

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 25.]

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1890.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request.

—BEN JONSON.

JESUS AT THE DERBY.

This is the age of advertisement. Look at the street-boardings, look at the newspapers, look at our actor-managers, look at Barnum. Scream from the house-tops or you stand no chance. If you cannot attract attention in any other way, stand on your head. Get talked about somehow. The only hell is obscurity, and notoriety is the seventh heaven. If you cannot make a fortune, spend one. Run through a quarter of a million in three years, be the fool of every knave, and though you are as commonplace as a wet day in London, you shall find a host of envious admirers. Should the worst come to the worst, you can defy obscurity by committing a judiciously villainous murder. Perhaps Jack the Ripper had a passion for publicity, and liked to see his name in the papers, until he grew *blasé* and retired upon his laurels.

Yes, it is an advertising age, and an advertising age is a sensational age. Religion itself—the staid, the demure—shares in the general tendency. She preaches in the style of the auction room, she beats drums and shakes tambourines in the streets, she affects criminals and dotes on vice, she bustles about the reformation of confirmed toppers. By-and-bye she will get up a mission to lunatics and idiots. She is now a very "forward" person. Forward movements are the rage in all the churches. But Methodism bears the palm, though Presbyterianism threatens to run it hard in the person of John McNeill. Hugh Price Hughes is a very smart showman. When truth is stale he is ready with a bouncing lie, and has "face" enough to keep it up in five chapters. But the West-End Mission is getting rather tame. The dukes and duchesses are not yet converted. Money is spent like water and the aristocracy still go to Hades. A new move is tried. The "forward" Methodists organise a Mission to Epsom. Jesus Christ goes to the Derby; that is, he goes by proxy, in the person of Mr. Nix. A van, a tent and a big stock of pious literature, with mackintoshes and umbrellas, form his equipment. He is accompanied by a band of workers. Their rules are to be up for prayer-meeting at seven in the morning, and "never to look at any race, or jockey, or horse." This is a precaution against the Old Adam. It saves the Mission from going over to the enemy on the field of battle.

Mr. Nix gives an account of his performance in the *Methodist Times*. He converted a lot of people. So has Hugh Price Hughes. "At one time," he says, "there were three Church of England clergymen and their wives and some distinguished members of the aristocracy in the tent"—probably out of the wet. Of course they were not converted. But what a pity! A "converted clergyman" would have been a glorious catch, worth five thousand pounds at St. James's Hall. And fancy bagging a duke! It was enough to make Mr. Nix's mouth water. He must

have felt some of the agony of Tantalus. He was up to the neck, so to speak, in lords and parsons, and could not grasp one. Dissenting ministers and their wives did not show up. Naturally. They would not go to such a naughty place—except in a mission van. Mr. Nix has a keen eye for the Methodist business. He has open and sly digs at the Church clergy. One of the tipsters said his father was a clergyman, but "his religion was no good to him." He would give anything for the religion of "the little chap that stood on the stool." That was Mr. Nix.

We suspect the Epsom races will outlast Mr. Nix. There is more boast than performance about Missions. Christianity is always converting drunkards, profligates, prostitutes, and thieves; but somehow our social evils do not disappear. Even the drink bill runs up, despite all the Gospel pledges. *Nix* is the practical result of the efforts of gentlemen like Mr. Nix. They are on the wrong tack. They are sweeping back the tide with mops. The real reformatory agency is the spread of education and refinement.

Yet the mission will go on. It is a good advertisement. Mr. Hughes gives it a special leading article. He cries up the Epsom mob as the "most representative gathering of Englishmen," and "therefore a fair specimen of the mental and moral condition of the English people." This is stuff and nonsense, but it serves its purpose. Mr. Hughes wants to show that Missions are needed. He finds that "the great majority of the people are outside the Christian Church," that "this is still a heathen country." Perhaps so. But what a confession after all these centuries of gospel-grinding and Church predominance! There are fifty or sixty thousand churches and chapels, and as many sky-pilots. Six million children go to Sunday School. The Bible is forced into the public day-schools. Copies are circulated by the million. Twenty millions a year, at the least, is spent in inculcating Christianity. Yet England is still "a heathen country." Well, if this be the case, what is the use of Mr. Nix? What is the use of Mr. Hughes? Greater preachers have gone before them and have failed. Is it not high time for Jesus to run the job himself? "Come Lord Jesus," as John says. Let him descend from the Father's right hand and take Mr. Nix's place at the next Derby. He might even convert the "clergymen and their wives" and the "distinguished members of the aristocracy." Anyhow he should try. He will not be crucified again. The worst that could happen is a charge of obstruction, and perhaps a fine of forty shillings. But surely he will not lay himself open to such indignities. He should triumphantly assert his deity. A few big miracles would strike Englishmen more than the Jews, who were sated with the supernatural. He might stop the horses in mid career, fix the jockeys in their saddles, root the Epsom mob where they stood, and address them from the top of the grand stand. That would settle them. They would all go to church next Sunday. Yes, Jesus must come himself, or the case is hopeless. Missions to the people of this

"heathen country" are like fleas on an elephant. What the ministers should pray for is the second coming of Christ. But we guess it will be a long time before they sing "Lo, he comes, in clouds descending." Besides, it would be a bad job for them. Their occupation would be gone. A wholesale conversion would cut up the retail traders. On the whole, we have no doubt the men of God prefer the good old plan. If Jesus came he would take the bread out of their mouths. That would be shabby after they had devoted themselves to the business. The very publicans demand compensation, and could the sky-pilots do less? But perhaps Jesus would send them all home. We should like to see them go. It would give the world a chance.

G. W. FOOTE.

FALSE CHRISTS.

(Continued from page 279.)

THE Samaritans appear to have been almost as much afflicted with the Christ fever as the Jews. There was one Dositheus, a Samaritan, who Mosheim tells us lived about the time of "our Savior" and set up for the Messiah, whom God had promised to the Jews. One Cleobulus played a similar rôle. There was also Menander, who the same historian remarks "is rather to be ranked with the lunatics than with the heretics of antiquity, seeing he also took it into his head to exhibit himself to the world as the promised Savior."

But the most renowned of these Samaritan gentlemen was Simon Magus, who is supposed to have appeared in the fourth decade of the first century. According to the untrustworthy Acts (viii., 9-11) he "bewitched the people of Samaria giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." The writer of the Acts makes him a Christian convert anxious to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost. This seems hardly compatible with the tradition which makes him the father of all heretics and to have disputed with St. Peter at Rome, where flying in the air by the power of demons, he was, by Peter's prayers, thrown down and killed. Baur, Volkmar and Zeller hold that Simon Magus was the Ebionite caricature of Paul. The matter is too abstruse to enter on here. I refer the reader to a curious and able paper on "The Myth of Simon Magus" in the *Westminster Review*, of July 1884, and give in a footnote a recent admission of an orthodox advocate.* Certain it is that Simon Magus figures largely in early Christian legend, and he appears to have had followers in the time of Origen. Justin Martyr says, a statue was erected to Simon in Rome as to a god. This was doubtless one of the father's many errors.

Hippolytus mentions Simon in connection with one Apsethus, a Libyan who he says taught parrots to say "Apsethus is a God," and then let them loose to be taken as a voice from heaven, like that which appeared with the dove at Jordan. Hippolytus also mentions one Marcus—no relation to Mark, a Gnostic follower of Jesus, who worked wonders "partly by sleight of hand, partly by demons," and who with drugs turned water into wine and multiplied the liquor.

