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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—X.

"THE FEAR OF GOD."

To the Rev. George Matheson, D.D.

[CONCLUDED.]

BUT if your comparative psychology of man and the lower animals is inaccurate, courtesy forbids me to describe your psychology of man by himself. Claiming fear as something particularly human, you proceed to affirm that it does not spring from experience. You assert that a castigated dog dreads the whip or stick, but "in a human soul fear precedes memory." "Did you ever ask yourself," you enquire, "why a child dreads the dark?" You ask again, "What is the reason that the infant so often cries when lifted by a stranger?" And these common facts supply you with "evidence that there is present in the breast of man from the very beginning a feeling of futurity, a presentiment of to-morrow, a putting forth of invisible hands beyond the present hour."

Surely no one but a theologian, whose trade is mystery, would found a prophetic argument on such a natural basis. The fanciful part of your explanation vanishes when the real explanation is supplied. There is no doubt whatever that fear precedes experience. But this is explained by natural selection and the law of heredity. In the long struggle for existence, through which evolution has operated, a confiding disposition would have made its possessor an easy victim to its enemies. It was inevitable that suspicion should be inbred. The rule of safety—and only those who obeyed it stood a chance of surviving and continuing the species—was to regard every other being as a foe until it proved itself a friend. And this was, and is, the law of savage and barbarous societies, as it must have been the law of primitive men. We see a philological proof of this in Latin, in which *hostis* means both stranger and enemy. And in our own language, to take the proof by the opposite handle, the words *kindred* and *kindness* come from the same root. Evolution shows us that fear has been at once an effect of the struggle for existence and a necessary element of preservation, and heredity explains its manifestation in a child antecedent to experience. Nor is there any mystery in the instinct being more active in the dark than in the light, for the danger is then greatest and the instinct most useful. To the Evolutionist, therefore, it is perfectly obvious that the civilised men and women—to say nothing of babies—who are timid in the dark, are under a psychological law of *mortmain*, being ruled by their ancestors from whom their instincts were inherited.

Thus a few sentences have exploded the "mystery" on which you base the doctrine that "human fear is a divine thing," an evidence of unseen spiritual powers, and a presentiment of futurity; and the foundation being gone, the superstructure might be left to its fate.

You perceive that as men slowly but surely become

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more civilised—and, I may add, more moral—fear loses its intensity, and its power of appeal to the coward and slave within us. With the growth of orderly society, in which life, liberty, and property are secured; and the development of science, by which our control of natural forces is continually strengthened; men become more confident and self-reliant. And theology has to undergo a corresponding change. This is why you argue that the threat of penalties is addressed to man's moral infancy, and that it changes into the law of holiness as he advances to moral maturity. But in doing this you betray the baseness and the falsity of your faith. You are obliged to justify the "divine" guidance of the human race by appealing to principles which are at once fallacious and degrading. "You can only teach a child love," you assert, "through the revelation of fear." Now if this has any relevance to your argument it means that punishment is the first stage of moral discipline. I deny this. I say it is a legacy of folly and brutality from the savage past. Repression is not education. Morality is a question of balance, and the balance is only effected by developing the intellect and the social feelings. Policemen may prevent burglary, but they will not make burglars moral. Prisons may deter from crime, but they do not foster virtue. Stimulate the good, and the powers of life will flow in that direction, while the evil atrophies from disuse. When punishment makes men moral, strait-waistcoats will make them sane.

When this truth is understood the whole system of supernatural ethics is seen to be false and mischievous. The fear of God appears as a relic of ignorance and barbarity, which priestcraft employs for its sinister ends. Heaven is a bribe for fools and Hell is a threat for slaves. Moral causation and the science of character take the place of these fictions, and man walks the path of progress in the sunlight of truth.

Let me say, in conclusion, that when you talk of the punishment which follows the transgression of moral laws and the violation of our ideals as "the judgment of God," and the honorable man's dread of wrong-doing as "the fear of God," you are pursuing the old method of theological mystification. Evolution explains conscience as easily as it explains fear. Conscience is the product of social training, and is unintelligible in solitude, where fear might be supreme. On the other hand, it is certain that fear of the gods had at first no connection with morality. Nor has it any real connection now; for virtue is not the dread of a tribunal, but a spontaneous effort flowing from the natural affections of a sympathetic heart. Such is the view, and I think a dignified one, which I take as a Secularist. But your theological system of ethics is very different. It begins, apparently with a child's mistrust of strangers and dread of the dark, and it ends with the fear of a God who is at once witness, judge and executioner. Whether you know it or not, you are worshipping an idol, and you are far behind the grand old Pagan who said that virtue is its own reward.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

All go unto one place ; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth if the spirit of man ascendeth upward ; and if the spirit of beasts descendeth downward. Wherefore I perceive there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work ; for that is his portion : for who shall show him what shall be after him ?—ECCLESIASTES III. (Jewish Translation.)

AMONG the sources of religion I place the dread of death and the fear of the dead. The latter has been held by Herbert Spencer to account for the worship of all gods, who were originally ghosts. But the fear of death, with which the fear of the dead is intimately connected, goes deeper. It is in fact bound up with the instinct of self-preservation which pervades all life. It persists even when the belief in ghosts has vanished, and it remains a trump card in the service of superstition.

Fear of death may be analysed into various elements. One may dislike leaving accustomed things, or dread loved ones being left to the tender mercies of the world ; one may be afraid of the unknown, or shudder at annihilation, or be afraid of physical pain in dying, or dread torture in another world.

Against the reluctance to quit life it is little use to argue. The shadow cast by love of life must remain, and the more intense the light the darker the shadow. That death is common to all does not lessen the blow. If we love life we must shun death, and as Sir T. Browne says, "the habit of living indisposeth for dying." Yet who would live on when he had become a burden. All must depart, and in truth it is not death but only premature death that is to be deplored.

The sorrow at leaving loved ones no words can assuage. Yet could we by attention to this world secure that they are provided for, one of the keenest anxieties of the thought of death might be removed.

Death, it has been said, is an untried experiment, and all dread the unknown. To the materialist, who deems it the end-all, it can have no terror, while the Theist may justly say with the wise heathen, Marcus Antoninus, "He who fears death either fears the loss of sensation, or a different kind of sensation. But if thou shalt have no sensation, neither wilt thou feel any harm, and if thou shalt acquire another kind of sensation thou wilt be a different being."

Fear of annihilation is hardly worth mentioning, despite the statesman who said he would rather go to hell than be annihilated. To dread a dreamless night is indeed to be frightened at nothing. Lucretius asks—

What horror see'st thou in that quiet state,
What bugbear dreams to fright thy after fate ?
No ghost, no goblin, that still passage keep,
But all is there sereno in that eternal sleep.

There is also the fear, not of death, but of being buried alive. So much are our customs matters of sentiment that it is possible this fear may be yet as powerful an incentive in favor of cremation as its many recommendations.

When crematories are substituted for cemeteries and sensible solemnity for the senseless parade of funerals, some of the terrors of death will depart.

Many dread dying rather than death. Bacon says, "I do not believe that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death." Here science avails. Its anodynes and anæsthetics diminish pain, and it has shown the so-called "death agony" is no more a conscious state than the rigidity which follows. A child in birth undergoes an ordeal, which if conscious, would be more trying than the most painful death. Most die as unconsciously as they are born. Physicians notice that fear of death departs with the dying. The nearer the end the less the apprehension. Hunter when dying said, "If I had strength enough to hold a pen, I would write how easy and delightful it is to die." "I thought that dying had been more difficult," said that gay sinner Louis XIV. Montaigne

having met with an accident which was supposed fatal, said on restoration, "I thought that life hung only on my lips, and I closed my eyes to aid me in expelling it, and I had sincere pleasure in the thought that I was passing away." Walter Savage Landor in extreme old age wrote :

Death stands above me whispering low,
I know not what into my ear,
Of his strange language all I know
Is, there is not a word of fear.

Christians claim that the King of Terrors can only be calmly encountered by aid of their faith. Yet a Japanese will disembowel himself on small provocation. Contempt of life is found in the most uncivilised races. The Tchuktas, a native fishing tribe of north-east Siberia, will deliberately drown themselves to save the cargo for the survivors. This is putting life on a strictly politico-economical basis. In truth Christianity has vastly enhanced the terrors of death. If it is true the odds are that to any given person death is the entrance to eternal torture. To anyone who realised this, the mere uncertainty as to whether one's loved ones were doomed to heaven or to hell must be appalling.

