *does* still storms in answer to prayer, but I do not know *how* he does it."

Not only does your theory of God's control of the physical world by human agency break down, but you connect it with a metaphysical theory which has been repudiated by the greatest doctors of your own faith. Your argument stands or falls with the doctrine of Free Will. You perceive unchanging law in the external world, but you declare that the internal world of man's nature is "another department where God governs, not by Law, but through the freedom of the human Will."

I will not discuss Free Will. There is no need to do so. You are defending Prayer as a Christian, and are not entitled to assume what many of the greatest Christians have denied. A theory of Christian prayer which would necessarily be rejected by Saint Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards; a theory which flies in the face of the plainest teaching of Saint Paul; a theory which is explicitly condemned by the tenth and seventeenth Articles of your own Church; such a theory, I say, is totally inadmissible, unless you *prove* it in opposition to these preponderant authorities; and as you make no attempt to prove it, but simply postulate it as though it were a Christian axiom, I am justified in declining to accept it as a basis of discussion.

The only question which is worth discussing, after all, is this—Does God answer Prayer? Or, in other words—Is Prayer answered? Now this is a question of objective fact, for I have contended, and you tacitly admit, that every one who prays asks for *something* that would not happen in the ordinary course of nature. It is idle to say that the lives of praying men prove the efficacy of prayer. You your-

self furnish the answer to this sophism, before attempting a singularly feeble reply. It is downright folly to assert that "Christianity as a whole is the true explanation, and the strongest defence of Christian Prayer," for that is assuming everything at first, and proving it afterwards in detail by means of the general assumption. The question is not whether God might, could, would, or should answer Prayer, but, in your own words, Does he do so? Now the only way to answer this question is to appeal to evidence. It has been proposed by Professor Tyndall, on the suggestion, I believe, of Sir Henry Thompson,

that an experiment should be made in some hospital, by specially praying for the patients in one ward, and seeing whether it affords a greater percentage of cures. Such a proposal is alarming to the professors of mystery; for all religions die of being found out, and experiment is fatal to their pretensions. Accordingly you declare that this "so-called experiment would, as a matter of religion, be a blasphemy," and that "Prayer made under such conditions could not have in it the essentials of Prayer." But of course you carefully refrain from suggesting an experiment which *would* conform to the true conditions, and which would, at the same time, be a *real* experiment. Nor do you explain why God should regard as "blasphemy" an endeavor to ascertain the truth or falsity of a doctrine taught by priests. It is only religion that cries "blasphemy!" in the presence of investigation.

While waiting for *your* experiment, I look abroad in the world, and find no *practical* recognition of the efficacy of Prayer. No Life Assurance Company would calculate a sovereign's life policy on the ground that her subjects asked God to "grant her in health and wealth long to live." No Fire Insurance Company would grant a policy on a House of Prayer unless a lightning conductor were run up to prevent the Deity from making mistakes in a thunderstorm. Underwriters never think of asking whether the captain prays or swears, or whether he carries rum or missionaries. And when the Peculiar People use prayer, without mixing it with medicine, they are browbeaten by Christian coroners and jurymen.

You give only two answers to Prayer, and they are extremely ancient. Nay more, they are selected from the Bible! *O sancta simplicitas!* Moses prayed to see "the good land beyond Jordan," and died without seeing it; but fifteen hundred years or so afterwards he saw it from "the summit of Tabor" when Christ was transfigured. What a precious "help to belief!" Paul also prayed God to remove his "thorn in the flesh"—whatever that was; and, although the thorn was not removed, God "gave the grace to bear it." Well, if there be a God, let us hope he will give us grace to bear the logic of theologians.

In the little sermon with which you conclude, you picture Christ standing "amid the surging, weeping throng of agonised humanity"—all created by the God of love—and hearing their cries for help from "sin." But is it not a fact that all the alleged miracles of Christ were *physical*? Where in the whole of the Gospels, did he make a single bad man good? "I have chosen you twelve," he said, "and one of you is a devil." He had, therefore, in Judas a fine subject for one of his "spiritual" miracles. But did he work it? No, the "devil" betrayed him, and Judas has been cursed by Christians ever since.

Here I take leave of your volume. You have not "helped" my "belief." You have said nothing to convince a doubter of the efficacy of Prayer. But you have shown me, once more, that Christianity has in its service a number of intelligent, accomplished, and *well-paid* men, who juggle and chop straw for a living. If I prayed at all, I would pray that they might despise the wretched business, and earn even a scantier allowance of bread in a more honest avocation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Some cattle at Banbury nearly drove in Mr. Bunton's window. He wrote to the local *Guardian* advocating the improvement of the street, and is replied to by a good Christian, Y. Z., who thinks it would have been a great blessing "not only if those erratic cattle had smashed his window and destroyed his *Freethinkers*, but that it had involved the whole building with its enlightening literature, and that it could never be replaced." Y. Z. is truly pious in his wishes, but they will not hurt Mr. Bunton.

HELP FOR THE SWEDISH MARTYR.

VIKTOR LENNSTRAND, the gallant young Swedish Freethinker, is in gaol again. He is serving two terms of three months' imprisonment, and one of six, and, as other sentences are pending, it is possible that he will be doomed to linger for two years in the place which Swedish Christianity reserves for bold and honest sceptics. Fortunately Mr. Lennstrand is in good spirits. He is provided with writing materials, and is contributing to his journal the *Fritankaren* (*Freethinker*). Captain Otto Thomson has left his home and gone to Stockholm for the purpose of conducting the paper during his friend's imprisonment, and he will keep the flag flying or fall beneath it. The darker side of the matter is this: The Swedish Freethinkers are poor and they are overwhelmed by the difficulty of maintaining the paper, which does not yet pay its way, and providing Mr. Lennstrand with decent food during his incarceration. Of course it scarcely need be said that prison fare in Sweden is very hard, and might seriously injure a delicately-bred gentleman. In these circumstances the Executive of the National Secular Society has voted £2 10s., and decided to appeal to the Freethinkers of Great Britain and Ireland for assistance for their Swedish brethren. A Swedish Prisoners' Fund is therefore open, and subscriptions are urgently requested. They can be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C., or to the editors of the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer*.

A FISH, A PROPHET, AND A GOD.

"BREATHES there a man with soul so dead,"
Who will not weep when he has read
How Jonah from his God had fled,

How Jonah strove to get away,
How Jonah's God would have him stay,
How with a fish God barr'd his way?

"O fish!" cried God, "hold Jonah down,
The indolent, disobedient clown,
And bring him back, not far from town."

So back he comes; oh, sad to see!
A sicker fish there could not be,
I wot none ever swam the sea.