* Dr. Salmon, in his Introduction to "The Study of the New Testament" (pp. 15, 16, 1889), says: "In one passage in the 'Homilies' the dislike of Paul passes the bounds of mere silence. For Simon Magus is described as 'withstanding Peter to the face,' and declared that he was 'to be blamed.' Many a reader might innocently overlook the malice of these expressions; but when attention is called to them, we can hardly deny that the coincidence of language with that in the Epistle to the Galatians (ii. 11) leads to the surmise that under the character of Simon a reference to Paul is cloaked; and that Paul is intended by 'the enemy,' who opposed St. Peter and St. James. We also see what interpretation is to be put on a controversy as to relative superiority between Simon Magus, who claims 'I have seen our Lord in vision, and Peter, who had actually seen him in the flesh.'

The greatest of the Jewish Messiahs was named Barchocheba, the son of a star, in allusion to Numb. xxiv., 17. In the reign of Hadrian, about 132, he set up a rebellion. His Messianic claims were recognised by the renowned Rabbi Akiba, who crowned him king of the Jews. Half a million of that people flocked to his standard. The Roman army was sent against him. For two years he resisted the power of the Empire, and finally he and a prodigious number of Jews—it is said two millions—were destroyed, and a new city *Ælia Capitolina*, raised upon the ruins of Jerusalem, into which no Jew was permitted to enter.

Another Christ was Mani, the founder of the Manichæan system. Of his life there are but few trustworthy details. He was born about 215 A.D. of a noble Persian family settled in Ecbatana. His father belonged to a sect of Baptists, something similar to the Christians of Saint John. It was in 242, when he was twenty-four years old, that he presented himself to the Persians as the founder of a new religion. He claimed to be a messenger or avatar of the true God. "What Buddha was to India, Zoroaster to Persia, Jesus to the lands of the West, I am to the country of Babylonia." He seems to have aimed at uniting some of the characteristics of these faiths. His Christian followers held him to be the Paraclete promised in John xvi., 13. He surrounded himself with twelve disciples. His career in attempting to reform the old Persian religion produced much opposition, and in 276 he was seized by the priestly party and crucified. His corpse was flayed, stuffed with hay, and nailed to the gate of the city, which afterwards bore his name. But his religion spread with the rapidity of Oriental fanaticisms. Manichæism sought to satisfy intellectual problems undealt with by Christianity. It explained evil by a system of dualism. The world began from the mixture of two radically opposing elements, one good the other bad. The course of history, the evolution of life, is but the conflict of these two powers. Manichæism, which for some time attracted the powerful intellect of St. Augustine, who, indeed, imported some of its ideas into Christianity, might as fairly claim to be an independent religion as Mohammedanism, by which it was mainly crushed, though some elements survived in the West among the Albigenes and Cathari.

Socrates, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, tells of a false Messiah named Moses, who appeared in Crete A.D. 434, and pretended to be the ancient legislator of the Jews, descended from heaven to procure a glorious deliverance for the Jews of that island by making them pass over the sea into the Land of Promise. Some of the credulous and oppressed Jews of Crete were fools enough to be persuaded by Moses redivivus. Many of them jumped into the sea, in expectation that it would give them safe passage. Numbers were drowned, others escaped as well as they could; and when they sought for the prophet to punish him, he could no more be found than the tomb of his predecessor.

A considerable list of further Messiahs may be found in the pages of Basnage, Milner and Jortin, but it may be doubted if their pretences more deserve the epithet false than those of the founder of the Christian religion. His claims at any rate have always been esteemed so by the bulk of the Jewish people who, I opine, should be the best judges in the matter.

J. M. WHEELER.

"It seems to me," observed Jo Cose "that the recording angel must have a pretty easy time of it now-a-days?"

"Why so?" asked his wife.

"Simply because if a man does anything good or bad it gets into the newspapers."

"Well, what of that?"

"Why, all the angel has to do is to go over his exchanges with a pair of shears."

LOOKING FORWARD IN IRELAND.

THE belief that the Irishman is a compound of contradictions is not devoid of foundation. While he is proverbially fickle, unstable and easily deceived in some important respects, he is so stubbornly immovable in others as to be utterly impervious to all arguments and blandishments. In religious affairs, especially, his tenacity to the creed in which he finds himself by accident is really extraordinary. He is so thoroughly convinced that he is in the right, and that all those who differ from him are in the wrong, that his self-confidence and self-satisfaction excite at once the amazement and ridicule of the Freethinker. These remarks are alike applicable to all sects that have found a home in Ireland, but in an especial manner to the dominant sect, the Catholics.

But there is a very important qualification to be noted. Outwardly things appear to be proceeding on the old self-satisfied and unchangeable groove. As to compliance with religious observance, and adherence to religious dogmas and beliefs, there is apparently no alteration. If we penetrate beneath the surface, however, it will be discovered that things are not exactly as they seem. Even inside the Catholic Church matters are altered, and the old cast-iron beliefs are undergoing a slow process of corrosion. I meet from time to time orthodox Papists, with some educational pretensions, who do not hide their dislike to be treated by the priests to the same homilies and exhortations that are specially designed for the ignorant and the illiterate. Others there are, of the same faith and similar pretensions, who admit, when brought to defend their doctrines, that they regard many of the Bible stories as allegories, and that they do not expect to find things in the "other" world as they are taught to expect. But they urge that if the ignorant were led or allowed to harbor such mild Freethought notions their conduct and their morals would quickly undergo serious deterioration. There are others still who are much displeased that the ministers of their religion do not practise what they preach; and these make little secret of their disgust at the respect paid to the rich, and the disrespect paid to the poor, by the Catholic clergy. It is true that the existence of such ideas does not give rise to any definite hopes as to the immediate progress of Freethought in Catholic circles; but still they point to a distinct step in advance, and a step which will ultimately produce important effects.

There is another point which must not be overlooked. The number and character of the ceremonies of the Catholic religion, and the all-important significance attached to them, are gradually bringing the more sensible Catholics to think that the spirit of the religion is being altogether sacrificed to the letter. This feeling is always preliminary to viewing the ceremonies as tom-fooleries, and once it exists in the mind of a Catholic his acceptance of Freethought is a likely contingency.

Notwithstanding these facts, however, it is not likely that Irish Catholicism will suffer perceptibly in our day from defections to Secularism. The Irish Catholic is essentially a religious animal. Irishmen and Catholicism seem to be made for each other, and the scarcely perceptible breach between them will not be widened without long and arduous labor. The spread of education, no doubt, will accomplish much; but the peculiar love of the people for the "old faith" will, it is to be feared, long withstand the march of reason.

The outlook is more hopeful as far as non-Catholic Ireland is concerned. The Protestants are as a house divided against itself. Ritualism has made its way amongst them, and is steadily dividing them into opposite and hostile camps. There are bitter quarrels in progress about how the clergymen are to face while performing the service, and about other equally

"important" considerations. Then there is the question of "Confession." The more common-sense Protestants view with righteous alarm the probability that the establishment of the Confessional will place a terrible power in the hands of the ministers who adopt the principle. It is notorious that the moral character of many of the clergymen of this church is anything but good. It is an open secret that quite recently the Protestant Chaplain of a Dublin Hospital had to be dismissed for accomplishing the ruin of the nurses employed in the establishment. "Give the clerics the power to establish the Confessional," said an influential Protestant, and member of the Synod, to me the other day, "and no family will be safe." We can, therefore, well understand the agitation in Protestant circles over the advance of Ritualism. The squabbles, however, are not without their interest for us, inasmuch as they are producing an extending indifference to all religion in intelligent Protestant circles. In the history of the Protestant Church in Ireland there never was such indifference among the best of its members as at the present time. The young men, especially, are notoriously careless, and great numbers of them, though nominally Protestants, are virtually Freethinkers. Many of these are only kept even nominally within the church by fear of the ruin that would await them in business were their true thoughts known. From these facts it is safe to conclude that the fate of Protestantism in Ireland promises to be the same as that which more obviously awaits it elsewhere. The Ritualistic portion will drift into Catholicism; the non-Ritualistic section will go over by degrees to Freethought; and, ultimately, the people will be divided into two camps, composed of Catholics and Secularists. When this inevitable division is an accomplished fact, then will come the "tug of war"; but the issue will be fought out long after "all of us are mute and most of us forgotten."