It is noticeable that in Bacon's well-known essay on Death, all the instances he gives of its being borne with equanimity are taken from Pagans. If they had less respect for the lives of others they also held their own at the service of the State. Cæsar deemed a sudden death the best, and Sir Thomas Browne says : "Were I of Cæsar's religion I should be of his desires, and wish rather to go off at one blow, than to be saved to pieces by the grating tortures of a disease." But Christianity added a new terror to sudden death ; the thought of being cut off in the midst of sin "unhouselled, unaneled." The Church of England prays against sudden death, which the Pagan was apt to pray for. The idea so strikingly illustrated when Hamlet refrains from killing the King while in prayer because :

To take him in the purging of his soul
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage,

is to send his father's murderer to heaven, is at bottom as absurd as that a parricide goes straight to heaven *via* the gallows, simply because he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. But both are part and parcel of the great budget of Christian absurdity.

Religion has found its account is investing death with all that is hideous. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come" have been its cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." By appeals to fear and imagination it has made a terror of that which should be accepted with perfect serenity ; and in proportion as men relinquish superstition and study the facts of nature, they discover that the creed that makes death a bugbear is as false as it is foolish.

J. M. WHEELER.

A QUESTION FOR ARIANS.

Can God the Father annihilate the Son and the Holy Ghost? This question, in the mouths of Freethinkers, would be flat blasphemy. In Charles Butler's historical account of the Confessions of Faith he shows how this question triumphantly overthrew Dr. Samuel Clarke at the court of Queen Caroline, the consort of George I., who desired a conference between Dr. Clarke and Dr. Harwarden, a celebrated Roman Catholic divine. Dr. Clarke first stated his view of the supremacy of the Father. Dr. Harwarden said the only reply which he would make was asking a single question, which he desired should be answered by the affirmative or negative monosyllable. To this Dr. Clarke assented. Then said Dr. Harwarden, "I ask, can God the Father annihilate the Son and the Holy Ghost? Answer me, yes or no." Dr. Clarke continued for some time in deep thought, and then said, "It was a question which he had never considered." Butler points out that had he answered Yes, he would have made the Son and the Holy Ghost to be "mere creatures. If he answered No, he admitted them to be absolute Gods."

"CONVERTING" AN ATHEIST.

NOBODY who has not been a Catholic himself can thoroughly appreciate the difficulties and unpleasantnesses that have to be encountered in the mental transit from Catholicism to Freethought. From the very nature of his faith the Catholic has to free himself from a more intense mental slavery than the followers of any other religious persuasion, and his self-emancipation is accordingly the more difficult. If he has been carefully trained it becomes almost a second nature with him to believe implicitly what he is taught, and to reject unreservedly the promptings of his mind to think for himself. But there is more than this to deter him. His religion tells him that his conduct should be regulated by fear of the consequences in another world than this; and the continuance of such a frame of mind makes him more subject to fear of consequences in this world than would be the case with a man of more robust moral principles. To be regarded as a renegade of the most disgraceful character; to be looked upon even by one's nearest and dearest friends as the owner of "a lost soul," and a person sure of eternal damnation; to be avoided as one possessed of a devil, and to be constantly reminded by looks and words that the mere suggestion of Atheism causes deep pain to those particularly dear—all these considerations are likely to daunt the timid Freethinker, and to make even the boldest pause before declaring publicly that God and religion are shams and frauds, and that it is in Reason, and in Reason alone, that the mind, true to itself, can find refuge and rest. Once, however, that the first great step is taken; once the long-practised habits are cast aside; and once the mind is made up to follow the course which it believes to be the true one; then difficulties that appeared to be insurmountable glide gradually away, and unpleasantnesses are compensated by pleasures that were not even supposed to exist. The contentment which the acceptance of Atheism produces in the mind is a pleasure in itself, and an enduring one; but it is of a less substantial pleasure I am about to speak at present, namely, the pleasure to be derived from the efforts towards "conversion," which the ex-Catholic is bound to experience.

Undergoing the process of "conversion" is capital sport. To meet men who imagine they have "a mission" in the direction of plucking "a brand from the burning," and who are deeply imbued with the notion that they can expel the devil that has taken possession of the Atheist's heart, affords excellent amusement to the good-humored sceptic who is able to turn opportunities to advantage for attacking superstition and ridiculing the pretensions and the absurdities of priests and their dogmas. Ever since I accepted Atheism, numerous acquaintances have thought it their duty to "convert" me, and have done me the honor to inform me that it is my own perverseness rather than the weakness of their case that has led to their being unsuccessful.

As well as I remember, the first man who took my "conversion" in hand was a person deeply versed in theology, who was intimately connected with the Jesuit clergymen in Dublin, and who had managed to accumulate a splendid collection of medals with alleged miraculous qualities. The first step he took towards my "conversion" was to place in my hands a book called *Mistakes of Modern Infidels*, by a Father Northgraves, a Canadian priest. Colonel Ingersoll was the modern infidel whose mistakes were pointed out. My friend told me that this was the best and most complete refutation of Ingersoll that ever appeared. Afterwards I was able to tell him that if that was the case the other "refutations" were poor affairs indeed. But at the time I contented myself with inquiring whether he had read Ingersoll. He replied in the negative; and when I remarked that

his opinion as to the completeness of the "refutation" might have more weight if he had read Ingersoll's writings, he looked a trifle out of humor. However, I read the book, and am glad to say it did me good. It saved me the necessity of looking at a comic paper for at least a week. It was a lengthy book, and might with advantage to the writer have been boiled down to a page or two. The drift of the whole volume was that as there was a God, miracles were possible, and therefore took place. This, mixed with abuse of infidels in general, was the substance of the great "refutation." When returning the work to the "converter" I gave him my opinion accordingly. He was disappointed, and went into the matter of the authenticity of miracles at great length. I inquired how it could be accounted for that, if God performed all those miracles nearly two thousand years ago, he thought it well "to shut up shop" all the time since. At this point he lost his temper, and saying that he could not allow his ears to be polluted by such language, he went his way and has not interfered with me since.

The next person who took steps to convert me was more astute. He took to praying for my conversion, and good Catholic though he is, he has discovered by now that his praying was a sad waste of time and energy. He also went and consulted a clergyman as to the best steps that could be taken to bring me back to the "true faith." That clergyman was a wise man. His opinion was that once a Catholic disbelieved in any article of faith he was a hopeless case and a good candidate for hell, to which he should be allowed to go undisturbed.

Then there turned up the man who expected that God would surely exert himself in expelling the devil if I did what he prescribed. First, I was to wear a "scapular" round my neck, though it was not necessary that I should regard it as of any more consequence than an ordinary piece of tape. I declined, and informed him that though tape had its uses, still I did not think it was yet endowed with the power to compel me to believe in a God. Next day he appeared again, this time armed so well with antidotes to Atheism that he expected me to fall an easy prey. He produced a certificate to the effect that he had enrolled me as a member of the "Apostleship of Prayer" in the "Holy League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus." The result of this enrolment is that I am now, according to the certificate, "prayed for every day by millions of fellow-members, including an immense number of holy religionists." Poor God! And all this hubbub about me, a wretched Atheist! I felt flattered; but as no effect has yet been produced, I have commenced to fear that either "the millions of fellow-members" have neglected to pray properly, or that God has turned a deaf ear to them (which is shabby on that gentleman's part) and is determined to reserve me for a hot corner in hell. This conduct of God's is the more unaccountable when we learn what he has done for other folk. In a monthly periodical called the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*—given to me together with the certificate I have mentioned—are recorded some surprising things done in answer to the prayers of members of the body to which I belong. I read that a Dublin girl who wanted a letter from her brother lit "a candle in honor of the Sacred Heart" (at the cost of a penny). The letter turned up a fortnight later! A Kerryman lost a great sum of money; he promised the "Sacred Heart" that if he got the money he would publish the fact; and the honor of publicity was so much coveted by the Heart, that the money was found next day! Wonderful! A school-teacher was to have an examination of her children. She, too, promised to publish the fact if the Sacred Heart managed to prevent her pupils from saying that five and five were eleven, or that "of" was a "noun"; and the Sacred Heart did

what was wanted, and was duly honored by having the fact published. But in my perverseness these astounding instances of the efficacy of prayer only made me smile at the credulity of my fellow-men. In addition to all this my friend brought two medals with which to convert me. He asserted that if I wore those medals "something" would happen, very likely in the direction of preventing me from organising a Branch of the National Secular Society, at which I am now engaged. He pressed me very hard to wear the medals; but he declined to enter into any arguments, though I managed to have a few jokes at his poor God's expense. This gentleman threatens that he is going to have another and yet another trial with the Devil, which he believes has possession of me. As it is, I am having a high old time of it; and the foolish efforts being made for "converting" me are only helping to convince me the more that religion is the hugest fraud this world has ever seen.