"Thou fish," roared God, "heave Jonah out!"
"I must," quoth fish, "beyond a doubt;"
Where'pon the whale began to spout.

"Aha," quoth God, "you're back, I see;
Now skin out straight for Nineveh;
And don't run off and go to sea.

"You lazy, worthless, roving clown,
Cry out like mad through all the town
That you and God will burn it down.

"Sure pop, old man, now git, I say;
You surely ought to find the way;
So don't you dare to go astray."

So Jonah got, as git he must,
God scarce could see him for the dust;
He sped as though his gall he'd bust.

And Jonah cried his false alarm,
Not doubting God would make it warm
For Nineveh in a fiery storm.

He bawled, he yelled, his Thus God saith;
He raved and stormed till out of breath,
And scared some Ninnies half to death.

"Yet forty days," great Jonah cries,
"We'll bake you up in brimstone pies,
On Jonah's God you'll find no flies."

The forty days their course had run,
Still Jonah sweltering in the sun;
"Alas!" quoth he, "where's all the fun?"

In this sad fix Jonah went to bed,
Growled about God, and finally said:
"Darn all Nineveh! I wish I was dead!"

So thus he died, and has gone to sleep
With his father and mother. Oh, weep,
All ye who would God's vigil keep!

NELSON HUNT.

ACID DROPS.

After endorsing the Catholic and High Church doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage, Mr. Gladstone now reprints an old article of his, written in 1844, eulogising the Confessional as an agency of spiritual culture. The *Tablet*, of course, is in high spirits, and those who have always asserted that Mr. Gladstone was a Catholic at heart are shaking their heads more ominously than ever.

Mr. Gladstone speaks of Confession as "making clean the inner chambers of the heart." But those who know the Confessional practically, in countries where the churches are whispering galleries, say that the priest too often leaves more dirt in the penitent's mind than he found there. How often is the young girl's mind poisoned by the lascivious suggestions of a priestly mud-raker. How often does the priest carry on a kind of spiritual adultery with the wife while the husband is toiling for her maintenance. And how often does the priest, who is for ever listening to confessions of frailty, become a volcano of morbid passion, that sometimes finds a vent in the beastliness for which the clerical tribe are only too famous.

Mr. Gladstone says he gave no permission for the republication of this old article. The editor of *Merry England* says he did, and flourishes one of the Grand Old Man's postcards. All this is a very trivial matter—to the public. The only important question is, Does Mr. Gladstone still endorse his old view of confession? If so, let him read again Michelet's *Priests, Women, and Families*.

Canon Liddon must be singularly behind date if he meant what he said about the late Bishop of Durham. According to the eloquent Canon, Bishop Lightfoot rolled back the worst attack on the Scriptures since the days of the early Church. But every outsider knows he did nothing of the sort. He spent all his time in wiping off the spray, while the tide flowed on unimpeded. Even the *Athenaeum*, which is not an heretical journal, is obliged to admit that "He was timid. He clung strongly to tradition. He disliked to be disturbed in any of the beliefs that prevailed within his Church." It adds that "he saw little truth outside of the beliefs which he deemed the essentials of Christianity. Accordingly, he has struck out no original path. He has done little with which his name will be permanently associated."

The Bishop of Bedford advises the clergy to take the lead in cricket clubs. He says "there is plenty of 'go' among the young fellows." Yes, in the legs. What they want is a little more "go" in their heads.

The Australian pietists have brought a Bill before the Victoria Parliament to prohibit the sale of newspapers on Sunday. The parsons want to have the monopoly of the day. It seems likely that the Bill may become law, but Mr. Symes promises to fight the question and continue at all costs the sale of the *Liberator* on Sunday. No doubt the parsons here dislike the competition of the Sunday newspaper, but they are not strong enough to attempt their forcible suppression.

The United States Court at Utah has decided against the Mormons being allowed to vote on account of their prior allegiance to the Church. If this judgment were applied to the Roman Catholics, it would disfranchise every one of them.

The Theosophists explain why they claim Edison. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1878, and as he has not publicly withdrawn, they still claim him as a member. Capital! Now note the subtlety of these people. When they ask you to join the Theosophical Society they tell you that you can do so without becoming a Theosophist; but, judging by Edison's case, the moment they book you, they claim you as a Theosophist for ever.

Reluctance to pay up is found even among the Theosophists, despite their spiritual culture, which is so superior to that of ordinary beings. The difficulty in getting in subscriptions led to the appointment of "commissioners" in July last, and the result is a recommendation to substitute

a system of voluntary contributions for the old method of definite subscriptions, which were so indefinitely received.

Prayer doesn't seem very efficacious in Spurgeon's case. His health does not improve, and his voice is almost completely gone. It is really too bad of Jehovah to make such fine promises and break them so shamelessly.

Spurgeon has a new view of persecution. "If any one," he says, "would see a persecutor in full flower, let him listen to a gentleman of 'advanced views' when he is delivering his gentle soul in relation to a Calvinist." Here, surely, says the *Christian World*, we have the wolf scolding the lamb to perfection.

The Rev. E. P. Downman has got the Bishop of London to relieve him from the vows (we suppose of poverty and chastity) he took some years ago when founding the Order of the Sacred Redeemer in the City-road. The reverend gentleman will now be able to pile up money and marry a wife—two things for which the English clergy have a sneaking fondness.

An evening paper calls this City-road fraternity "a brotherhood for men." Did it ever hear of a brotherhood for women?

There is a proposal to marry people "free, gratis, for nothing" in the State churches at Derby. The object is to draw people away from the Nonconformist chapels and the registry office. Should the scheme succeed it will no doubt be tried elsewhere. The churches, we suppose, will have notices out-side to this effect:—"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. Come and be married for nothing. Splendid chance for the poor, the helpless, and the unemployed. Christenings at the same price, with a present of five shillings for each baby, whether single or in twins or triplets."

Canon Eyre, reading a paper on the press at a clerical conference, lamented the power of the press for evil. There were no fewer than three weekly publications of a Freethinking character, and in addition to this there were 57,700 tracts of the same nature. Where does the Canon get his figures? We can assure him that the London Secular Federation issue far more than this number in the course of a year. He then, of course, went on to speak of penny dreadful and other "poisonous and filthy literature" in a way to associate in the minds of his hearers the serious Freethought propaganda with all that is low and detestable. It is the old game of the clericals to seek to blacken their opponents. We can afford to smile and live it down.

Among the "timely topics" submitted for discussion at a recent London Ministers' Meeting were these:—What is a London minister's duty in respect to the alarming increasing debt of the London Methodist Mission? What can be done to save the collapse of the Methodist Day School systems in London? Questions like these show that there is a sombre obverse to the pretty picture of the "Forward Movement."