J. O'DONOVAN.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The historical books of Israel which we possess are not historical records, but are historical legends reduced to writing by writers who had sometimes political and sometimes religious ends in view. The argument of those tales is that all the people habitually worshipped Jahveh and him alone, during which normal period they were prosperous, but that sometimes under evil influence they abandoned him, and fell into disaster, until, after sufficient chastisement, they returned to the true worship. The historic truth is that the old Israelites, when disasters came, as they always do come, gave up the worship of their national god as not a success, and tried the gods of their neighbors. They returned to Jahveh because the other gods did not satisfy them any better. In fact, the people had no fixed or distinct faith, and it is not correct to accuse them of backsliding when they were only vacillating.—*Garrick Mallery in "Popular Science Monthly."*

OBITUARY.

Died on June 12, William Chicken, at South Gosforth. Deceased for many years had been a member of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch of N. S. S. Not long before he died, the vicar of the parish desired to see him. The deceased sent word out that he might come as a gentleman, but not as a priest. The vicar did not come. Almost his last words were: "I think this is the winding up."—CHAS. H. KELP.

On May 28, at his residence, Bartholomew Street, High Fields, Leicester, aged 72 years, died, after a long illness, Mr. Geo. Woodford. He was one of the first pioneers of Freethought in Leicester, holding meetings at the homes of different friends, and afterwards joining the Secular Society, of which he was an earnest member. Deceased was buried on Saturday, May 31, at Leicester Cemetery, by Mr. Slater, sen., who read the service. I have known the late Mr. G. Woodford 25 years, and remember him as one of the most consistent and benevolent members of society. He passed away peacefully in the opinions for which he fought in life. He was much respected by all.—S. STAUGHTON.

"On human evidence the miracles of St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament."—*J. A. Froude, "Short Studies."*

SOME BIBLE SAINTS.

THERE was an old Jewess named Jael,
She took up a hammer and nail,
And knocked on the head
A friend in her bed;
So "blessed among women" is Jael.

Then there was the holy cheat Jacob,
Who played all the tricks he could rake up;
He deceived his old dad
And his brother drove mad,
So a saint now in heaven is Jacob.

Another fine saint is King David,
Who watched Mrs. Uriah as she bathed;
Then put Mr. Uriah
In the enemies' fire,
While he took the joys of the saved.

And lastly there's sweet gentle Jesus,
Whose virtues so cold nearly freeze us;
He swore at the figs
And sent devils to pigs,
And took all our sins just to ease us.

LUCIANUS.

TALMAGE IN THIRTY-NINE ATTITUDES.

One of our Sunday papers, says *The Christian Register*, has recently published thirty-nine pictures of Dr. Talmage, taken by instantaneous photography—taken in all the attitudes of prayer, spiritual ecstasy, devotion, inspiration, exaltation, fervor, and frenzy which he exhibits in the pulpit. This five-cent show is one of the most extraordinary uses to which photography has ever been put. The worldly laugh over it, the judicious grieve, the pious mourn. The editor of our religious evening daily has heretofore rather gloried in Dr. Talmage; but he is out now in a lengthy article in which he solemnly takes the doctor to task for profaning the Sabbath. If the doctor allowed himself to be photographed in the pulpit in the full swing of his eloquence, it was awful; if he posed for those theatrical pictures in cold blood, who can characterise the deed? This aspect of the affair is, however, lost sight of by the religious daily, which regards the doctor's sin as monstrous in swelling the receipts of a sensational Sunday newspaper. But one of its secular rivals harps on a different string, as witness the following: "Ye gods and little fishes! Is the preacher's art a sham and a humbug? Is your pulpit pathos a simple matter of arching the eyebrows, and your eloquence a mere trade? Can you show how you make your congregation weep by putting on the proper expression before a camera? Is it all mechanism, all acting, all hypocrisy?"

LAWYERS AND DOCTORS AS FREETHINKERS.

The lawyers are probably less inclined to scepticism than the doctors, because the legal mind is closer akin to the theological mind; it has chiefly to do with arbitrary and artificial questions and distinctions, and is brought less under the influence of natural causes than that of the medical practitioner. The lawyer falls into personal and exclusive views; he makes the cause of his client his own; and his whole training is to beget a habit of mind quite the opposite of the scientific. The physicians were the first to discredit witchcraft and to write against it, but the lawyers cherished and defended the belief nearly as long as did the clergy. The legalism, too, which has invaded Christianity, and which is such a repulsive feature in certain of the creeds, especially that of Calvinism, is the word of the attorney habit of mind.—*John Burroughs in "Open Court."*

In the Life of Dr. Doyle by Fitzpatrick, it is told how examining theological students at Carlow College on the subject of administering the mass, he said to a student named Jarrett, "Supposing you were saying mass, and let a spider fall into the chalice, would you feel yourself authorised in picking it out?" Jarrett was silent; but having been prompted by another student, he replied, "I would swallow it, my lord." "Very good," said Dr. Doyle "and if a donkey fell into the chalice, what course would you adopt?" "Swallow it," responded Garrett mechanically. "Hoofs and all?" inquired the Bishop. "Yes," replied Garrett to the amusement of the assemblage.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE A FAILURE.

The lady of the house was cheerful, chatty, and good humored. A late personal experience which she told was enjoyed by her small audience. She had not been feeling well, had been depressed and nervous, and somebody advised her to try Christian science. She consulted a "healer," who informed her that she was not ill, depressed, or nervous; that such states of feeling had no real existence; that she must lift herself into an exalted atmosphere, keep herself in an elevated condition of mind, and thus free herself from these troubles, which were nothing more than the evidence of sin, etc. She was much impressed by this spiritual doctrine, and returned to her home feeling that she had indeed been lifted into the regions of the beautiful and the good.

At dinner, surrounded by her husband and children, she continued in this transcendental state—as evidenced by her conversation—and thinks she might be there still had she not been rudely lowered to the level of commonplace life by the remarks of various members of the family about the board.

"Mother, you seem absent-minded," said one of the boys.

"Mamma, you are hifaluten," chimed in one of the little ones.

Finally the august senator, who is accustomed to all sorts of attention from his wife, emphatically demanded: "What the——is the matter with you?"

"I came down at once," said the vivacious hostess. "I was like the old farmer who had got religion and who owned a ram. Going into the house one day, minus his hat and coat, he said to his family: 'There's no use in trying—I can't be a Christian while that ram is on the place.' I told the senator that I can never be a genuine Christian scientist while he and the boys are around."—*Washington Post.*

ACID DROPS.

The impudence of the Romish Church, and the connivance of Lord Salisbury, should attract greater attention. Malta is an English possession, but our Tory premier has allowed the Pope to decide its marriage laws. Roman Catholics must be married according to the form established by the Council of Trent. If a Protestant marries a Catholic the marriage is null and void. And as the arrangement is retrospective all persons married otherwise will be regarded as "living tally" and their children as illegitimate. Surely it is enough to make an Englishman's blood boil to see our Government truckling in this infamous way to Papa Pecci.

A joker will have it that Miss Fawcett is not the first woman who may claim to be senior wrangler. He says Eve has a prior claim. She was the first to eat of the tree of knowledge, and the world has been full of wrangling ever since.

Mr. Sheil, a London magistrate, has fined a Salvation officer for doing his duty. He obeyed his general's orders and had the big drum banged, and a number of brass instruments blared, outside the house of an old lady suffering from rheumatics in the head. She was nearly driven crazy, but that was her own fault, for why did she have the rheumatics when the Salvationists were playing? Being asked to go, the officer said he wouldn't. Afterwards he moved four doors off. Finally he was taken in hand by another officer in the service of the law, and the upshot was a stiff fine in a police court. We sympathise, with the poor oppressed Salvationist. As for the old lady, who objected to being driven mad with pain, she ought to be ashamed of herself.