J. O'DONOVAN.

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

THE parson of the village one day was walking out,
With senses all alert and eyes sharp cast about
To claim obeisance meek from every passing lout.
He had not travelled far on this eventful day,
When Jake, the local sweep, came trudging by the way,
With face so sad that plain it seemed grief heavy on him lay.
"Good morning, Jake," says parson, "what makes you look
so sad?"

"Oh, sir," says Jake, "behold in me a man 'most driven mad,
And all by th' other rival sweep, the nasty dirty cad.
The chimneys of the village he cleans so very nice;
He's handy too, to every call he comes just in a trice,
And does the work, quite up to par, at half the usual price;
And here you see a ruined man, with business gone to pot.
I'll sweep no more; with what I've saved I'll be the village sot,
And in the workhouse sure I'll die. Oh, what a sad, sad lot."
"Cheer up, poor Jake," the parson said; "'tis but a chastening
rod,

All of us meet with troubles keen as through this life we plod.
Now brace your heart, your courage rouse, and put your trust
in God.

Don't fail each morning when you rise, nor yet at end of day,
To ask kind Jesus, friend of all, your troubles to allay;
Rest sure your grief will disappear if fervently you pray."

Again, when just two weeks had passed, Jake and the parson
met;

The former looked quite blithe and gay, 'twas plain he'd
ceased to fret.

That luck had fallen in his way you might quite safely bet.
"I'm glad," says parson, "now to see that God's been kind
to you.

'The Rock of Ages' never fails, God's word is always true;
But how this change has come about come quickly tell me, do."

"O reverend sir," said humble Jake, "I prayed, and prayed,
and prayed;

My bitter troubles, one and all, before the Lord I laid,
And praying, sure, 'tis plain to see, is quite a paying trade.
You know that rival sweep came here to steal away my bread,
But thanks to you, my parson kind, God's power upheld my head.
When I'd been praying just a week, the dirty cuss dropped
dead."

A. LEWIS.

A young man about to be married asks for the prayers of the
congregation, was the announcement made at a prayer meeting
lately.

There is a railway crossing near the depot in Adrian, Mich,
has a big sign up with these words painted on, "Prepare to
meet thy God."

Minister: "So you saw some boys fishing on the Sabbath
my young man. Did you do anything to discourage them?"
Small Boy: "Yes, Sir; I stole their bait."

"My dear friend," said a minister at the bed of a sick man,
"I want to call your attention to the blessed consolation which
religion brings in hours of suffering and danger to those—"I'm
much obliged to you," interposed the grateful patient, "but
you are too late." "Too late?" "Yes, sir my physician says
that the crisis is past, and all danger is over."

ACID DROPS.

"We teach in the Highlands, from Sabbath to Sabbath,
this doctrine, that unbelief is the greatest of all sin." So
writes the Rev. (?) W. Mackinnon in the *Methodist Times*,
and he justifies himself from Scriptures. Yes, unbelievers
will be damned. Not the least doubt about it. And what
is an unbeliever? Why, a man who doesn't believe what
I believe. And who am I, sir? The preacher, sir, the
preacher. And what is a preacher?—But here *we* must
answer. A preacher is a man who gets a living by talking
dogmatic nonsense, and shouting "Damned be he who first
cries, Hold, enough!"

The Bishop of Lichfield is a knowing one. He knows a
hawk from a handsaw when the wind is southerly—that is,
when it affects the interests of Holy Mother Church. In
his recent Charge he expresses a wish that discussions, like
those in *Lux Mundi*, as to the date and authorship of the
Scriptures, could be carried on in Latin. This would keep
the truth among scholars, and allow the clergy to go on
hoaxing the multitude with good profitable lies.

The Rev. John McNeill, "the Scotch Spurgeon," seems
to be a poor imitation of the Tabernacle orator. The *Daily
News*, reporting his services at the Central Hall, Holborn,
says his comments were "at times humorous, though by no
means strikingly original." His "wit" was displayed in
giving out the line of a hymn "within these sacred walls"
as "within these Holborn walls." He seems to know that
he must play down to a popular audience. A promising
circus clown appears to have been spoilt in the Scotch
Spurgeon.

It has frequently been remarked that Revivalism and
Forward Movements are only reshufflings of the same old
pack of cards. One sect makes a special effort and snatches
a few members from another sect. Some time ago the Rev.
J. Llewellyn Davies declared that the Salvation Army in
Marylebone made no converts, but simply drew the most
excitable people away from Church. This was denied by
"Commissioner" Railton in the *Times*, but the clergyman
challenged him, of course in vain, to produce the drunkards
and other sinners reclaimed in that district. Now the Pres-
byterians, following the Methodists, who followed the
Salvation Army, are making a big effort to catch souls for
Christ in the Central Hall, Holborn, the net being wielded
by the Rev. J. McNeill. On the first Sunday afternoon
more than two thousand people assembled. But who were
they? The loose fish of the Holborn and Clerkenwell
slums? Nothing of the kind. According to the *Christian
World* "the audience was a highly respectable one, being
evidently very largely made up of the church-going
element."

Dr. Parker, who is a bit of a showman himself, draws the
line at these enterprises, and his remarks bear out what we
have written. Speaking on Monday as president of the
Congregational Union, he said, "He would express his
strong distrust of the occupation of theatres and halls on
Sunday afternoons. In some cases they were only traps
for catching ordinary seatholders. The most of the
attendants were Sunday-school teachers, or stated adherents,
or lovers of novelty, who laugh at any jokes the preacher
might be foolish enough to provide. For his part, he would
rather open the British Museum on a Sunday afternoon than
establish a religious joking saloon or an ecclesiastical
circus." This seems a pretty straight thrust at the Scottish
Spurgeon. If the Rev. J. McNeill replies it will be a
lively time for the profane.

The *National Advance* gives circulation to a lie headed
"Beecher and Ingersoll." The story goes that Beecher
compared the Colonel to a man who knocked the crutches
from under a cripple. Both Beecher and Ingersoll have
denied the story. They were, indeed, good friends till the
day of Beecher's death, which they could hardly have been
if there was any truth in the tale, which is thought so good
by the *National Advance* that it has awarded a guinea prize
"for the best religious anecdote" to Mrs. M. J. Hawley,
who sends it from Leeds. When lies against infidels are
worth a guinea each there is not likely to be any dearth
of them.

The good old lady who runs the *Spectator* says "a propagandist Atheism is impossible, if not unthinkable." Do not be alarmed, dear Mrs. Hutton, if we whisper that a propagandist Atheism is actually on foot in every country of the civilised world.

A rating case which will affect most places of worship was decided this week at the Highgate Police-court. The Hornsey Local Board sought to recover rates for the road in front of the Ferme Park Baptist Chapel, and it being proved that the chapel was used for concerts, meetings, etc., the Bench decided that the chapel trustees were liable.

Here are the returns of the persons present at each service held during the month of March at the four Billingsgate churches: The average for St. Dunstan's-in-the-East is 49, of whom 21 were officials and their families. St. George's, Botolph Lane, only attracted 47 persons, of whom 21 were there as a matter of duty. St. Mary-at-Hill had an average of 22 officials and a congregation of 17. St. Margaret Pattens, with a staff averaging 38, managed to attract an average attendance of 111, but only by means of two performances of the "Stabat Mater" and a distribution of palm leaves. The churches provide 1,750 sittings.