How funny! *The Ceylon Friend*, a Methodist paper in the isle of spices, ridicules the Singhalese for their belief in demons, when almost every page of the Christian gospels is saturated with the same superstition.

The *Medium*, which took no notice of the Fox sisters when they published their exposure of Spirtism, now gives prominence to a recantation by Maggie Fox Kane, in which she repudiates all she said against Spiritualism as false, and hints that she was suborned thereto by Catholics high in position. She says she had a letter from Cardinal Manning advising her to abandon this "wicked work of the Devil." To us this second recantation of Mrs. Fox Kane only makes it clear that her evidence on any point is thoroughly untrustworthy; and from the way in which she herself speaks of her hopes of emolument from lecturing, one need not look far for a motive for her perversions, conversions, and re-conversions.

The good Christians of New York do not permit the directions of the New Testament to be carried out to the public danger. The police raided a faith cure establish-

ment at Brooklyn and arrested three persons who had endangered the public health by going from a house infected with diphtheria and scarlet fever, which they had sought to remove by the prayer of faith, to a place of public meeting without taking the ordinary precautions to prevent the spread of the disease.

The New York Presbyterians, and a good number of Scotch ones too, are getting ashamed of their Westminster Confession of Faith. The Presbytery has reported certain changes which it desires with a view of toning down reprobation, election, and damnation. Meanwhile the orthodox are crying out that hell is just as hot though changed to Hades, and that, as the Scotch beadle said, a kirk without a hell isna' worth a damn.

Canon Shuttleworth is a pleasant gentleman, and we are not surprised at his bursting out into "poetry" on his Christmas cards. But why on earth should a daily paper chronicle such very small beer? Fortunately we are spared six lines out of eight. The two given refer to Robert Browning and Bishop Lightfoot, and are as follows:

Story-singer of earth's hope, man's life, God's love,

Wise pastor, sweet as deep and true of soul.

Lines like these could be turned out by the thousand by any educated man. Preach away, dear Canon, but spare us your "poetry."

Everybody has heard the story of the Quaker sailing in a ship which was attempted to be boarded by a privateer. Seizing a hatchet, he cried out to a fellow with his hand on the bulwark, "Friend, take away thy hand; I am going to chop that wood." A pendant to this story is told by an evening contemporary. An Irish priest was walking in Rome. A "rude fellow of the baser sort" struck him in the face as he was going along the street. "My friend," said he, "smite me on the other cheek also." Nothing loth, the rough administered a sounding blow on the other side of the priest's face. "Now, my friend," said the priest, "I have obeyed the command of the Gospel—it is my turn now." Whereupon he doubled his fists and gave the man as sound a thrashing as ever he had in his life.

Lord Brougham said you could drive a coach and six through any act of parliament, and evidently you could drive Barnum's show through any maxim of Jesus Christ. When the little boy called his sister a fool, and was reminded that whoso calleth his brother a fool is in danger of hell fire, he retorted "She ain't my brother."

The *St. James's Gazette* gives a very interesting account of the *Coronoca Nera*, the Black Chronicle, which has been started at Rome as an organ of the lower clergy, and already enjoys a circulation of 38,000 daily. The higher clergy are denounced as avaricious and profligate, and the vices of some are described under pseudonyms that do not disguise their identity. One sells indulgences, another intrigues with his fair penitents, and another carries on an amour with the wife of a brigand whom he shields from the law. Naturally the Cardinals are in a great rage, but the obnoxious paper goes on with its exposures, and demands the abolition of clerical celibacy.

The late Mr. Kavanagh, formerly an M.P., had neither legs nor arms, and the peasantry of his district believe it happened in this way. His mother, a strong Protestant, was offered a plaster model of the Virgin in Paris. She bought it and broke off its arms and legs, and her next child was born with the same defects. Such is superstition in the land of potatoes, pigs, and priests.

A Mr. W. Shepherd opposed Mr. Foote at Nottingham. His remarks were so rambling that the chairman took the sense of the meeting as to whether he should be allowed another speech, and the meeting decided against him. Mr. Shepherd has since eased his mind in a four-paged tract. It seems impossible for him to be accurate. He says he only had five minutes on the platform, when he had fully ten, like other speakers. Being very dull and offensive, Mr. Shepherd complains of Mr. Foote's "sarcasm and ridicule." Another time he is likely to get rather more than less.

The proprietors of St. George's Hall, Plymouth, wouldn't

stand a lecture by Mr. Moss on "The Devil's Doom," but they made no objection to "Inspired Nonsense." Christians in that part won't have the Devil played with, but don't mind being called fools.

The Bishop of London preaching at Fulham Parish Church on Christmas day, gave utterance to some remarkable theology. Alluding to the connection of Christ with domestic life he was reported in the *Evening Standard* as saying "this domestic relation had a counterpart in the very essence of God himself. Enough was revealed to them to show that the tie which bound parent to child and child to parent did not spring from the creation of things that they saw, but sprang from a deeper foundation, and had its origin and source in things which were far beyond the possibility of comprehension by our human intellects." If this means anything within the comprehension of human intellects it refers to God the Father and God the Son, and if the domestic relation has a counterpart in the very essence of God himself it must imply there is also a God the Mother who, judging from the analogy of human relations, should be the most important member of the whole concern.

The Rev. Dr. McCann, of St. Cuthbert's, Winson Green, has discontinued the week-day services. He does not feel the utility of discoursing to empty benches, and the people don't see the use of filling them.

The Government inquiry into the management of the Kilhampton Home, which appears to be conducted by Canon Thynne, a Mother Superior, and sisters, reveals facts by no means creditable to these pious people. Some of the girl inmates testified that they were half starved, that they were punished by putting stinging nettles on their mouths and hands, and that though they went in well, they came out with bad places on neck, arms, and legs.

Several girls declared they did not get enough to eat, but they seem to have had a pretty bellyfull of religion. In the morning they said the Lord's Prayer, sung the hymn "Gentle Jesus," and said a prayer asking God's blessing on Canon Thynne and the Mother. They also had to pray for the sisters and all the others, and in the evening, service was held in the chapel by the Mother.

The birthday of his Savior proved too much for one of the Salvation Army. He appeared to be the leader of a band that caused annoyance near Holborn, and, on being asked to go away, struck a constable in the chest. He was taken to Bow Street and fined 20s.

Dr. Joseph Parker thought it proper at Christmas to warn religious editors, "lest in an unguarded moment ye bite and devour one another." Dr. Parker has edited a Christian paper himself, and knows it would never do to allow the editor of the *English Churchman* to come near the boss of the *Church Times* unless both were muzzled.