After eighteen centuries of Christianity the grandest monument in Brompton Cemetery is to Jackson, the prize-fighter.

At a meeting of the Kent and Sussex Baptist Association, the Rev. J. S. Geale related with much gusto how a tract headed "Prepare to meet your God" created so much alarm in the mind of the female occupier of a house in Sussex, that she thought it requisite that a retired policeman should sleep at her house to protect her.

There is not to be a religious census after all. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury is against it. Perhaps he is

afraid a good many people will put down, as Mr. Foote did in Holloway Gaol, "Religion—none."

Count Leo Tolstoi, the great Russian novelist, has gone the full length in his imitation of Jesus. He now boldly advocates universal celibacy, says there can be no such a thing as Christian marriage. Marriage is a sin, and "the Christian view of marriage requires a married convert to substitute fraternal for conjugal relations." Mr. Foote will deal with Count Tolstoi's declaration next week.

The Bishop of Rochester has been holding forth at Kingston on heaven. His object was to raise funds to build a little heaven on earth, in the shape of a vicarage, for the parson of St. John's. Dr. Thorold told his audience as much about heaven as could be imparted by one who has never seen it and does not know anyone who has. He described it as a place of "rapturous worship." Evidently the parsons are to be the top sawyers even in paradise. The poet says "The heaven of each is all that each desires," and Dr. Thorold cannot imagine a heaven without plenty of "worship" and unlimited gospel-shops. Just in the same way the Russian soldier looks for grog-shops in heaven. According to a story, which we are not sceptical enough to doubt, one soldier got to heaven, and finding he could not obtain any brandy, he went off in a huff to the other place, where he found brandy and tobacco too.

Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, in this city, thinks that "our elections are bought and sold in the most shameless way, and the political morals of the republic in all respects are thoroughly depraved. Vice rules and virtue tamely submits." He ought to know. Collector Erhardt and the Hon. Thomas C. Platt, the Republican boss, are both members of his church.—*Twentieth Century.*

The Bishop of Manchester says the poor clergy are scandalously underpaid. He himself draws only some £1,000 a year. Meantime match-box makers get 2½d. a gross and find their own paste.

The Bishop of Chester is a facetious gentleman. He preached at St. Paul's the other day on behalf of the East London Church Fund, which needs £20,000 this year. For his subject he chose the dwellings of the poor. He dilated on the evils of insanitary dwellings and overcrowding, and when his sermon was over they took up a collection for more gospel-shops. From his lordship's closing remarks it seems that the Church's part in remedying the life-conditions of the poor is to consist in maintaining "the purity of family life by her Gospel of Love." Ahem! Was it not Dr. Johnson who said "Clear your mind of cant, sir"?

The President of the National Secular Society has received several begging letters, printed or stereotyped from London missions. They are all in the gospel line, and all want money for "the poor." We hope they may get it—if they deserve it, which is sometimes doubtful. But why do they beg from the President of a Freethought Society?

"People preach that there is nothing in religion. It is a lie, as deep as hell." So says the Rev. J. McNeill, and he speaks from experience. He finds there is more in religion than in railway portering.

The other Sunday Barnum's wife got him to go to church, where, early in the proceedings, he fell asleep. The minister then began reading the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel. As he proceeded in the description of the wonderful beast, which the prophet saw in the land of the Chaldeans, Barnum moved uneasily in his seat. "Everyone had four faces and everyone four wings." Barnum rubbed his eyes, and the preacher went on—"And they had the hands of a man under their wings." Barnum was now wide awake. "As for the likeness of their faces, the four had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side, and the four had the face of an oxen on the left side, and the four also had the face of an eagle." Barnum was now standing up, his wife vainly pulling at his coat tails. "Name your own price," he cried, disregarding the wifely entreaty.—*Winnipeg Star.*

Thibet is being gradually opened up. Mr. Rockhill, formerly American Secretary of Legation to Peking, has explored the country, and so has Babu Sarat Chandra Das, whose account will be given in next month's *Contemporary*. Readers will probably be able then to judge whether the account of Buddhism in Thibet as given by Mme. Blavatsky, who pretends also to have been there, or that given by Mr. Wheeler in our columns last year, is the more correct.

Cardinal Manning has turned poet, or rather parodist, in his old age. Copying the well-known lines of Pope—

"For modes of faith let graceless bigot fight;
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."—

he says,

"For charts and compasses let bigots fight;
He can't be wrecked who steers the ship aright."

Of course he argues that the ship cannot be steered aright without the charts and compasses provided by the Church. But this is a question of fact and experience and shows that there are more shipwrecks by following these antiquated charts than by boldly casting them aside and relying on what is supplied by modern science.

By the way, Pope was professedly a Catholic, but the lines Manning reprobates shows he was really more a follower of his friend Lord Bolingbroke than a true disciple of the Church.

The so-called "Christian Scientists," or believers in the faith cure, who are virtually a new Christian sect, are spreading in America. One little town in Indiana reports: "All the members of orthodox churches in this town of 1,500 people have withdrawn and have become Christian Scientists." They don't believe in doctors. The only way in which "Christian Science" is likely to be beneficial is in killing out the fools.

The Christian Scientist holds that really there is no disease, and he is enjoined to meditate upon this profound thought for fifteen minutes at the hour of nine every day. The editor of the *Christian Science Thought*, the organ of the believers, says that the difference in solar time between the localities will not materially affect the result. We should think not indeed.

Dr. L. E. Browski, who obtained a copy of the sacred book of the Yezidees, the so-called devil-worshippers of Mesopotamia, says the Yezidee religion is so fortunate as to have no devil. They not only don't worship him, but think it a God-pleasing act to cut off the head of any one who even mentions his name. Missionaries would have a bad time among the Yezidees.

Lord Rosebery, in laying the foundation stone of the London County Council's new asylum, delivered an impressive speech. He deplored the increase of insanity in civilised countries, and remarked that "among barbarians it was comparatively rare—so rare that a person mentally diseased was regarded as a deity." Yes, and all our Western religion comes from the Orient, where the prophets of God are all more or less cranky and every lunatic is inspired.

A statement was made in America that more than one half of the cases of religious mania came from the Presbyterians, the sect who hold most firmly to God's sovereignty, election, and eternal torment. No doubt these views tend to mental distraction, and an illustration is given this week by the identification of the young woman found in the Thames at Horsleydown as Miss Mary Louisa Garraway McGaw, the daughter of the Rev. J. Thoburn McGaw, the general secretary of the Presbyterian Church in England. She had suffered from religious mania and doubtless committed suicide.

The Prophet Elias recently arrived at Odessa. Not the one who ascended in a fire-chariot, and turned up a thousand years later when J. C. was "transfigured," but a vessel of that name. She was manned entirely by monks from the monastery of Mount Athos. This is as it should be. There are many strapping men of God in England who would be more useful before the mast.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has discovered that John Stuart Mill was a great social reformer, and that his message to the world is very far from being exhausted. It hopes that "Mill will find his Cobden"—someone, that is, to carry his gospel amongst the people—and suggests Mr. John Morley as a likely prophet. But, alas, "Mill was an Atheist, or nearly such, and the popular idea of Mr. Morley is the melancholy one that he is altogether so." 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

Dr. Parker is getting on with his People's Bible. He has arrived at the Psalms, and if he lives long enough he will reach Revelation. How strange that the Father's Word requires such a vast amount of explanation! Fancy a human father sending such a muddled message to his family that one of them had to spend his whole life in finding out and expounding the governor's meaning!

The Jews starting an Association for the Colonisation of Palestine looks like a practical joke. Like Christians in their eulogy of poverty, the Jews think that to go to Palestine will be an excellent thing for everybody but their individual selves. They all want somebody else to go.