The other day Mrs. Wolf, the young wife of John Wolf, a German living near Monticello, stole up behind her husband and crying, "God has ordered me to kill you, John," felled him with a club. He disarmed and quieted her, but after a few hours she stole to the woods with a babe, and though she was retaken the babe has not been found.

Jacob Andersen hanged himself in New York city recently while crazed by the belief that he was pursued by devils. The same belief, in a mitigated form, is harming many millions in varying degrees.

The Rev. Edward Cadogan, Rural Dean and Rector of Wicken, North Hants, committed suicide last week by shooting himself. There is no reason for supposing that he was an Atheist.

Lieut. Roundell committed suicide by drowning himself in the Severn. He was a son of Bishop Wordsworth and a relative of the Bishop of Lincoln. More facts for Talmage!

A bad accident happened at a "dipping" ceremony near the Baptist Church, at Springfield, Ohio, on Sunday. A crowd of two thousand persons watched the cleansing of sinners from a bridge, which suddenly gave way, the result being that five were killed and many seriously injured. Is this to be taken as a sign that Providence disapproves of adult baptism?

A person advertises in the *Times* for the loan of £350 to bring out "a deeply religious and highly moral novel in three volumes." Here is a chance for a pious capitalist!

The Rev. Samuel Evans, M.A., rector of Taxal, goes in for muscular Christianity. He had a dispute with Colonel Edward Hall, J.P., one of the churchwardens, relative to fixing a notice on the church door. The man of God ordered the colonel to leave the church on Sunday, and as he refused, took him by the collar of the coat and struck him a violent blow on his cheek with his clenched fist. Colonel Hale said he felt for some days as if he had a mustard plaster on his face. The reverend gentleman was bound over to keep the peace and to pay the costs of the proceedings.

"Be not afraid" was the text of a minister of Nonconformist chapel on the high road between Barnes and Mortlake. A bear, who had escaped from the custody of a travelling showman, entered the chapel, and the congregation forgot the discourse of their pastor. Fortunately Bruin's owner followed him shortly and succeeded in removing him from the holy edifice.

The Hindoos are greatly agitated because one of their temples has been demolished by orders of a government official. The residence of a God is of course holy ground

and taboo like Jehovah's ark. To save a bother, the official has been sent to another district, and government has ordered the rebuilding of the temple.

An English Catholic pilgrimage has started for the holy land with the blessing of Cardinal Manning on their heads. We should not care if the Catholics displayed their activity by going to Jericho and staying there.

"This is a smart story, but slightly profane, I regret. A suave, clerical member of our School Board, it seems, was examining a small class of boys during a short visit to a certain school. It is uncertain what special point regarding humanity he wished to bring out, or if he only asked the question thoughtlessly, when he said, with a bland smile, 'And who do you think I am, my little man?' The small boy thus addressed seemed rather nonplussed, for he suspected some allegorical answer was expected instead of a merely mortal cognomen. Whatever strange fancy passed through the little man's mind as he timidly gazed up at the great one cannot be ascertained, but as a timid answer to the question he whisperingly answered the one word, 'God!' And the great man smiled as he patted the small boy encouragingly on the head, saying, 'Not quite, my boy; not quite.' This story was certified as true by the narrator, but it is open to question, I think."—*Glasgow Evening News*.

Canon Hole has been proposing an inquiry into the administration of the Church of England Working Men's Society, which is accused of carelessness, extravagance, and mismanagement. The C.E.W.M.S. is deeply in debt, and it is very doubtful if an investigation of its affairs will lead to a removal of the burden.

The Convocation of York has issued its solemn protest against the recent Divorce Bill passed by the colony of Victoria, on the ground that it is opposed to the express words of J. C. The world goes on all the same, and will hardly now be stopped any more by the teachings of J. C. than by the legislation of Moses.

The great question of bags *v.* plates for the collection in churches has agitated more than one Easter vestry. The parsons find their offerings getting scantier, and advocate an open collection, while the parishioners prefer to follow the injunction of Jesus and give their alms in secret. The parsons, who know that religion is mainly a matter of show, think that with a plate collection they may shame their auditors into giving what they would otherwise withhold.

The Rev. A. A. Lyne, of Westgate, does not wish that any of the attractions of that watering-place shall compete with his own show. At a public meeting of the inhabitants he moved that any band engaged to play in Westgate during the summer season should be engaged with a proviso that they were not to give any performances on Sunday. The resolution was seconded by the Rev. T. Blandford, but was lost. It was then moved by a layman that only sacred music should be played, but an amendment adding the words "or classical" should be added was carried.

The distinction between sacred and profane music is pure nonsense. On what ground can Beethoven's pious songs be considered sacred and his sonatas profane? The only distinction is between superior and inferior music, and what we suppose is meant by "classical" is that the bandmaster shall rather select from Mozart and Wagner than from Dan Godfrey.

A sect of Faith Healers at South Woodford believe in the literal truth of the saying of J. C. that those who believe in him shall never die. One of the prominent ladies of the movement, according to the *Woodford Times*, makes periodical visits to Claybury Hill, Woodford Bridge, in the belief that she will be "caught up," and wafted into heaven or interstellar space. It seems the devil and the law of gravitation are one and the same. Those who, like J. C., overcome the Devil, levitate *à la* Elijah. But alas! the devil and the law of gravitation are too strong even for the faith-healers, who are said to be building a temple at Claybury, pending the time of their ascension to the New Jerusalem.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, it is said, has received a native letter from Central Africa. There is some difficulty about the translation, one version reading, Please send us more rum and less religion; another version asks for more religion and less rum; a third wants more rum and more religion; and a fourth neither religion nor rum. It has been sent back to Africa to get some missionary there to properly translate the strange document.

Dr. Parker says of Joseph Cook, "Twelve children and twelve months' affliction would complete his education." As it would take Joseph at least twelve years or so to get the twelve children, he has a poor prospect of becoming a finished theologian. He could get the twelve months' affliction by listening to Dr. Parker.

Hobbes said that words are the counters of wise men and the money of fools, and the truth of the observation is often exemplified. At Northampton, for instance, the Rev. T. Gasquoine has been arguing that "brotherhood implied fatherhood." So it does in the strict, prosaic sense of the word; but in the wider, ideal sense of the word it does nothing of the kind. Men are brothers, not through the fatherhood of God, which has set them quarreling and fighting, but through their common nature, common wants, common hopes, common aspirations, and mutual helpfulness.

The parsons are always boasting of their "charity," but the *Christian World* declares that "the last person who should have anything to do with a public charity is a parish clergyman," and it gives the case of one of these gentry who stopped the loaf of a poor woman eighty years of age because she put her nose inside a Wesleyan chapel. The "fatherhood of God" doesn't seem to have led to much "brotherhood" in this instance.

Professor Max Müller is very mildly heretical, but his Gifford lectures have been stirring up the righteous, godly folk in Glasgow. The concluding lecture of the second course excited particular indignation, and the Rev. John Hunter has been attacked for allowing it to be redelivered in Trinity Church. Pair auld Scotland!

The *British Weekly* says, "It is a hopeful sign that the *Freethinker* has found it expedient to discontinue the frightful illustrations which used to appear on the first page." We beg to inform our contemporary that we dropped the illustrations partly because we had worked the Bible through, and partly because we could not afford them when we enlarged the *Freethinker*.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's references to Mr. Foote, in his interesting reminiscences in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, have roused the ire of a correspondent who signs himself "Gyronny," which is perhaps a misprint for "Gowrongy." This gentleman wants to know if Mr. Holyoake is aware of the awful blasphemies which Mr. Foote published in the *Freethinker*. Well, we guess Mr. Holyoake knows a good deal more about "blasphemy" than "Gyronny" can teach him. Mr. Holyoake knew the brave old "blasphemers"—such as Carlile, Southwell, Hetherington and Paterson—of forty and fifty years ago, and he was himself imprisoned for the fictitious crime which Christians manufactured to get rid of their opponents.

The *Christian Commonwealth* is responsible for the statement that in America there are 7,000,000 young men, of whom 5,000,000 never darken a church door. "Seventy-five out of every 100 of these young men do not attend church; 95 out of every 100 do not belong to the Church, and 97 out of every 100 do nothing to spread Christianity." Awful! But our contemporary is still hopeful. Things are not worse than they were!