The Rev. John McNeill, of Regent Square Presbyterian Church, preaching on the Rich Man and Lazarus, denounced the innovators who sought to put out the fires of hell. "This was no mere parable Christ was narrating. . . . The Pharisees denied Christ for his teaching, and he flashed up the lurid light of one of themselves being in hell." The Scotch Spurgeon, after the manner of his kind, makes of the narrative what he pleases. It says nothing of the rich man being a Pharisee, and his torments in hell appear not to have been the result of any sin, but simply a revolution of position, because in his lifetime he received good things and Lazarus evil things.

Mr. C. Raleigh Chichester is struck with a good idea, which he ventilates in the journals. It is to further open up trade with Africa and at the same time to Christianise the Dark Continent. He proposes the formation of a Christian Trading Co., a prominent item of whose operations will be to allow and establish at every station of 300 miles lands for churches, schools and a dwelling-house, which the company will make over to a minister of religion.

The idea is by no means novel. Many travellers have observed how well Christianity and trade go together, and that whenever Christianising begins, the lands and commo-

ditities soon—by the divine blessing, of course—find their way into the hands of the Christians.

Here is Mr. William Harris, for instance, who has just put out a book on Morocco. He says that missionaries are invariably accompanied by drink, and is emphatic in his belief that the inhabitants are healthier and better when unchristianised.

The dear old *Daily News* came out on Tuesday with a rattling blood-and-thunder article on the Bishop of Salisbury and his rigging of the educational supply of the city, by which he practically forces Nonconformists to send their children to Church schools, and have Church religion taught them or none at all. Now, Nonconformists play the same game with Freethinkers, and call it fair play. They squeal to the very stars when they are hit themselves, but cannot see that they have no right to beat others. By and bye, perhaps, they will learn that secular education, pure and simple, is the only solution of the difficulty.

Hating every form of persecution, we share the indignation of the Crewe Radicals who have suffered from the bigotry of the Tory railway officials. But while they are smarting they should remember that one kind of persecution is as bad as another. There are several Freethinkers among the railway servants at Crewe, enough to form a good strong Branch of the N. S. S., but they dare not move for the bigotry of Nonconformist foremen. Those who cry out against persecution should be very careful not to indulge in the sport themselves.

A newsagent of the feminine gender, not many miles from the Euston Road, sells the *Freethinker*. She also sells the *War Cry* and other religious periodicals, and conducts her business in a spirit of impartiality. This annoys a bigoted sky-pilot, who tells her she ought not to sell this journal. She replies, "I have to get a living, and why shouldn't I make a penny out of one paper as well as another?" He rejoins, "Oh, you shouldn't." "Well," says the shopkeeper, "will you make up my loss if I stop selling it?" Oh dear no! Not he! Bigots like to gratify their bigotry at other people's expense.

The *South African Methodist* reports a speech of the Rev. J. T. Lloyd at a meeting of the Wesleyan Missionary Society at Port Elizabeth, in which that missionary, while glorifying Christianity, said "The natives come among us and we teach them vices, and they return to their native countries degraded and vitiated from their contact with Christian people." Strange testimony to the triumph of the one divine religion.

PARSONS AND GYPSIES.

ENGAGED in philological research, I became acquainted with the Gypsies and their Oriental language. The designing nomads are no strangers to the Christian religion, for they spoke of *duvel* (god), *duvelsko chavo* (Jesus), *mi-duvelsko mauromengri* (the Jews, *i. e.*, god-slayers), and posed as believers, mistaking me for a — parson. It reminds me of the ancient lie they told, when first they appeared in Europe, making their dupes believe that they had been banished from Egypt, as devout followers of the ranter, Jesus; hence Egyptians, Gypsions, Gypsies, (vide Andrew Boorde, 1547). On closer acquaintance, however, they dropped the mask, and frankly acknowledged that their real religion is the acquisition of valuables,—chiefly coin, which they worship like—their Christian brethren. I twitted them with being *bengesko folk* (the devil's people). An old *Romany chal* retorted: *Aava Aatcheni Romany chalaw see sor nashedé.* (Yes, all true Gypsies are lost), which proved to me that the *rashei* (parson) had not made a lasting impression upon them. Yet the man of god is told by the swarthy would-be penitent (by way of gammon): "*Tinova, pal, sor Kon Koovah too pookeras mandi see tatcho.*" (I know, brother, everything thou tellest me is true;)—adding with a sly look: "*Meero duvel see mere bokorengro, Keknannei wanta sova.*" (My god is my shepherd: I shall want nothing at all;—sotto voce, "*for I help myself!*"—There is a difference between them and the parsons. Gypsies make things pleasant by telling our good fortune (*bonne fortune*), for which they, poor devils, often suffer imprisonment; whilst parsons make things very unpleasant, by telling our bad fortune (*mauvaise fortune*), for which they are well paid. Gypsies and parsons carry on a strange game. They delude mankind as to a future state, of which neither can know anything. Yet, instead of being subjected to the same treatment, the former go to jail, whilst the latter are honoured by Court and Government whom they help in duping the people.

CHS. KROLL LAPORTE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 5, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 7, "Mr. Gladstone on Marriage and Divorce: a Freethinker's Reply."

Jan. 12, Hall of Science, London; 13, Reading; 19, Liverpool; 23, West Ham; 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.

A. N. S.—Thanks for the cutting, which may be useful on some future occasion.

"IMMOTUS" writes an interesting letter from South London. We regret it is too long to reproduce. Twelve months ago he first saw a copy of the *Freethinker*, which was handed to him in the train. He shrank from it with horror, but could not get the picture out of his mind. He avoided the shop where he knew it was exhibited, but at last he purchased a copy and became a regular subscriber, and gradually a Freethinker. He has suffered a good deal of petty persecution, but he does not regret his conversion to Freethought.

A. POMEROY.—We hope you won't be puzzled again by our irony or facetiousness. Of course Sunday Closing is a rank piece of humbug, got up in the interest of the sky-pilots.

J. KING.—We used the word *determined* in a purely scientific sense, meaning no more than caused; just as we might say that the earth's orbit is determined by the centripetal and centrifugal forces. *Foreordained* is quite another matter. That means *consciously* determined by a *volition*. So, you see, you are in the mess, and not we.

W. INCHES.—Mr. Forder showed us your letter. Some day or other there ought to be a Freethought propaganda in Dublin. When it arrives Mr. Foote will no doubt pay the Irish capital a visit.

R. E. WILCOCKS.—Thanks for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."

T. JENKINS.—Your adventure with the parson was amusing. These black gentry should be tackled whenever possible. Glad to hear you so appreciate our Christmas Number. We have still a supply left for those who would like to purchase further copies for distribution.

JAMES GRAY.—There is no Freethought magazine published in England.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Paragraph inserted.