The Christians of this country should feel relieved to know that the Maori god recently contributed to the New York Museum of Natural History has been sent back to New Zealand whence it came. There is a high duty on gods, as home manufacture must be protected. It is lucky for Jehovah that he got in before the tariff was established.—*Freethought.*

The Lord sent a fire upon the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Stourport, which destroyed the organ and gutted the interior of the building. The guid auld Scotch folk always held that the Lord did not like organs.

One of the Lord's visitations in the shape of cholera is reported from Spain, where godliness usually has so much play that cleanliness does not get a chance.

An outbreak against the Jews in Lithuania is reported. At Lohoisk a crowd of drunken peasants attacked and destroyed the shops and public-houses belonging to the Jews. The police were quite unable to manage the crowd, and were attacked with stones. A great number of policemen and Jewish merchants were wounded. More blessed fruits of religion.

The Rev. F. McLeod, formerly of Economy, Nova Scotia, has been sent to gaol at Chicago for bigamy. The heartless law has no consideration for the privileges of men of God.

The unhappy husband and wife who committed suicide after killing their child at Holloway, died in the conviction that their child "was in heaven." "God forgive us," wrote the husband in his last letter. "God bless you," also wrote Alfred Reynolds, whose body was found in the Thames. Evidently not Atheists, Mr. Talmage.

A controversy on "Confession and Absolution" has been going on in the pages of the *Sussex Daily News*. No doubt sacerdotal pretensions in that direction are endorsed by the Prayer-book, but when people read how women are disgusted by the questions asked them at Ritualistic confessionals, and that the filthy *Priest in Absolution* is used there and defended by its users, they will not think much of the Prayer-book endorsement.

The Sabbatarian bigots are wild at the idea of a Sunday band at Hampstead Heath, and the *Record* devotes a leading article to denunciation of the desecration. "No Competition" is the cry of the sky-pilots. Music is an excellent thing, but only in the service of the church.

The tithe war still goes on in Wales. Mr. Stevens, the agent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who has been endeavoring to get in the arrears at Llanefydd, near Denbigh, has been obliged to retire, and vows he will not again attempt the task unless the claims of the Church of Christ are enforced by a strong body of police or military.

Of "rich coves' parsons" we have enough and to spare—clergymen who keep their denunciations for the vices of

Lazarus, and are careful never to ruffle the self-complacency of Dives. Now and then we have a bishop in search of a sensation taking up gambling or Sunday sports among the upper classes as a peg on which to get paragraphed in the Press; but as a rule it is the poor people who are preached at, prayed at, yelled at, and sent to hell by the great mob of half-hearted, half-souled sky-pilots who crowd the quays of religion in search of a job. They howl at the poor, but they go out in the pilot boat only to assist the rich who have something to give away.—*Referee.*

Canon Carter, Superior-General of the Romanising Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, evidently fears that the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury will not thoroughly endorse the Ritualism of the Bishop of Lincoln and that that dignitary may "cave in." He therefore urges his friends to remember that their movement does not depend on any single man, however high, however venerable.

Some Welsh operas by Dr. Parry have been produced at the Theatre Royal, Cardiff, and some of the most pious people in the town gave their services as singers. This has roused the wrath of the Rev. F. C. Spur, who makes a solemn protest against this hideous thing. He said, in his Sunday sermon: "We have had this hideous spectacle—I can call it by no other term—of a company of professedly Christian people—members of Christian churches in Cardiff and elsewhere—on the boards of our Theatre Royal. One of them the daughter of a Congregational minister, one the daughter of a Church of England minister, two or three the daughters of Cardiff chapel deacons, a number of them members of chapel choirs and members of the churches themselves, principally in this town." Horrible, most horrible! The Devil is evidently inserting the thin edge of wedge to drive out Calvinistic Methodism.

The religious papers are much concerned about the Lord Mayor having declared that Cardinals like Manning took precedence like other "deposed princes." Now we don't care a jot whether the Cardinal comes before the Archbishop of Canterbury or not, but we cannot help noticing how constantly he is pushed forward, as though he was virtually already the head of the Church of England, instead of "a restless self-advertiser."

"A restless self-advertiser." This is the description given of Cardinal Manning by Prof. Friedrich, the historian of the Vatican Council, in his scathing reply to the Cardinal's "True" History of the Vatican Council. The Professor adds: "As before the Council and during the Council he was always pushing himself to the front, so he continued to do after the Council, and so he does still."

Bishop Wilberforce told Prince Albert that if Manning had been made an English Bishop he would never have "verted to Rome, and in his Diary Soapy Sam refers to Manning discussing his chance of being a bishop with one Trower. Possibly Manning, like all Cardinals, aims at the seat of St. Peter. His good friend Mr. Stead, who has urged the advantage to the Church of an English-speaking Pontiff, has not mentioned that Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, has far better claims. But the Italian Cardinals will take good care that the tiara falls on one of their own heads.

Here is a new Thomas Paine story—positively a *new one*. According to one of God's elect at Manchester, Thomas Paine's death-bed was attended by John Wesley, and Thomas told John that he would be in the arms of Jesus in two hours. How's that for high? Paine died at New Rochelle, in America, on June 8, 1809. Wesley died in 1791, eighteen years earlier. But what does that matter? If it wasn't Wesley it was someone else.

JEHOVAH AND HUMAN SACRIFICES.—That the worship of this deity was at first completely in keeping with the steranness of his nature may be inferred from the facts that human sacrifice occur even in the time of the Judges (Jephthah's daughter), that the prophet Micah presupposes an acquaintance with them on the part of his contemporaries, and that the substitution for them of animal sacrifices only takes shape in the (late prophetic) form of the legends of Abraham.—*Dr. Otto Pfeleiderer "Philosophy of Religion, vol iii., p. 123.*

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 22, morning at 11 and afternoon at 3, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; evening at 7, Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street: subjects—"Heresy at Oxford," "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism," "Is there a Future Life?"

Thursday, June 26, Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Hammersmith, at 8, "Freethought and Christ." Admission free.

June 29, Reading.

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 31, Birmingham.

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.

J. C.—There is no evidence that Cyrenius was governor of Syria in the time of Herod. There is evidence to the contrary. Herod the Great died B.C. 4. Being recognised as king, he would not have been subjected to such an indignity as the taxing, which is unrecorded by any historian. Judæa was only declared a Roman province after the deposition of Archelaus, about A.D. 7, and then Cyrenius was sent (see Josephus, *Antiq.*, xviii., 1, 1, and *Wars*, ii., 8, 1). Of course there are numerous attempts to shuffle out of the difficulty that there is a difference of a dozen years between Matthew and Luke as to the date of Christ's birth, by those brought up to believe in inspiration. Mr. Wheeler will probably write on the subject shortly.

J. HAWKE.—Your letter was answered, and the reply posted in your own envelope. Ingersoll would be laughed at if he took any action against a creature like Clark Braden. If you believe everything said about public men, which they do not deign to contradict, you will have to carry a good budget of scandal. Mr. Justice Will recently denounced this wicked and foolish principle in court. Colonel Ingersoll is too sensible and dignified to go down and scuffle in the gutter with blackguards who make faces at his windows.

R. G. LEES.—We are pleased to hear such good reports of Mr. Snell, and hope he will prosper with his platform work in London.

J. BROAD.—Paper sent. What is the other matter to which you allude?

C. K. LAPORTE.—Don't be too hard on the Grand Old Man.

C. J. RUSE reports 16s., collected at a Camberwell Branch open-air lecture for Hospital Sunday Fund.

C. JOHNSON.—It is copied from an American paper. Fixing it at "Crowe, Cheshire" is good.

W. HOLLAND.—The Branches have the power to invite whom they please to lecture for them. The Executive would not interfere except in a case affecting the honor of the party. Thanks for the jokes.

G. B.—Shall appear.

G. NAEWIGER.—The date is altered to September 28.

J. BRUMAGE.—Thanks for the cutting. Always pleased to hear from you.

C. H. KELF.—We note what you say.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec., N. E. Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subs.:—Stockton Branch, £1 15s. 2d.; Mr. Elcoat, £1; J. Bowen, 2s. 6d.