While the young men are *slowly* coming over, the *C. W.* looks for the conversion of the heathen—we mean those outside Christendom; and, in order to get this carried out it recommends the raising-the-wind scheme of the Rev. A. T. Pierson Taylor, who suggests that each church member should give twopence-halfpenny a day, in which way "£100,000,000 per annum would be raised for the missionaries." Good! But will you get the twopence-halfpennies?

Ministers are always finding out that Mr. Bradlaugh's scepticism rests upon a mistake, and that he would soon swallow Christianity if they made up the prescription. "We think," says the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, "that many of Mr. Bradlaugh's personal objections to Christianity would disappear if he could distinguish between ecclesiastical and scriptural Christianity." It is difficult to say whether ignorance or impudence predominates in this passage. Both are there in a very high degree. It is impudence to settle the measure of Mr. Bradlaugh's unbelief in this way, and ignorance to suppose he does not know the Bible as well as ecclesiastical history. By and bye Mr. Hughes will be teaching his grandmother to suck eggs.

Mr. Bradlaugh's "personal objections" to Christianity are not likely to be removed by Mr. Hughes, nor is he likely to be enamoured of the "scriptural Christianity" which leads to the concoction of lying stories of converted Atheists.

The Rev. Earl Gray tries to justify himself in the *Red-ditch Observer* for saying that "a beautiful girl of immoral character" was worshipped by the French Revolutionists as the Goddess of Reason. He thinks it sufficient to quote Carlyle's description of her as "Demoiselle Caudeille, of the opera, a woman fair to look upon, when well rouged." That settles it, in the opinion of the Rev. Earl Gray. But the poor man only betrays his ignorance of the opera, where all the performers have to make up with rouge and powder, to say nothing of more mysterious pigments. Madame Patti herself has to make up, and it would surprise her admirers to find she is therefore an immoral woman.

Mr. Gray's "beautiful girl" was not only not immoral, but not even a girl. If the reverend gentleman read a little further in Carlyle, he would find that she was only a "miss" on the stage. Off it she was a respectable married woman, and after the Feast of Reason she went home with her husband, who was a bookseller, and sat down with him to a frugal supper. The Rev. Earl Gray should really try to cultivate a sense of accuracy, which he will never do, by the way, if he spends too much time in reading the Bible.

The pill-vendor's Baptist concern at Southgate has been having an anniversary and boasting of its mighty deeds. Its chief achievement seems to have been the circulation of 1,000 copies of the *Dying Pillow*, a pamphlet à la Hugh Price Hughes, stuffed with lies about dying infidels. Such is the light of the world at Southgate.

A Liverpool friend says a two-headed boy is being exhibited in that city, and asks how many souls he has got. We don't know. Ask a Theosophist.

"Incendo" in the *Consett Guardian* gloats over the fact—with a good deal of what Hamlet calls damnable iteration—that only fifteen persons (we don't vouch for his figures) turned up at a meeting called for the purpose of starting a local Branch of the National Secular Society. Likewise, he almost bursts with delight at the thought of the deficit, which had to be borne by the Oxhill Branch, whose committee attempted the experiment. We beg to remind this journalist, who is perhaps as venal as he is slanderous, that if financial success is the true test of prosperity, the party of Jesus Christ must have been in a bad way when Cashier Judas sold the whole concern for thirty shillings. We further beg to remind him that the party was reduced to one leader and eleven followers, and that when the leader was arrested the eleven followers "all forsook him and fled." The Oxhill Branch of the National Secular Society has more than eleven members, and they are not good at running away. It is also probable that the Freethought cause will prosper, slowly but surely, at Consett; and as soon as a Branch there numbers eleven members, who won't run away, it will be stronger than the party of Jesus Christ was after three years' preaching and a perfect epidemic of miracles.

"Incendo" opines that "men by adopting Secularism in lieu of Christianity bring themselves to the dead level of so many dogs." After reading "Incendo's" libel on Secularism homes we are tempted to say he might rise to that level.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday morning, April 27, Bethnal Green Liberal and Radical Club, 22 Abbey Street, Bethnal Green Road, E.; at 12, "Should Parliament Regulate the Hours of Labor?"
Sunday evening (at 7), Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.; 7, "Mr. Gladstone on the Creation Story."
Tuesday, April 29, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N.W.; at 8, "Freethought and God." Free admission.
Friday, May 2, Secular Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell Road, S.E., "Freethought and Christ." Free admission.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.
 June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and 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.

FREETHINKER.—Sorry you are disappointed. We will give the Rev. J. McNeill's sermons another trial as soon as we have leisure.

J. BRUMAGE.—We note your change of address to 38 Sydenham Terrace, Fratton, for the sake of your friends.

T. CLARK.—Rather too long, and your indignation at Jehovah's bandits has overwhelmed your versification. Why not try to reduce it by a half? It would gain by compression.

A. LEWIS.—It ought to convert us anyhow.

FREETHINKER.—The verse is not so good as the prose it is based on—a passage in Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*.

F. GOODWIN.—Glad to hear you so highly appreciate the work put into this journal. We reproduce the paragraph on the late Mr. Powell.

L. STANLEY.—Half-crowns are as welcome as larger sums to the Freethought Fund. We hope no one will hesitate to send what he can afford, however small the sum may be. It would be pleasant to see a hundred pounds realised before the Conference.

W. ELCOAT.—Mr. Foote will be in the district early in May. Something should be done with the Stockton Branch. There is a large field for its enterprise, and we believe a fertile one.

REX REGES.—Cuttings are always welcome. Pleased to find you thoroughly approve our criticisms on Theosophy. We simply acted from a sense of duty and took the risk which we foresaw.

C. H. KELE.—We note your suggestion. It is worth considering. Meanwhile we are always glad to answer questions as to the best books for any line of study.

SOPHIA ROBERTSON.—Doubtless you mean well, but you are only wasting time, paper and postage.

SCRUTATOR.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums." The *Freethinker* and all Secular literature can be obtained at the small shop attached to the meeting place of the Battersea Branch N. S. S., Prince of Wales' Road.

DAYLIGHT.—Thanks for your congratulations. See "Acid Drops."

G. W. BALE.—We note the subject and await further particulars.

H. ROTHERA.—The Heckmondwike Branch is acting generously in sending an annual subscription to the new N. S. S. Fund. It is hardly to be expected that Branches should strain themselves. They consist chiefly of poor hard-workers. The well-to-do Freethinkers are the persons who should subscribe.

S. PEACOCK.—Glad to hear you are getting a few subscribers at South Shields for the new Fund. We believe it will be a great success in time.

C. DOEG.—Mr. Foote thanks the Liverpool Branch for its resolution of approval of his efforts as President of the N. S. S.

T. H. ASTON.—If you wish to set Mrs. Besant right you must apply to the journal she contributes to. We are not responsible for her statement that you are "notoriously untruthful." No doubt she will prove it or retract.

J. WILKS.—You are entitled to return your unsold *Freethinkers*, but our publisher cannot be expected to pay for the carriage

of your returns. Nor can he make other publishers give you special terms. The real reason, we suspect, for the reduced sale of Freethought literature in Bradford, is that the local Secularists do very little but quarrel. It is high time that they sank their differences and fought the common enemy.

A. HASSELDINE.—You may rely on our doing our best to make the N. S. S. more lively and effective. To this end it is necessary for the members to subscribe liberally.

QUIZ.—That Mary Magdalen was a loose character is merely a Christian tradition. There is no contemporary evidence of the existence of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, or even of Jesus. Glad to hear you circulate five copies of this journal weekly. Would that a thousand readers did the same.

W. BRANDLE.—We have always found you courteous, and we hope to find you so in future. But in stepping upon the C. E. S. platform you will have to remember the proverb about evil communications.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Cardiff Weekly Mail—Echo—Independent Pulpit—Margate and Ramsgate Gazette—Twentieth Century—Leeds Mercury—Woodford Times—Yorkshire Daily Chronicle—Newcastle Chronicle—National Advance—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Redditch Indicator—Christian Globe—La Verité—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Devon Evening Express—Consett Guardian—Freedom—Fritankaren—Der Lichtfreund—Evening Standard—Cosmopolitan—Leicester Daily Mercury—Boston Investigator.

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.

THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

Second List.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
J. T. Hampson	1 0 0	G. Payne	2 2 0
Mrs. A. Hampson	1 0 0	B. H. Brace	0 10 6
A. Lewis	0 5 0	Heckmondwike Brch	0 10 0
G. Smith	0 6 0	J. V. Pearce	0 10 6
D. Hughes	0 5 2	H. S. Frizelle	0 5 0
G. V. Ball	0 10 0	L. Stanley	0 2 6
O. Hasseldine	0 5 0	S. Holmes	1 0 0

It is to be hoped that this second list will soon be followed by a third. Members of the N. S. S., or unattached friends of the movement, should bestir themselves. Let the President and his colleagues on the Executive be supplied, as they should be, with the sinews of war, and they will carry on the battle of Freethought with vigor, and they hope with success.

G. W. FOOTE

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote performed a dreadfully difficult task on Sunday evening. He lectured on "Is the Bible Fit for Children?" without shocking his audience. But he took the precaution of leaving the Bible at home lest he should be tempted to read from it. This evening (April 27) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science, when he will reply to Mr. Gladstone's new article on "The Creation Story" in the May number of *Good Words*.

The Woolwich Branch had some difficulty in obtaining the Co-operative Hall at Woolwich for Mr. Foote's lecture. Twice the Committee refused it, and it was only let after the Secularist members of the Co-operative Society talked of calling a general meeting. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Why I am an Atheist" drew a large audience, which included several

ladies. Six local ministers had been specially invited, and one of them, the Rev. Mr. Baker, attended and offered some courteous opposition. He was followed by three other Christian speakers, each less rational than his predecessor, until the audience grew restive under the infliction. Mr. Foote's reply to his critics was very heartily applauded, and the Rev. Mr. Baker, in shaking hands, said he was perfectly satisfied with the courteous treatment he had received.

A freethinking lady got up to expose one of the Christian speakers, but the audience thought it beside the subject. Still, we can sympathise with the lady. She had heard this man traducing Mr. Foote at an outdoor meeting, where he read out a disgusting passage as if from the *Freethinker*. She promptly challenged him, and asked him to show her the paper he was reading from. At first he declined, but he yielded to pressure, and it turned out that not a word of the stuff was to be found in the paper. Such was the lady's story. Yet in Mr. Foote's presence the man claimed him as "a brother." And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Mr. Wheeler has published through Mr. Forder a new pamphlet, entitled *The Christian Doctrine of Hell*. Its object is to show that actual future torment has been taught by Christian divines throughout the ages. Some of the extracts should be serviceable to opponents of Christianity.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectures to-day (April 27) at Reading, and we hope the local Freethinkers will give him a good reception.

Mr. C. J. Hunt, who is going north during his holiday on a lecturing tour under the auspices of the Organisation Committee, will work the Tyneside district pretty thoroughly. He will visit the following places:—May 20, Hartlepool; 21, Stockton; 23, Ox Hill; 24, Chester-le-Street; 25, South Shields; 26, Newcastle; 27, Cramlington; 28, Bedlington; 29, Gateshead; 30, Sunderland. Sunday, June 1, Mr. Hunt lectures at Belfast.

Birmingham Freethinkers should all foregather at Baskerville Hall to-day (April 27). Tea will be served at 5, and the entertainment will begin at 7. The proceeds will go to the Benevolent Fund. Those who cannot attend should take a ticket.

Mr. Foote has agreed to open the winter season for the Birmingham Branch with two lectures at Baskerville Hall and an afternoon free lecture in the Town Hall, a building capable of holding four or five thousand people.

The Newcastle Branch has done good work in establishing and sustaining the Sunday Music League. According to the *Evening Chronicle* the strength of the friends of the League can no longer be denied. A memorial with more than a thousand signatures has been presented to the Mayor, requesting him to call a town's meeting. The Mayor has acceded to the request, and the bigots who desire to regulate their neighbors' observance of the "Sabbath" will either have to defend themselves or let judgment go by default.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Branch will be held next Sunday (May 4) at 11 o'clock. All members and supporters are earnestly desired to attend.

North Middlesex Secular Federation.—From May 4 all the North Middlesex stations will be open for Freethought lectures, Tottenham excepted. New Southgate and Wood Green, 11.30; Finsbury Park, 3.30; Edmonton, 3; Old Southgate, 6.30. The arrangements for Tottenham are not yet completed.—Sam. Standring, 9 Finsbury Street, E.C., secretary.

Another petition with 5,338 signatures of Swedish Utilisers (Secularists) has been presented to Prince Karl in favor of Mr. Lennstrand's release, and protesting against punishment for opinion. The Swedes are a serious and determined people. Having once taken up with Freethought, they will hold on despite all opposition, and they have evidently the nucleus of a powerful organisation which will soon make impossible such prosecutions as those which have disgraced the present Government.

At the General Assembly of the French Freethought Federation held at the Salle de l'Ermitage, 29 Rue de Jussieu,

Paris, on Sunday April 20, the statutes of the New Federation were approved and the following persons elected on the commission: E. Pasquier, C. Cilwa, Mme. Pasquier, G. Verone, MM. Beugnot, Schacere, Bevalet, Cottar, Okecki, Odin, Mlle. Chelega Loery, MM. Lebey, Dobelle, Cordeau, and Rouselle. The energetic secretary M. Pasquier, and our good friend M. Cilwa were level at the head of the poll, and the rest followed in the order given. Our French friends also organised a *Dernier de la Libre Pensée*, for collecting money after the fashion of Peter's Pence for the Propagation of Freethought.

President Carnot, who is too much of a Freethinker to go to church, has had a splendid reception in the south of France. Boulanger, who coquetted with the Church, is pretty well played out, while Carnot is daily rising in the esteem and affection of the people. At Corsica he was rather startled when the fishermen kissed his hand; it looked like treating him as a king; but it was only their fashion of greeting the great. One of these fine fellows saved twenty lives in a violent storm. While Carnot is respected by such men he may laugh at Boulanger and the Church too.

The *Independent Pulpit*, a Freethought monthly, of Waco, Texas, is in its eighth volume, and is full of interesting advanced Freethought matter.

Buddhism is not only making surprising advances in America and Austria, but in France. Leon de Rosny, a distinguished Orientalist, says it has taken firm root. He says that many of its disciples confound Buddha's pure philosophy with a variety of supernatural theories and dabble in spiritism, hypnotism, and occult practices.

A. E. Bultjeens, B.A., a young man brought up at St. Thomas's College, Colombo, Ceylon, has renounced the Christian faith and attached himself to that of the Lord Buddha. His name has been struck off the panels of the college, where it had been inscribed with honor.

The Austrian Christians have instituted a prosecution against Dr. Bruehl, Professor of Natural History in the University of Vienna, for "crimes against the Church and religion," the said crimes arising out of his lectures, in which he has taught Darwinism. Dr. Bruehl is seventy years of age and widely respected. The prosecution is bound to make the evolutionary doctrines more widely discussed and accepted.

The Liberal Woman's Convention, which met at Washington in February, has formally published its resolutions. The following will interest our readers, as showing a strong spirit of Freethought:—

Resolved, That as the first duty of every individual is self-development, the lessons of self-sacrifice and obedience taught women by the Christian Church have been fatal, not only to her own vital interests, but through her to the vital interests of the race.

Resolved, That every Church is the enemy of liberty and progress and the chief means of enslaving woman's conscience and reason, and therefore as the first and most necessary step towards her emancipation we should free her from the bondage of the Church.

Resolved, That the Christian Church, of whatever name, is based on the theory that woman was created secondary and inferior to man and brought sin into the world, thus necessitating the sacrifice of a Savior. That Christianity is false and its foundation a myth which every discovery in science shows to be as baseless as its former belief that the earth was flat.

Resolved, That morality is not theology, but has a basis independent of "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not"; that right is right and wrong is wrong, not because any being in the universe so declares, but in the nature of things, the origin of right being in truth and not in authority.

A work upon which Mr. J. Stuart Glennie, the friend of Buckle, has long been engaged, will shortly be published by D. Nutt. It is entitled *The Origin of Civilisation*.

The *Truthseeker* gives as its cartoon for April 12, the figure of a Christian maiden clinging to a cross in the water, hard by the rocks of superstition. Priestly sharks are playing round her as the Freethought lifeboat approaches and offers her relief. She holds to the wooden cross with such fervent

devotion that it is doubtful if she will accept the proffered help.