E. GOTTHEIL.—Thanks. It may be useful.

J. SAUNDERS.—It is hardly fair to make public use of the reverend gentlemen's letters without their permission, and what they write is very nebulous.

C. J. RUSE.—Capital!

TYPO.—Thanks for the paper. Mr. Foote has not visited Bury for many years. There are so many places that want his services, and only fifty-two Sundays in the year. We can still supply the Christmas Number, and shall be glad to be eased of what remains.

G. STEWART.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. L.—We certainly agree with you that the Salvation Yahoos have no right to howl and blare and drum in public at every hour of the day and night. But if they couldn't make a noise their business would soon expire. The "walk up, walk up" is indispensable to the show.

H. T. BAILEY offers to take 1,000 copies of our last week's article on "Jesus Christ's Birthday" if reprinted as a Tract. What do others say? This correspondent asks the meaning of "sacrosanct." It is (in short) double-holy.

L. STANLEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. BRUMAGE.—Glad to hear your health is improving. It is the best bit of news from the south of England this week.

W. R.—(1) Cobbett was a strong partizan, but worth reading. Both he and Hume are superseded now. Froude, Gardiner, Hallam, and Stubbs are more valuable. (2) The act of Jesus was that of a maniac. The money-changers were doing a legitimate business, changing the current Roman money for the old Jewish money, which alone the priests would accept

in the sanctuary. If they cheated they must have been devilish sharp, for all their customers were Jews.

INCOG.—The thing was merely a joke, and the figure was put down at hazard.

PAPERS RECEIVED—Mumbles Observer—Western Figaro—St. Helens Advertiser—Weekly Telegraph—Devon Evening Express—Westminster News—Banbury Guardian—Rushden Argus—Truthseeker—Surrey Times—Printer's and Stationer's Circular—Twentieth Century—Progressive Idea—South African Methodist—Grocotts—Grahamstown Penny Mail—Evening Standard—Liberator—Freethought—Secular Thought—Open Court—Bulletin des Sommaires—Boston Investigator—Jewish World—Bury Times—Star—New York Herald—Anti Infidel.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention directed.

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.

TO ALL WHOM IT CONCERNS.

A GENTLEMAN asked us at Nottingham if the invitation we printed early in the year was still open. We replied that it was. Our resources are not adequate to carry on our Freethought business properly, and they are diminished from time to time by investors requiring to withdraw their money. We have indeed to repay a good deal of money during the new year, and we shall be glad to hear from any friends who have spare cash to entrust us with. Every investment bears five per cent. interest, and the investor receives a legal document entitling him to recall his amount by six months' notice. We intend, if possible, to be very active in publishing during the next year or two. There is a certain market for all we produce, and a reasonable, if not handsome, profit on sales. It will be borne in mind that the *Freethinker* brings us no direct return for our labor, at least for the present, though the prospect is slowly improving. We have, therefore, to rely upon what is yielded by the publishing business, which, besides lecturing work, is our only source of income. Our stock of publications is a large one, and some idea of the resources needed may be gathered from the fact that the *Dictionary of Freethinkers* alone has cost £150 to produce, exclusive of the binding, the expense of which is incurred gradually as the work sells. Those who cannot afford to invest are not desired to inconvenience themselves; we only appeal to those who can; and they who respond quickly will be doing us the greatest service.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Two friends, one in London and the other in Lancashire, have responded to this appeal. We shall be glad to hear from others forthwith. Any sums from £5 upwards will be acceptable on the foregoing conditions.

SPECIAL.

MR. FOOTE is writing a reply to the Bishop of Peterborough's extraordinary article on Christianity. It will take the form of an open letter, and will be published in pamphlet form early next week, price two-pence. The title is not yet settled. Orders can be sent in on Tuesday.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OH the fog! What the deuce is Providence thinking about—putting men in a place to live, and surrounding them with an atmosphere as thick as pea-soup and as black as a priest's face when he sees a heretic? On Sunday evening it was horrid in the vicinity of Old Street, and the three hundred people who found their way to the Hall of Science deserved a medal each in honor of the event. Mr. Foote lectured on the Star of Bethlehem, and really if there be such a luminary about he missed a good opportunity of shining.

THIS evening (Jan. 5) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science. His subject will be "Mr. Gladstone on Marriage and Divorce: a Freethinker's Reply." Mr.

Gladstone's article on this subject has just appeared in the *North American Review*.

NEXT Tuesday evening the second annual dinner of the London Secular Federation takes place at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. The dinner will be served punctually at eight. Mr. Foote presides, and there will be toast speeches by many prominent Freethinkers, with musical interludes. This gathering is looked forward to by those who were present on the last occasion, and a very large company is expected. Indeed, the annual dinner may now be regarded as an institution.

SECRETARIES of Branches will please advise Mr. Seago, 209 Hill Street, Walworth, at the latest by Monday morning, how many tickets they have sold, as a definite order as to the number of diners will have to be given on Monday evening.

JANUARY 29 being the anniversary of the birth of the author of the *Age of Reason*, a Thomas Paine Birthday Party will be held at the London Hall of Science, under the auspices of the Secular Federation, and the profits will be handed over to the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. The tickets are on sale, and can be obtained of any Branch secretary, of Mr. G. Standring, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C., at the Hall, or at 23 Stonecutter Street. Messrs. R. O. Smith and G. Standring have all the arrangements in their hands. The programme will include a musical and elocutionary entertainment, a brief speech or two by Mr. Foote and others on Thomas Paine, and dancing until a fairly unreasonable hour in the morning. There ought to be a good party in honor of the great reformer.

MR. FORDER, secretary of the N. S. S., will be glad to receive subscriptions forthwith for the annual Children's Party at the Hall of Science. He is being assisted in the arrangements by many of the ladies and gentlemen who have given their services before. As to the subscriptions, we venture to think they will flow in readily. Anyone who has ever witnessed the riotous glee of four or five hundred little demons—we beg pardon, little darlings—on the floor of the Hall of Science, will need no incentive to dip his hand in his pocket. For weeks afterwards the laughter of the children echoes about the building. Some of the kindest elders can hear them still in the corners of the galleries. Ladies and gentlemen, shell out. Provide a long evening's innocent enjoyment to hundreds of little ones, some of whom don't get too much of it. And as example is better than precept we pull out our own lean purse and extract—bless us! how light the draft has left it!—the sum of ten and sixpence. There you are now. Who's next?

MR. FORDER has since sent us the following list of subscriptions for acknowledgment:—Per J. Anderson: A. C., 2s.; S. Stalder, 2s.; F. Maitland, 2. 6d.; Miss Allen, 2. 6d.; Rayment, 6d.; per R. Forder: R. H. Side, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Temple, 1s.; B. A. Marks, 5s.; R. A. Cole, 1s.; H. Seal, 10s.; F. Rutt, 1s.; per Mrs. Santem: T. Moses, 1s. 6d.; Mr. Harrison, 6d.; Mary, 6d.; J. Young, 6d.; H. Kelsey, 6d.; small sums, 1s. 5d.; E. Truelove, 5s.