A. W. BARBER.—Thanks for the extracts which may be useful.

J. BURRELL.—The suggestions shall be considered.

W. H. PEGG.—Mr. Forder executes your order and sends you the information as to joining the N. S. S., which every Freethinker should do. You will find Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on the *Law Relating to Heresy* useful, also Mr. Foote's *Prisoner for Blasphemy*.

M. A. FISHER.—Cuttings are always welcome.

S. STANDRING.—Sorry to hear of the disturbance in Finsbury Park. You are to be relied on, but are you sure of the discretion of all your lecturers?

A. B. MOSS.—We wish the *Freethinker* did circulate by the hundred thousand. As an editor we haven't modesty enough to dispute that it deserves to. Thanks for your efforts to push our circulation.

F. ABLARD.—We have passed over your order to Mr. Forder. For the Paine story see "Acid Drops."

W. FOWLER.—The Parson's Idol is one of our tracts. See advertisement on our last page. We don't want any more copies. With mistaken kindness our readers send us one nicely written once or twice a month.

THE SNAKE.—First half good, second half indifferent.

W. WARRY.—We never knew the man and could not "disown" him. We cannot find that he was ever a member of the N. S. S.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Open Court—Freethought Record—Daily News—East Devon Mail—Loyal American—Sussex Daily News—Canterbury Press—Two Worlds—West London Church Chronicle—Morpeth Herald—People's Press—Reading Observer—South Wales Echo—Gravesend and Dartford Reporter.

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.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that all will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe something above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £64 6s. 8d.

Ninth List.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
J. Sanderson	0 5 0	F. Denny	0 2 6
S. M. Peacock	0 5 0	J. Primrose	0 4 0
R. S.	0 5 0	H. Croughan	0 2 0
R. S.	0 1 0	J. Bunton	0 1 6
E. Brewster	0 7 0	J. Mascord	0 1 0
W. Josslyn	0 1 0		

SUGAR PLUMS.

A small meeting of delegates of Lancashire Branches of the N. S. S. was held at the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Saturday evening. Mr. Foote presided. On the proposal of Mr. Smith (Liverpool), seconded by Mr. Hemingway (Manchester), it was resolved that the Lancashire Branches should form a Secular Federation on the model of the existing Federations in London and the Tyneside. It was further resolved to call a special meeting, for the purpose of publicly inaugurating the Federation, at Manchester, on Sunday, July 6, at half-past three in the afternoon. Delegates from all the Lancashire Branches are invited to attend, and also any members of the Branches who would like to attend individually and take part in the deliberations. The Constitution will then be adopted; a President, vice-presidents and a secretary will be elected; and steps will be taken to organise some lecturing tours in the district. We hope the July 6 meeting will be a large one.

Despite the extremely fine weather, Mr. Foote had very good audiences at Manchester on Sunday. He said a few words in the afternoon on the usefulness of outdoor lecturing. In the evening Mr. Pegg, the chairman, announced that an outdoor lecture would be delivered the following Sunday afternoon on an open space in the Oxford Road, at the corner of Denmark Road. Time 3 o'clock. Lecturer, Mr. A. B. Wakefield.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (June 22) at Liverpool. The morning and afternoon lectures will be delivered in the

Camden Hall, but owing to structural alterations it is not large enough for the evening meeting, which will be held in the large Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street. This hall holds a great many people. We appeal to the Liverpool Freethinkers to bring as many as possible of their liberal or orthodox friends.

Mr. Geo. Standing's lecture at Hammersmith, in connection with the London Secular Federation, was distinctly a success, the hall being well filled with a mixed audience, who heartily enjoyed the discussion. A great many questions were asked and replied to. Three clergymen attended, two of them opposing, as also did Mr. J. Glen, of the Theistic Church, and a liberal-minded lady, who argued for figurative interpretation. Good feeling prevailed, the Rev. F. L. Donaldson and others describing the Secularists as "Church Purifiers." There are many Freethinkers at Hammersmith, and a good open-air station should be started. Mr. Courtney is willing to endeavor to do this, if a little help is forthcoming from local friends. His address is 8 Norland Road North, Notting Hill. Or he will be pleased to confer with Freethinkers after the forthcoming lectures on the 19th or 26th.

The London Branches are preparing for the Federation's excursion to Epping Forest on July 20. The arrangements for the Hall of Science contingent are completed. The brakes will start at 9.30. Tickets (price 2s. 6d.) can be had from Mr. Anderson at the Hall, the bookstall on Sunday evening, or Mr. E. Pownceby (secy.), 9 Finsbury Street, E.C.

The presence of a good number of Freethinkers overawed the pious rowdies at Tottenham on Sunday afternoon and the meeting went off peacefully. Unfortunately there was trouble in Finsbury Park. We have heard many complaints about this station. Lecturers should remember, when they are breaking new ground, that the wind of Freethought must be tempered to the orthodox shorn lambs. It is highly necessary that lecturers in such places should be courteous and good-tempered. No doubt Christian insults are hard to stand, but those who cannot control themselves should not engage in such work.

The Newcastle Secularists are making headway with the Sunday Music League. On Sunday evening a first concert was given on the Town Moor. The band was conducted by Mr. Thomas Wood, and according to the *Chronicle* the selections were admirably rendered. There was a large and orderly concourse of people. During an interval in the programme some spirited addresses were delivered by Messrs. J. Brown, E. Copland, and F. Ogle. Loud applause greeted the announcement that Sunday music would be made a test question at the municipal elections in November.

Of course the Secularists have all along been the moving spirits in this agitation, but we are glad to see they are now being joined by some liberal-minded Christians.

The North-Eastern Secular Federation's annual meeting took place on Sunday. Mr. S. M. Peacock, as a matter of course, was re-elected president, Mr. Joseph Brown secretary and Mr. Tullen treasurer. Most of the old vice-presidents were also re-elected. Two additions were Mr. H. Richardson, of Jarrow—a very welcome addition—and Mr. Storar. Arrangements were begun for the annual excursion to Durham on August 4, when a public meeting will be held in the market-place. No more lecturing tours are to be organised for the present, the Federation having overrun the constable. We hope its financial position will be speedily improved by the subscriptions of the wealthier Freethinkers.

Mr. Freeman, the historian, writing to the *Speiker* from Kairwan, gives an interesting account of the Great Mosque. "This astounding work was done," he says, "when St. Sophia was still a modern building, and when in England we had but lately begun to build the rudest buildings at all. The Great Mosque arose before the seventh century was ended, while Islam was still in its early zeal, when Africa was its latest conquest." Mr. Freeman also refers to the "time when the Arab had the whole civilisation, the whole art and science of the world, to himself."

In the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for June 15, M. Ernest Renan resumes his critical history of the People of Israel, dealing with the reign of Hezekiah. Hezekiah and Isaiah

he holds were the real founders of Judaism, which before their time was without name or definite monotheistic character.

Chat, of Portsmouth, prints our paragraph on the noble Millett in a letter from "A Hater of Cant." The same number of *Chat* contains a strong satirical sermon to parsons, enough to make the younger ones gnash their teeth and the older ones their gums.

Next Sunday (June 29) the Battersea Branch will have a Tea and Soirée after the quarterly meeting. The tea will begin at six o'clock. Tickets can be obtained at the hall.

Mr. Foote's portrait is now on sale. The cabinet size is one shilling. Mr. Forder will send them by post, carefully packed, for thirteen-pence each.

The publication of the new edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* will begin on July 1. The first instalment will be *The Creation Story*.

The first eight, as well as the second eight, of our Freethinker Tracts are now ready. The last four, completing the twenty, are being printed. We have issued this large variety to hit all sorts of tastes. There is no reference to the *Freethinker* except at the end of each tract. This will prevent the ordinary reader from being alarmed at the outset. When he has read the tract through it doesn't matter.