Religion does not play a very important part in the courts of New York nowadays. A juror in the Flack conspiracy case, on his examination, was asked: "Have you any religion?" "No, sir. We live to-day and die to-morrow." "Then you have no fear of the future?" "Not at all." He was sent to the box as a juror. A few years ago the man would have been discharged from the jury panel as incompetent to serve.—*Truthseeker.*

Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad, editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, Calcutta, has sent us an obliging letter in excellent English. He tells us that he has translated two of our essays into the vernacular. He also informs us that "the bubble of Theosophy is all but blown out here," but Mrs. Besant's conversion has caused some persons to make fresh inquiries about it, though with no very noticeable result.

Dr. Remegius Stölzle, the Professor of Philosophy at Würzburg, states in a letter to Karl Blind, in London, that he has discovered a number of manuscripts in the Town Library of Augsburg and in the University Library of Erlangen, containing the transcript of writings and notes on Aristotelean works made by Giordano Bruno, the Italian philosopher, who was burnt at Rome in 1600, at the order of the Inquisition. Some letters of a German friend of Bruno have also been found referring to the travels, studies and publications of the ex-monk during his sojourn in Germany. The whole will be published in the forthcoming edition of the works of Giordano Bruno, which is to come out in Italy.—*Daily News.*

Mr. Hendricks has introduced into the New York Senate a bill to abolish arrests in civil actions except for contempt. Lawyers are divided in opinion as to the advisability of this proposed complete abolition of imprisonment for debt. Colonel Ingersoll says: "I am opposed absolutely to imprisonment for debt. It is a relic of barbarism and savagery. The bill to abolish arrests in civil actions as published in the *Herald* meets my views exactly as to what is demanded in the way of a reform of the abuses that have grown out of this crying evil. I hope the bill will become a law."

The *Reading Observer* prints two replies to the Rev. J. Rose on the subject of miracles. That of the Rev. D. Amos, the Unitarian minister, is very strong. Unfortunately the editor is obliged to close the correspondence. Liberal-minded as he is, he must keep an eye to business, and it won't answer to let orthodoxy be so soundly thrashed, and so frequently.

Our next number will contain an article by the editor on Mr. Gladstone's second *Good Words* article on the Bible—"The Creation Story." We shall print an extra supply in the hope that some of our friends will take more copies than usual for distribution among their orthodox acquaintances.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY NOT UNIQUE.

THE commandment of love our enemies and to return good for evil, the most sublime doctrine of Christianity—so sublime, indeed, that Christians themselves have declared it to be too sublime for this world—can be shown to belong to the universal code of faith and morality from which the highest religions have drawn their strength and life. Let me first quote the words of Christ: "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Now, let us first consult a religion which cannot possibly be suspected of having borrowed anything from Christianity. Let us take one of the three great religions of China, Taoism, such as we know it from the writings of Lao-tze, who lived about 600 B.C. In the xlix. chapter of the Tao-te-king, Lao-tze says, "The good I would meet with goodness, the not good I would also meet with goodness. The faithful I would meet with faith, the not-faithful I would also meet with faith. Virtue is faithful. The sage dwells in the world with a timid reserve; but his mind blends in love with all. The people all turn their ears and eyes upon

him, and the sage thinks of them all as his children." In chapter lxiii. he says again: "Recompense injury with kindness." How widely spread and how old this doctrine must have been in China we may gather from some curious remarks made by Confucius, the contemporary of Lao-tze and the founder or reformer of the national religion of China. In the "Anelects" we read: "Some one said, 'What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?' The Master said: 'With what will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness.'" This is evidently the language of a philosopher rather than of a religious teacher. Confucius seems to have perceived that to love our enemies is almost too much for human nature, and he declares himself satisfied therefore with demanding justice to our enemies—and who does not know how difficult it is to fulfil even that commandment? However, the true prophets who thought not so much of what men are as what men ought to be, insisted on love, or at all events, on pity for our enemies as the highest virtue. Thus Buddha said: "Let a man overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, and the liar by truth. . . . For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; *this is an old rule.*" Remark here again the same expression, that the commandment to love your enemy is an old rule in the eyes of Buddha as it was in the eyes of Confucius. What, then, becomes of the attempts to show that the doctrine of love towards our enemies must have been borrowed, wherever we find it, from the New Testament, as if that doctrine would become less true because other religions also teach it, or because it had been revealed, in the truest sense of that word, to all who had eyes to see and hearts to love. It is truth that makes revelation, not revelation that makes truth.—*Professor Max Muller in his last Gifford Lecture at Glasgow.*

TRIBUTE TO A DEAD FREETHINKER.

THE *Grays and Tilbury Gazette* prints the following:—

"We regret to record the death of Mr. Edwin Powell, of Grays, which sad event took place at his residence on Friday, the 11th inst. Deceased, who was widely known as "Ted Powell," was one of the most prominent working men Radicals in the district. His presence was to be seen at all meetings for the propagation of Radical principles, and his outspoken advice will be greatly missed by the whole of the party in South-East Essex. He was also one of the most active officials of the Grays Co-operative Society, which society on Friday had their flag flying half mast high as a token of respect. Deceased, who had been ailing for some time past, was 40 years of age at the time of his death, which occurred from a complication of diseases, dropsy and heart disease being, however, the immediate causes. He had been employed by Messrs Brooks, Shoobridge, and Co. ever since the commencement of their works, and has always been highly esteemed and respected by the members of the firm as well as by his fellow workmen; and it is a noteworthy fact that at all times, when others were working against the firm, he was one of its staunchest supporters. He was one of the leaders of the old Liberal Reform Club which was started in Grays some time back, and at the time of his decease he was one of the most prominent members of the existing Grays Liberal and Radical Club, and has invariably figured in all elections, both political and otherwise. He leaves a wife and six children to mourn his loss, although the bitterness of that loss will be less keen to the widow from her knowledge of the fact that during his life her husband worked for a firm who after his death will not allow her or her children to starve.

"Deceased was a professed Secularist. The funeral took place on Sunday at the Cemetery, in the presence of one of the largest gatherings which has ever assembled there. His widow and a large number of relatives followed, and in accordance with Mr. Powell's expressed wish he was buried as a Secularist, no religious ceremony being performed. The Secretary and other representatives of the Secular Society in London were present, and an eulogy on his life was read by one of the members. At the funeral Messrs. Brooks' firm was represented by Mr. Walter Brooks and Mr. Simpson."

Sir G. Stokes has published his lecture on "I" through the office of the *Family Churchman*. We shall get a copy and give it our attention. From the reports we have seen it is all my I.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you allow me to make a few comments on the criticism of the report of the Leicester Secular Society for 1889, which appeared in your issue of April 6th. I am sorry I had not time to send this letter before.

It is not correct to say that members of our club are "not necessarily Secularists." We do not intentionally admit a single person who is not a Secularist. It is possible for a non-Secularist to become a member by deceiving us but not otherwise.

It is hardly accurate to say that only £34 is spent "on lectures." £34 16s. 7d. is the amount paid to lecturers, but the cost of the lectures is of course much more than that. There are rent, rates, gas, water and coal (for heating), manager's salary and numerous other expenses connected with keeping up such a hall as ours, altogether amounting to over £200 per year spent in the purely propagandist side of our work. It would puzzle any Secular Society in the kingdom to show a better lecture list than ours, and if some of our friends do not ask much for their lectures, sometimes even charging nothing, I think we are to be congratulated on that fact. The lectures certainly are on all sorts of subjects, as we believe that Secularists should be interested in all sorts of subjects and given opportunities for discussing them. Still, our report shows that the large majority of the lecturers last year were pronounced Secularists.

I believe my father's bequest is being used in accordance with his wishes, and on that point I think I am a better judge than the writer of the criticism.

What "respectability" means I confess I don't know. If it means "ability to claim respect" I hope we may increase and not diminish our share of it. If it means considering "Mrs. Grundy" before the claims of Freethought, and developing a tendency towards pot hats and kid gloves, then I do not think we needed your critic's advice. This last kind of respectability has no hold on our Society, I cannot imagine Freethought being more free anywhere or more consistently vigorous. Our Secularism is not intermittent, alternating grand revivals with seasons of sloth; we keep steadily at work month after month, and year after year, with the result that our influence is always felt in our town.