It is all very well to laugh at "tea-fights and muffin struggles," but the Camberwell party on Dec. 8 resulted in a profit of £6 to the London Secular Federation. That's no laughing matter anyhow.

NEXT Monday, Jan. 6, the North Eastern Secular Federation's tea, concert, and ball takes place at the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle. The tickets are 1s. 6d., and can be obtained from Mr. Joseph Brown, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle; Mr. Peter Weston, newsagent, 77 Newgate Street, or Mr. Tullen, 137 Burt Terrace, Gateshead.

THE Committee of "scientists and philosophers," Italian and foreign, has met at Milan with the object of instituting a new "National church." Their first step has been to draw up a catechism, and to invite adherents through a manifesto addressed to parents, students, and public officers. The manifesto declares that its promulgators wish to found "a fresh church in a free State, unfettered by the ideas,

prejudices or dogmas of other creeds, and having for sole guide the books of Nature, with the eternal truths taught therein."

DR. RICHARD H. CLARKE of New York, an eminent writer among the Roman Catholics, makes the statement that the Roman Church in America has lost far more by the falling away of Catholic immigrants from their ancestral faith than it had gained by conversions. The *New York Sun* thinks the Catholics have lost more than half their immigrant population or their descendants, and adds that "Infidelity is more dangerous to the Church than ever before."

WE see from the *Fritänkaren* that Mr. H. V. Berghell continues to hold forth from the Freethought platform at Stockholm. The same number contains a translation of Mr. Wheeler's recent article on the "Opponents of Christianity," reproduced from our pages by our esteemed friend Captain Otto Thomson.

THE *Truthseeker*, which we notice is inclined to drop its cartoons on account of their extra expense, has a very good one entitled "When Womanhood awakes: A new Shakesperian Cipher." It depicts womanhood as Titania awakening, while beside her lies a figure with an ass's head labelled Christianity. The well-known lines from "Midsummer Night's Dream" are given below. *Womanhood as Titania*: "O Oberon! What visions have I seen! Methought I was enamored of an ass." *Manhood as Oberon*: "There lies your love!" *Titania*: "How came these things to pass? O; how mine eyes do loathe his vision now."

Secular Thought reports some very successful lectures by Mr. C. Watts in Canada. Mr. Watts is doing a good work over there, and is winning a first-rate reputation. His paper is well conducted, and often gives a paragraph on the progress of Freethought in England.

THE Freethinkers of California meet in Convention at San Francisco on Saturday and Sunday, January 25 and 26 with the special object of discussing the issues forced upon the people by ecclesiastical encroachments, and preparing measures for the establishment of a purely Secular government in the State.

MRS. MARGARET DELAND, authoress of *John Ward, Preacher*, has begun a new novel entitled "Sidney" in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

AT their quarterly meeting next Sunday, the Camberwell Branch present Mr. R. S. Seago with a testimonial, together with a handsomely bound copy of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* as a "send off" before his voyage to South Africa. By his untiring energy Mr. Seago has done much to make the Camberwell Branch an undoubted success, and he will be greatly missed both there and at the Council of the London Secular Federation. We have the consolation, however, of knowing that wherever he goes his services will be enlisted in the Freethought cause.

WE have been considering how we might accede to the request to insert reports of N.S.S., Branch meetings. Up to the present we have been unable to come to a decision. We have decided, however, to insert a list of forthcoming lectures. Notices must reach us not later than Tuesday morning. Lecturers can also have their lists of engagements inserted free of charge. But we can only give this privilege to those who have been long enough in the field to be regarded as "solid." New comers will have to win their spurs before wearing them, and we must be on our guard against enthusiastic young men who, finding they cannot climb to the top of the tree in a month or two, begin to ask whether they are in the right camp.

WE remarked the other day that the special numbers of the *Freethinker* seldom did more than recoup us for the investment. The present Christmas Number, having a new cover, has been extra costly; the great expense being, of course, entailed by the illustrations. Making up the account to date we find ourselves slightly out of pocket. There is a small supply still left, and if these are cleared off we shall

just make both ends meet. Such is the colossal fortune to be made in running a Freethought paper. Never mind, we didn't expect anything, and that's the way not to be disappointed.

"WHAT magazine writer seems most popular among the contributors of the great heavy magazines?" was asked recently at one of the news-stands in a Boston depot. "Pagan Bob," came the quick reply; "and," continued the newsdealer, "to illustrate the fact, we usually sell fifteen or sixteen *North American Reviews* a month; when Mr. Ingersoll writes, we sell from fifty to a hundred, and one month last winter when he contributed we sold one hundred and sixty copies over this counter."

WE have just issued a splendid new pamphlet by Colonel Ingersoll on the great and grave question of Marriage and Divorce. Portions of it were reprinted in our columns from the American papers, but we have, in the pamphlet, reproduced the Colonel's article verbatim from the *North American Review*. Hardly anything so just, beautiful, and eloquent has been written on the subject since the days of Milton. Like the noble gentleman he is, the Colonel is the sworn friend of women and children, and he teaches men that love is higher than authority. The pamphlet should be circulated by the ten thousand.

MR. BRADLAUGH seems to have had a splendid reception at Bombay. His health is reported to be nearly recovered. This will be good news to his many admirers.

THE CORROBORATION OF PROFESSOR HUXLEY.

BY JOHN BURROUGHS.
From the "*North American Review*."

DR. LYMAN ABBOTT, in criticising Professor Huxley in a recent number of this Review, loses sight of a very important distinction—a distinction which Professor Huxley keeps constantly before him in the articles referred to; namely, the distinction between objective and subjective truth, between a statement or a proposition which rests upon outward, independent, logical evidence, and is addressed to the reason and the understanding, and one which is purely personal and the subjective, involving the taste, the emotions, the hopes, the aspirations, and which is true or false according to the temper and experience of the person to whom it is addressed. When our theological doctors talk of the evidence of Christianity, they lay great stress upon the historical evidences; the root of the matter is here; these are real, objective, positive, and are matters of logical and scientific inquiry. The subjective evidences—that is, those which are furnished by the mental or spiritual experience of the individual and beget a feeling of certainty and security in his mind—these are of quite a different nature, and our logical faculties can have little to do with them.