The new edition of James Thomson's *Satires and Profanities* is now on sale. The price is one shilling. Those who read the advertisement on our back page will see that this little volume is one to be prized by Freethinkers.

We have in the press two works by the great Jeremy Bentham, the intellectual father of John Stuart Mill, the founder of the Utilitarian school, and the reformer of English jurisprudence. One is *The Church of England Catechism Examined*—a trenchant criticism of the instrument by which the State Church debauches the minds of children, and does its best to make them fools and slaves. This work is of considerable length. There will be a biographical Preface. The other work is a reprint of the early chapters of his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. It contains a statement of *Utilitarianism*, and will bear that title. This is a smaller work than the first. Both will be useful to Freethinkers and to the Freethought propaganda.

A magistrate in South Australia, according to the *Australian Radical*, recently startled a lawyer who was endeavoring to discredit a witness because he did not believe in the Bible, by declaring that "nobody believed in it." The lawyer said he believed in it, and the magistrate laughingly remarked that the Bishop of Peterborough did not believe in it—probably to show that those who know it best believe it least. But of course Bishop Magee will say he does believe in it, though he don't think its adoption by the State practicable.

The Sunday excursion to Seaton, Devon, has been hailed with pleasure by a writer in the *East Devon Mail*. Such places want waking up, and a Sunday excursion comes as a tonic with lasting effects.

Captain Otto Thomson acknowledges the balance of £4 12s. 2d. from the Swedish Prisoner's Fund, and returns the thanks of Mr. Lennstrand and the Swedish Freethinkers for the generous aid received from the Freethinkers of England. Mr. Lennstrand will soon, we trust, be able to go on with his work as energetically as ever. But he must hasten slowly. Thanks to the bigots, he has had a touch of prison-consumption and must be cautious of his health for the rest of his days.

Our esteemed Swedish contemporary, *Fritankaren*, gives a brief notice of the N. S. S. Conference at Manchester.

Mr. William Rossiter, with whom Mr. Foote has had some controversy, sends us a memorial pamphlet entitled *Elizabeth Rossiter, Founder of Country Life for Poor Town Children*. We hope the claim made for Mrs. Rossiter is not correct, for it is a severe reflection on the Christianity and humanity of Londoners if they never before 1868 thought of taking poor children for a while into the country. Be this as it may, the

exertions of the late Mrs. Rossiter in this direction deserve esteem as a work of practical secular benevolence.

It is frequently complained that the education given in government schools in India leads to Atheism. At any rate the scholars abandon their own faith and do not take up with any other. Sir Charles Aitchinson, ex-governor of the Punjab, says that many of the natives even prefer to send their children to Christian missionary schools rather than to those established by the government. According to our information some of the most decided Hindu sceptics have been turned out of these very missionary schools.

Dr. Specht, of Gotha, sends us, together with *Menschenthum*, a copy of his other publication, *Freie Glocken*, which inculcates the religion of Humanity in a somewhat lighter fashion.

Almost all the Liberal papers in Belgium are conducted by Freethinkers. Their attitude is expressed in the motto to the *Journal de Gaud* "Liberalism is either freethought or nothing."

Professor A. Dickson White takes "The Antiquity of Man and Egyptology" as his subject in the June number of the *Popular Science Monthly*. His account of how Egyptian chronology was twisted to make it agree with the Bible inspired idea that man is less than six thousand years old, shows the intellectual servility engendered by Bibliolatry.

"A PIOUS AND REVERENTIAL SPIRIT."

DURING my fifteen year's experience as a Freethought advocate it has frequently been urged against me by lugubrious gentleman of orthodox pattern, "that I do not treat solemn and sacred subjects in a proper spirit: that I allow carnal reason to overcome and destroy all the finer qualities of the human soul, and consequently all my discourses have very little influence for good."

If this charge were true I should be sorry. It is my highest ambition to be of some service to my fellow man—to be a true "Educationist"; for what is an educator but one who tries to make men think, who endeavors by a multitude of varying modes to draw out the faculties of his hearers? When I have heard this charge levelled against myself—and I have heard it made against men of far greater intellectual gifts that I can lay claim to—I have reasoned with myself in this wise: Do I then really laugh at the noble and good and pour ridicule upon the lofty and sublime? Have I ever taught men that good conduct only characterises fools, and that wise men were always rogues?—No.

Have I ever spoken in favor of murder, or theft, or lying, or adultery, or fornication, or any other offence against the community?—No.

Have I always protested with all my power against slavery, physical as well as intellectual?—Yes.

Have I always insisted that men could not evade the consequences of their own deeds?—Yes.

These subjects, then, were treated in a "proper and reverential spirit"?—Yes.

At what, then, have I mocked? at what have I jeered? at what have I pointed the finger of scorn?

To answer these interrogations I think for a moment of how biblical subjects were regarded twenty or thirty years ago by the whole Christian community, and what havoc destructive criticism has played with them during the time that has elapsed till to-day.

I think how, only twenty years ago, few dared to ridicule Samson's broad jawbone encounter with a thousand pudding-headed Philistines without bringing upon his heretical head a terrible storm of anathemas; and how to-day the "revised version" admits that after all it is only "poetry." I think of the time when few had the temerity to poke fun at Balaam's talkative companion, and how to-day Christians laugh as heartily as unbelievers. I remember

how reverentially the "Devil" was spoken of when I was a Sunday-school scholar, and how we were always instructed in our amateur theatricals to say "What the deuce" instead of "What the Devil," and upon no account were we to inform any one (except in a pious way) that they would be *damned*. On the stage inferior comedians to-day who cannot give a funny sentence point without "gag," often succeed in arousing some merriment by adding a vigorous *damn* to make it go. The majority of the audience, who would consider themselves insulted if you called in question their Christianity, positively enjoy the vulgarity.

But what does it all mean? It means that the old pious and reverential spirit has gone out of the people. It has certainly gone out of me. I can never feel again as I felt in my old schoolboy days. But what Freethinker expects that I should?

What leads me to write in this strain is the fact that recently a clergyman of the Church of England and a City missionary both said that they felt in their hearts that I really did not mean to laugh at these so-called sacred subjects, but that I found my jokes pleased my audiences and that was why I keep to it. These gentlemen did not see that by so saying they were charging me with insincerity. No. They would fain believe that I had some remnant left of the "pious and reverential spirit" which had been imparted to me in my Christian days, but that I kept it in subjection for special occasions for my own use. The fact is, the article with me has been long "out of stock."

Pious I have not been since I restudied the Bible without the aid of theological spectacles. Reverential I have always been towards those things which at once commanded my respect and admiration—but to nothing else. But one of my Christian opponents recently said, quite sorrowfully: "But if we cannot defend these things in the Bible you have pointed out, if we cannot answer your objections to the Christian faith, surely you will not try and destroy a religion that has done so much good in the past, and is a comfort and solace to thousands." In the first place, I question the "good" Christianity is said to have done; and I emphatically declare that I will endeavor to destroy everything that seems to me untrue. That is my great objection to Christianity. I could overlook a good deal in it if it were only true. But it isn't. I cannot take notice of the alleged "comfort and solace" a superstition may be to those who hold it. As soon as I know it to be a superstition my duty is to assail and, if possible, destroy it. Old delusions may have been very comforting to those who believed in them; we had to expose them nevertheless; and we have to expose the fallacies of Christian arguments and the folly of Biblical statements for precisely the same reason.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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PROFESSOR HUXLEY TO PROFESSOR SKILTON ON
"METAGNOSTICISM."

(From the "Popular Science Monthly.")