There is nothing like going from home for news. Your critic thinks the "rank and file of the Secular party in Leicester" are dissatisfied. My impression is that it would be difficult to find anywhere a body of men and women working more harmoniously or more earnestly. In any case they are not "obliged to take what is given them." All our officers are elected by ballot, one member one vote, the smallest subscriber having exactly the same power as the largest. The policy of the Society is therefore in the hands of the majority.

I think your critic has somewhat mis-read the quotation from Mr. G. J. Holyoake. He does not say that "Secularists need not contest the divine origin of the Bible," but that secular principles *can* be stated and certain mischievous views of theology combated "without digressing into the discussion of the truth of Theism or divine origin of the Bible." I take this to mean that we can discuss Secularism without everlastingly hammering at God and the Bible. Criticism of Theism and the Bible has its place and is most necessary, but that is not all that Secularism consists of—at least, so we think at Leicester. We like to put God and the Bible in the background sometimes, and show that we are independent enough to do a little secular work without their help.

In conclusion, allow me to thank you for the criticism. It is always good to have our work examined, and a Secular Society whose work would not bear the closest examination would not be worthy of the name. If any of your readers are interested in knowing what we are doing at Leicester, I shall be glad to send a copy of the report on receipt of address.—Yours truly,
SYDNEY A. GIMSON.

[We insert Mr. Gimson's letter for the sake of fair play. It does not convince us, however, that our criticism was very inaccurate. What he says about the self-denial of lecturers seems to us a sort of "sweater's" excuse, and we are unable to follow him in his arithmetic in the third paragraph. Nor do we think he has rightly read the principle he refers to in paragraph seven. As for the other paragraphs, more might be said about them if we had time to say it. It must now

suffice that Mr. Gimson has made his reply: There are men whom we respect in the Leicester Secular Society, and we would not be uncivil to anyone who bears the name of Gimson.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

HOME RULE AND ROME RULE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your paper very properly eschews politics; but it seems right to permit some discussion on the religious aspect of the Irish Question raised by your able contributor, Mr. O'Donovan. Most Freethinkers are Radicals, and many, like Mr. Morley, were Home Rulers long before the question was taken up by the Liberal party. Some few—very few, I think, but I know at least two—however, are Conservatives, placing Order before Liberty or Progress. Others, including such eminent Freethinkers as Huxley, Tyndall and Lecky, decline to follow Mr. Gladstone on this question, and would rather vote with the Conservatives than place Ireland in the hands of an Irish Parliament. Some again, and I confess myself of the number, though they deem Home Rule just and inevitable, feel much like a man who has to hand over a fortune to a relative, who, perhaps from its being too long withheld, has fallen upon bad times and bad company. The man can but doubt the issue. But the relative is clamorous, and will be satisfied with nothing short of his rights. The man can only say: "Take it freely, but I warn you new power will bring new responsibilities. Beware of those black parasites who have so long kept you poor, and who I fear only demand your rights to secure more for themselves."

Mr. O'Donovan sees what so many politicians and political journalists scrupulously put out of sight—that the religious and political questions are inextricably mixed. He has himself told us in burning words of the credulous submission of his countrymen to the priests. He sees hope in liberty. I heartily admire his bravery in propagating Freethought in Dublin, and I wish I could share his hopes of success. But Irish Freethinkers will have a long and uphill fight. I agree the Church will be too astute to directly persecute Protestants. But will it show the same tolerance to those who sap its authority and that of all religion? A College Green Parliament would have much to do. Will not the priests who control the votes, take care they control the expenditure? Will not Catholic schools thrive while others starve? Will not Parliament discover that the Protestants of Ulster can and must contribute the major portion of the expenses of the whole country? Will they not aim eventually not only at Catholic ascendancy, but at making Ireland an entirely Catholic nation? Prophecy is a gratuitous form of error, and I avoid it. I only ask for information. Mr. O'Donovan's views from the capital I have read with sincere pleasure, but I should also like to hear the opinions of Freethinkers in Ulster.

SAXON.

PROFANE JOKES.

Some one called a clergyman a fool. The latter threatened to complain to the bishop. "Do so," said the former, "and he will confirm you."

"What did you see at church, grandfather?" asked Mianie after her first visit to the sanctuary. "I saw a man come in with his nightgown on, an' he was so 'shamed he hid his face in his hands a little while 'fore he dared to say a word."

"Say, Pathrick, whispered Jacobson to his Hibernian friend, "I vonder vot sort of man dot is at de odder end of de loonch-counter?" "Begob," returned Pat, eying the stranger, "he must be wan av thim new-fangled ducks called Eggnostics. A man that will ate bacon on a Froiday is nayther Jew nor Christian!"

A clergyman, mounted on a tall, lank, row-boned animal, asked a dirty urchin which was the nearer road to town. The boy said, "Who are you, old fellow?" The clergyman replied, "My son, I am a follower of the Lord." "A follower of the Lord, eh? Well, it makes mighty difference which road you take; you'll never catch Him with that horse."

SACRIFICES.—At first it is supposed that the spirits actually eat the food offered them. Soon, however, it would be observed that the animals sacrificed did not disappear; and the natural explanation would be that the spirit ate the spiritual part of the victim, leaving the grosser portion to his devout worshippers. Thus the Limboos, near Darjeeling, eat their sacrifices, dedicating, as they forcibly express it, "the life-breath to the gods, the flesh to ourselves."—Sir John Lubbock, "*Origin of Civilisation*," p. 365. 1839.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, "Theosophy of the Day: its Autopsy and Obsequies," by an Orientalist."
Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, a lecture. Park Gates, 11.15, a lecture by Mr. Hunt. Social evening every Tuesday.
Bethnal Green—Opposite "Salmon and Ball," Mr. W. Heaford, "Some Objections to Christianity"; 3.15, at 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, members' general meeting.
Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson (closing lecture), "Rationalism."
Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Evolution in the Domain of Chemistry."
East London—Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Why we Advocate Secularism."
Edmonton—Opposite the "Angel," 3, Mr. Sam. Standring, "God and Mammon."
Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Christ and Freethought."
Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone on the Creation Story."
Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Jesus and his Beliefs."
Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mrs. A. Besant, "Free Education, Shall we Compromise?"
West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11.30, Mr. Jesse Cocks, "The History of Freethought in Stratford"; 7, Mr. A. Dipper, "The Resurrection"; 8.30, music, etc.
Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Decline of Christianity." On Saturday (April 26) at "Duke of Ormonde," 13 Prince's Street, social meeting of members and friends.
Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Socialist speakers.

COUNTRY.

Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S., 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. M. Gass, "The Single Tax: Will it Solve the Labor Problem?"
Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, Mr. H. Barkby, "Let the Slaves Unite."
Hull Branch—Cobden Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. J. Hooper, 10.30, "Bible Heroes"; 2.30, "Birth, Life, and Death of Christ"; 6.30, "The State Church, its Origin and Deeds."
Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—Mr. J. Clarke, M.A., 11, "The Religion of the Future"; 3, "Anthropomorphism"; 7, "The Childhood of Jesus."
Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, humorous and dramatic recitals by Mr. and Mrs. E. C. White. Free. On Friday, May 6, ball of the season, commence at 6.30; gents, 1s. 6d., ladies, 1s.
Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. R. J. Murray, "Bruno."
Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Southsea, 7, Mr. Woods, "Vegetarianism, a False Ism"; several prominent vegetarians likely to attend, and good discussion will follow.
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, music, recitations, etc., by several friends.
South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, at 7, a lecture by Mr. Thos. Thompson.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MESS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—April 27, Reading. May 4 (morning), Westminster (evening), Woolwich; 11 (morning), Camberwell; 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, 11 (morning), Ball's Pond; 25 (afternoon), Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End. July 13, Mile End.
TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 22 (evening), Woolwich; 29 (morning), Bethnal Green. July 6 (morning), Hyde Park; 13 (morning), Clerkenwell Green; 27 (morning), Mile End Waste.
JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Ercinton, Nottingham.—April 27, Hull; 28, Grimsby. May 4, Nottingham.
T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 27, Hyde Park.
H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—May 4, Birmingham; 11, Hanley.

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