Professor Huxley in his *Nineteenth Century* articles referred to, applies the scientific method of inquiry to certain alleged occurrences in the New Testament—occurrences which must rest upon objective evidence, if upon any, and in which the appeal of credibility is made, not to our faculty of spiritual insight, but to our reason and understanding. Is the story of the Gadarene swine probable? is it reasonable? does it agree with the rest of our knowledge? "The Gadarene miracle either happened, or it did not. Whether the Gadarene '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 Gennesaret on a certain day of a certain year," etc. "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 it?" Professor Huxley thinks a man who believes such a story without logical evidence is guilty of an immoral act. And so generally with the miracles recorded in the New Testament, and with demonology and possessions. These things are alleged occurrences in the outward physical world, and they are not supported by adequate objective evidence.

Men reason upon the subject of the soul's immortality, but the answer which reason gives is mainly in the negative. There is nothing that could be called evidence that man continues to live after the dissolution of his body. Yet

Dr. Abbott is convinced that he does so exist; he realises in himself "a nature superior to disease, decay, mortality;" and who shall gainsay him? who shall say he is illogical? The evidence he has upon this point is personal and subjective, and cannot be imparted to another. It has no logical or scientific validity, because it begins and ends with himself. It is not a question of reason, but of religious conviction. But all the questions in dispute between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wace are questions of reason and of evidence. They pertain to the outward, visible, concrete world of history and of experience, and can be settled in no court but the court of reason.

Dr. Abbott says (and he assumes to speak for "the great mass of Christian believers") "that there are propositions which men ought to believe without logically-satisfying evidence." This is what the old Mother Church used to say, and used to back it up with the stake and the rack. "Ought to believe"—that is, it is a man's duty to believe certain propositions addressed to his rational faculties, without rationally-satisfying evidence. It is to be regretted that the good doctor did not cite some theological or religious proposition, or some article from the creeds, that it is a man's duty thus to believe. Would he say that a man ought to believe any of the points in dispute between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wace without "logically-satisfying evidence"?—the swine story, the authorship of the Gospels, that Jesus said what he is reported to have said, that demonology is true, etc., etc.?

Professor Huxley, I imagine, would be the last man in the world to deny Dr. Abbott's proposition that there is such a thing as spiritual insight, or the religious sense, and that certainties, or at least assurances and satisfaction, reach the soul through these avenues. The religious nature or the poetic and artistic nature is not occupied with logical processes or the reasons of things, but with impressions, attractions, intuitions, emotional processes, the divine, the beautiful, the enjoyable. We do not ask of a poem, or a work of art, or any work of pure literature, Is it true? as we would ask of a proposition of science, or the statement of a witness upon the stand, or the declaration of a creed, Is it true? but, Is it good? is it powerful? is it satisfying? does it move and nourish us? A poem must have poetic truth, but how different is this from mathematical or scientific truth, and by what different faculties apprehended! Neither do we ask of purely religious utterances like the Sermon on the Mount or Paul's Epistles, Are they true? but, Do they stimulate and exalt our religious sense? do they quicken and purify the spirit? Paul's theology may be true or false: what is forever true and real is his fervid piety, his spiritual power, his eloquent humility, and his love for mankind. His logical faculties may have been weak; the things which he believed, which lay in his understanding and satisfied his reason, may have been utterly inadequate to stand rigid tests, but for all that the power and value of his writings are beyond question. The same may be said of some of the fathers of the Church, weak in reason, but strong in the spirit. Professor Huxley is strong in reason; his logic is a chain hard to break; but highly spiritual and imaginative natures would perhaps find little satisfaction in his writings. He is occupied with objective truth, not with subjective impressions. His mind is strictly scientific, and the results of his method of inquiry are hard to controvert.

He does not deny the moral sense, or the æsthetic sense, or the religious sense, as Dr. Abbott would seem to imply; he is not discussing questions that lie in either of these realms, but questions that come within the scope of reason and are matters of evidence. The questions of right and wrong in human conduct, of lying, of stealing, of murder, etc., which Dr. Abbott introduces, belong to quite a different sphere from the question of the authorship of the Gospels or of the credibility of the miracles.

There is the appeal to conscience, the appeal to taste, the appeal to our sense of the fitness of things, and there is also the appeal to reason, to the judgment, to our power to weigh and sift evidence. It seems to me that Dr. Abbott confounds these things, and in his reply to Huxley sets up a man of straw. If the great scientist had said that all truth and certainty comes through the logical faculties, he would have laid himself open to the doctor's criticism. What he did say or imply was that all scientific, all objective truth comes through our logical faculties. These are his words: "It is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty."

In the outward objective world a fact is always a fact. It is always pertinent to inquire into the truth of any alleged occurrence. St. Augustine says that the flesh of the peacock never decays. Is this a fact? If it was a fact in his day, it must be a fact in ours. Do miracles happen? Have they ever happened? Is there a personal devil? Are we surrounded by a multitude of good and bad spirits who are seeking to influence our lives? Any objective evidence of the truth and reality of these things must hold good at all times and in all places. Two and two always make four, and doubtless always will. But when we enter the region of morals, we are in a world where all is plastic, indefinite, relative. Right and wrong are so only under certain conditions. It may be right to lie and steal and murder under certain extraordinary circumstances. "The certainties of the moral and spiritual realm," to which Dr. Abbott refers, and upon which he says "all æsthetic, all domestic, all political and national life are based," are not outward demonstrable certainties, like those of science, but inward personal certainties, which involve our constitution and our temporary relations to the universe and to each other.

(To be concluded.)

INGERSOLL ON IMMORTALITY.

THE following letter from Colonel Ingersoll has just been published in America. It was addressed to Mr. E. R. Johnes, the author of *Circumstantial Evidence of a Future Life*:—

45, Wall Street, New York, June 25, 1889.

Dear Sir,—Accept my thanks for your essay on "Immortality." It is very beautifully written, and you have brought forward in support of your doctrine all the argument there is, and you have stated your case with much force and clearness.

In addition to this you have abandoned many positions that cannot, in this age of the world, be maintained. You admit that the hope of immortality cannot, with safety, rest upon the inspiration of the Old and New Testament, or upon any form of superstition. If we admit the existence of a God of infinite wisdom and compassion, we may say that there must be a world better than this; but how do we account for one worse than that, that is to say, for this? If injustice triumphs here, why not there? If honesty goes without bread in this world, why not in another? Certainly God will be no better than now. Still, it may be possible that a God of infinite love and compassion will so reward those who suffer, through suffering itself, that all that happens will be consistent with wisdom and compassion.

I do not see any evidence in this world that it was created by either wisdom or compassion. Neither do I see what right we have to say that man has a spiritual body, any more than trees have. The tree springs from a seed, so does man. The trees produce others and then perish from the earth; the same is true of the human race. You have had the courage to accept the logic of your position and give to all life the immortality that Christians give to man.