I have read the papers which accompanied your letter of the 25th of November with much attention; but, I regret to say, with the result that I can discover no good ground for the change of nomenclature which you propose. Permit me to trouble you with my reasons for that conclusion:

The term "Agnostic" was not suggested by the passage in the "Acts of the Apostles" in which Paul speaks of an inscription to the "Unknown God." It is obvious that the author of that inscription was a Theist—I may say an anxious Theist—who desired not to offend any God, not known to him, by ignoring the existence of such a deity. The person who erected the altar was, therefore, in the same position as those philosophers who, in modern times, have brought about the apotheosis of ignorance under the name of the "Absolute" or its equivalents.

"Agnostic" came into my mind as a fit antithesis to "Gnostic"—the "Gnostics" being those ancient heretics who professed to know most about those very things of which I am quite sure I know nothing.

"Agnostic," therefore, as the name of a philosophical system is senseless; its import lies in being a confession of ignorance—a warning set up against philosophical and theological phantoms—which was never more needed than at the present time, when the ghost of the "Absolute" slain by my masters Hume and Kant and Hamilton is making its appearance in broad daylight.

Your definition of "metagnosticism" says that "it relates to beyond knowledge." That is exactly what all the "absolute" philosophers profess the "Absolute" does; and it is precisely that profession which I consider to be futile and mischievous. To my mind science is exact and organised knowledge—neither more nor less. And the knowledge which goes "beyond knowledge" is something which my cognitive faculties do not enable me to apprehend.

The term "Evolution Philosophy" which you employ seems to have different meanings for different people.

For me, evolution is a name for a certain process, the occurrence of which in various groups of things is as nearly demonstrated as any historical event can be. And this, I think, constitutes a fair ground for the expectation that the whole cosmic process will turn out to be one of evolution. The business of philosophy, as I understand it, is, among other things, to arrive at a scientific theory of evolution; but these other things are quite as important as evolution. Philosophy, in fact, should embrace the whole of which the theory of evolution is a part.

Three or four generations of patient workers, cautiously feeling their way by the well-known methods of true science, may bring our posterity within sight of such a philosophy. For the present, while welcoming all attempts to foreshadow it, with due gratitude to their authors, and holding fast by that which is good in them, it is very necessary that we should not confound such scaffoldings with the edifice, the foundations of which are not yet complete.

I am, dear sir, Yours very faithfully,
T. H. HUXLEY.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REV. MR. KITSON,
Senior Chaplain to the Aldershot Division.

DEAR SIR,—In the sermon which you delivered in All Saint's Military Church, Aldershot, at the 10.15 a.m., parade service, on Sunday the 8th inst., you made a violent attack on Freethinkers. If you were aware that there were any Freethinkers in church at the time who were compelled to listen to you, your choice of a subject was injudicious, unless you wished to promote some friendly discussion, but the tone of your sermon precludes such an idea. The fact is your sermon was a studied insult. The use of words to the effect that "Freethinkers were always men who rejected Christianity from purely selfish motives, such as, to obtain promotion, or to indulge in sensual pleasures," warrants no other conclusion. I suppose you justify such a cowardly lie by the reflection that you told it for the glory of God.

You were also good enough to taunt Freethinkers with being unreasonable in not accepting the myth of the resurrection as a fact on the evidence which you are pleased to call "sufficient." The Rev. Armitage asserted from the same pulpit some months ago that it was "conclusive."

Do you know what amount of evidence is necessary to establish the truth of such a story? Do you know the worthlessness of the evidence you adduce in support of it? The testimony of the Gospels is worthless (1) because they are mutually contradictory (2) because they are evidently anonymous.

Your argument from martyrdom contains a fallacy. Martyrdom proves sincerity of belief, not the truth of the thing believed.

In the spirit in which you scoff at "scientific theories," I recognise the same spirit which compelled poor old Galileo Galilei, under threat of Holy Inquisition tortures, to solemnly swear that the sun was not the centre of our solar system and that the earth did not move round it.

I should strongly advise you, sir, to let Freethinkers alone at parade services. Such sermons should be reserved for voluntary services. If you have any desire to attack any one on his religious views, why not confer with him in private? If you desire to attack a party do it through some one or other of its recognised leaders. It is cowardly to take advantage of the compulsory attendance of soldiers at your service to scoff at them for honestly disagreeing with your views. In conclusion, let me express the hope that the day is not far distant when soldiers and sailors will no longer be compelled to attend religious services in which they have no interest and from which they derive no benefit. Attendance at divine services is not in the least necessary for the maintenance of military discipline and the sooner this is recognised the better.

I remain, etc., A SOLDIER.

NEWS FROM HEAVEN.

Unlike the editors of our leading Christian journals, who are compelled to sneak up the ministerial back stairs to pick up important information, I can boast of being in direct communication with the celestial *haute volée*, and occasionally receive divine intelligence unsolicited. An opinion prevails at present on earth that Jesus Christ is an illegitimate child (Matthew i., 18—19), and in consequence of the Virgin Mary having been subjected to insults by Mrs. Putophar, Lady Castlemaine and other "saved beauties," the Trinity held a Cabinet Council, and it was resolved unanimously that a marriage must be celebrated forthwith between Mary (*l'ingénue*) and the Holy Ghost (*le paillard*), in order to save appearances.

The Devil, who was in attendance, as usual (Job i., 6), suggested that the bride should be given away by G. W. Foote, and that J. M. Wheeler (*pauvre garçon*) should act as best man. The menu of the wedding breakfast was also under consideration. It will chiefly consist of home produce—manna, motzos, roast quails, consecrated wafers, lamb with mint sauce, etc., to be washed down with Lachrymæ Christi. Truffles, eggs and oysters will be eschewed as amatory food. Should Jesus turn water into wines and spirits, there will be a heavenly spree. The Devil suggested pipes and tobacco, but this was opposed by the Trinity as savoring somewhat of hell fire. There is no doubt of the weed being introduced by Old Nick when the guests have well drunk (John ii., 10). His will be done in heaven as it is on earth!

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

REVIEW.

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And the Lord said unto Moses, Let Jews have big noses. And lo it was so.

A young lady about to marry a farmer, said, "Mother Eve married a gardener." She forgot to add that owing to the match the gardener lost his situation.

A gentleman was telling a friend of his that he was so good-looking that he was often taken for the Prince of Wales. "That is nothing," said the friend; "I was walking up Dublin the other day, when a man came up to me and got hold of my hand, and said, 'Jesus Christ, is that you?'"

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "The Resurrection: Did it Happen?"
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Witnesses for Christ." Social evening every Monday. Thursday (at 8 sharp), committee meeting. Friday, discussion.
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Immortality."
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Holy Ghost."
 Mile End—Assembly Rooms, Beaumont Street, Mile End Road, E., 7, Mr. Cohen, "Evolution or Special Creation: Which?"
 West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Rational Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, a debate.
 Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Freethought and the Bible."
 Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "All about the Devil."
 Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."
 Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Bible against Progress."
 Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. L. Keen, "I and my Father are One."
 Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Miracles: Are they Credible?" June 25, at 8, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Bible and Progress."
 Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic."
 Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."
 New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "Why Christians Libel Us."
 Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, a Freethought lecture.
 Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, a lecture.
 Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Miracles; or the Fairy Tales of Faith."
 Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Love, the Basis of True Secularism."
 Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. Marshall, "The Death of Jesus."
 Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "What is Freethought?"
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."
 Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "Diana of Ephesus."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "A Defence of Atheism"; 7, "Creation and Evolution."
 Dublin—87 Marlborough Street, Saturday, June 21, at 8, Mr. H. Sutton Frizzelle, "The Pagan Origin of Christianity."
 Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 7 (in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street), "Is there a Future Life?"
 Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. Clifton, a reading.
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Excursion to Kiveton Park; members and friends meet at the Victoria Station at 2.10 p.m.
 South Shields—Seamen and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. Thos. Thompson, "Compensation or No Compensation?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—June 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 29, Liverpool. July 20, Liverpool.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 22, Birmingham; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 22 (morning), Camberwell. July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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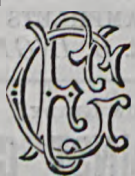
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