I hardly know the meaning of the words "spiritualist" and "materialist." I do not see that it makes the slightest difference with the argument to admit that everything is "spiritual," or to assert that everything is "material." He who asserts that all is "spiritual," admits the existence of everything that another calls "material"; and he who insists that all is "material," admits the existence of everything that is by the other called "spiritual." Call it what you will, it remains beyond the grasp of our mind.

The weakest parts of your essay are the quotations from others. What Greenleaf says upon the subject seems to me a *non sequitur*. If man had believed only in his own experience, why could the world "be neither governed nor improved"? The first man obtained something by experience which he could convey to another, to which the other might add by his own exertions, his own experience, and so on from generation to generation, until there would be a vast and splendid capital of human experience. So, what Mr. Drummond has to say may be more ingenious, but is equally without foundation. Of all the men who have written upon this subject, I know of no one so shallow and insincere as Dr. Young.

I congratulate you on what you have said concerning the "wax figures" of Milton. If anyone is open to the charge of barren Materialism, it is Milton. His "heaven" was simply another England—with a government somewhat worse. You have endeavored to establish your doctrine by

reason—by something universal—and you have wisely left out the provincialisms, the prejudices, and the puerilities of Christianity. Love and hope are universal. As long as men love and as long as they hope, there will probably be in heart and brain the splendid dream of immortality. It may be that we live no more—that we go back to the unconscious dust, and yet the heart will always say, "Perhaps there is another life." But whether there is or not, let us all paint on the canvas of the future the pictures that delight and satisfy the soul. We know that in this world after joy comes grief, as after day comes night; and it may be there is some world where after grief comes joy, as after night comes day.

Thanking you again for your beautiful and poetical essay,
I remain, sincerely yours,
R. G. INGERSOLL.

"DAGONET" ON DR. PARKER.

Dr. Parker, who has been put in the shade lately by the superior business abilities of the American gentleman at Olympia, has made another wild attempt to attract a little attention. This time he has introduced a kind of burlesque opening to his Christmas pantomime by sending messages from the pulpit to the celebrities of the day. This sort of thing is the latest.—"To the Queen.—God bless your Majesty. Why do you not recognise your Nonconformist subjects?" "To Mr. Balfour.—The Lord have mercy on you," etc., etc.

The pulpit pranks of the mountebank minister are not unknown in this country. The Nonconformist merry andrew—for whom a better name than a Nonconformist would be a Dambadformist—has before now caused the judicious to grieve, and there are not wanting clergymen of the Church of England, who have degraded the pulpit to the level of the political platform; but this new departure of the City Temple Tabarin is so grossly offensive that to dismiss it with the contempt it deserves would be a mistake. The Brothers Harris should compete for him for next Christmas, before Barnum secures him for a side show.—*Referee*.

THE CHRISTIAN HEAVEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—On Tuesday morning last, a man named Dukes was hanged in this city for the murder of a Mr. Gordon, his employer. Gordon had a shop in a neighbouring town managed by Dukes, and one day he went over to inquire into the accounts, which had gone wrong, when Dukes smashed his skull with a hammer, thrust the body into a wardrobe, and locked it in. Gordon's brother went over before the body could be disposed of, found Dukes on the premises, and he was captured, tried, and executed. Dukes was a dissipated drunken villain who after his conviction paid great attention to the exhortations of the prison chaplain, and when he stood on the scaffold, with the rope round his neck, he said to the reporters, "Tell my wife that I die happy."

A few years ago, a notorious scoundrel named Peace, who had murdered three or four people, was hanged on the same spot as Dukes. Peace, too, became touchingly pious under the hands of the gaol parson, and when he stood on the scaffold he said, addressing the reporters, doctors and prison officials, "Oh, my friends, I hope that your end may be like mine, for in less than two minutes I shall be safe in the arms of Jesus."

Now, I presume it cannot be denied that according to the christian scheme of redemption, both these men would go straight to heaven. Each had repented, had been washed in the blood of Christ, had received absolution at the hands of the parson, and had had no opportunity of relapsing into sin. After having their necks broken, they would be received into the heavenly kingdom, be presented with a regulation harp, and are now—and will be to all eternity—tramping over golden pavements and singing one monotonous song.

This is the christian heaven, filled almost entirely with such wretches as Dukes and Peace, who would be welcomed with yells of delight, whilst Darwin, Huxley, Herbert Spencer and millions of the best and wisest who have appeared on earth will be consigned to a hell of literal fire and brimstone. It may be, but I do not think it is possible to imagine more hideous trash than this, and I rejoice at having lived to see the Christian mythology in its death flurry. It has sat like an incubus on the human mind for ages, and though superstition dies slowly, this one is doomed to follow many others into the limbo of contempt.

(Manchester).

AN AGNOSTIC.

THE "STAR" ON BISHOP MAGEE.

It is useful to hear from the Bishop of Peterborough in the new *Fortnightly* what, in his opinion, Christianity may not and cannot do. It seems that it cannot put down war, it cannot put down poverty, it cannot teach us to forgive public enemies, and that in short the State that tried to live up to the Sermon on the Mount would be ruined in a week. The Gallio may very well be inclined to ask, if it can't do these things what on earth is the good of talking about it any longer, unless for the sake of filling fat sees with gentlemen of the cut of Bishop Magee? But the Bishop is no way discomposed by such possible questionings as these. True, he says, it can't put down war; but then it can teach us that our enemies (whom we are preparing to exterminate with bullets that make a little hole when they enter their bowels and a large one when they come out) are "our brethren!" So with the poor, Christianity has not said there shall be no poor "nor has it in any way enlarged the poor man's right as a citizen!" But still it teaches him that he is "our brother"—especially after we have given him skilly and stone-breaking because he has no work—or three months' hard labor for trying to keep up his scanty wage. So with the starving tramp to whom the Christian magistrate has given five years for picking a Christian pocket on a Christian highway. He, too, is to learn from Christianity that he is "a man and a brother."

Well, this is Cant, and Cant that no man—be he learned bishop or drivelling curate—would dare to utter if he were not steeped to the very lips in class vulgarity and selfishness, disguised as the most unselfish of religions. The article in the *Fortnightly* is worth to Mr. Foote or Colonel Ingersoll five yearly issues of the *Freethinker*, and five hundred editions of the most sceptical pamphlet that ever was penned.

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Minister: "And do you like to go to church with your papa and mamma, Bobby?" Bobby (inclined to non-committal): "Well, I guess I like it as well as pa does."
 Nervous Curate: "I am requested to intimate that the new hymn-books will be used for the first time next Sunday. There will also on the same afternoon be a public christening, when members of the congregation are invited to bring their children. Those who are not already provided can purchase them in the vestry at one shilling each, or with stiff backs for eighteenpence."

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