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By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request.

—BEN JONSON.

A RELIGION FOR EUNUCHS.

THIS is a strong title and it requires a justification. We have to plead that nothing else would serve our purpose. But is our purpose a sound one? That will appear in the course of this article. Let the reader finish what we have to say before he forms a judgment.

We purpose to criticise the view of Christianity recently put forth by the greatest writer in Russia. Count Leo Tolstoi enjoys a European fame. He is one of the classics of modern fiction. His work in imaginative literature, as well as his work in religion, said the late Matthew Arnold, is "more than sufficient to signalise him as one of the most marking, interesting, and sympathy-inspiring men of our time." Whatever such a man writes deserves the closest attention. Not, indeed, that this needs to be bespoken for him. He has the qualities that compel it. There is the stamp of power on all his productions. We pause at them involuntarily, as we turn to look at a physical king of men who passes us in the street.

For some years Count Tolstoi discontinued his work as a novelist. His mind became occupied with social and religious problems. He ceased to be a man of the world and became a Christian; and his being a most sincere nature, endowed with a certain large simplicity which is characteristic of the Russian mind, he did not rest in ecclesiastical Christianity. He embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, and began working it out to its legitimate issues. To him the Sermon on the Mount is divine teaching, not in a metaphorical sense, but in its literal significance. Accordingly he tells the Christian world, in such volumes as *My Religion* and *My Confession*, that it is all astray from the religion of Christ. He points to what its Savior said, takes his words in their honest meaning, and brands as un-Christian the whole framework of Christian society, with its armies, its police, its law courts, its wealth, and its institution of property. The Bishop of Peterborough and Count Tolstoi are at one in believing that if the Sermon on the Mount were carried out the State would go to ruin; only the Bishop of Peterborough shrinks from this, and jesuitically narrows the scope of Christ's teaching, while Count Tolstoi accepts it loyally and calls on Christians to square their practice with their profession.

Mirabeau said of Robespierre, "He is in earnest, he will go far." This is what we felt with respect to Count Tolstoi. Sooner or later he was certain to follow Jesus to the bitter end. After property comes the institution of marriage, upon which the teaching of Jesus may be found in the Gospels. Count Tolstoi now insists on this teaching being practised. He has written a novel, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, to show the evils, not only of marriage, but of all sexual relations. Since then he has written a sober article to justify the sentiments of the hero, or the protagonist,

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of that terrible story. It is no longer possible to say that Pozdnischeff's ideas are those of a person in a drama. Count Tolstoi accepts the full responsibility of them, and presses them still further. He is now the unblenching apostle of real Christianity—not the Christianity of the Churches, but the Christianity of Christ; and his new evangel will alarm the "advanced Christians," like Hugh Price Hughes, who are always canting, in their sentimental way, the very phrase which he develops in all its terrific meaning. To be a Christian, he tells them, is to crucify the body, to kill the animal passions, to live the pure life of the spirit, and, in short, to practise every austerity of asceticism.

Tolstoi did not jump to this conclusion. Writing on his novels, Mr. W. E. Henley called him "the great optimist." The *Kreutzer Sonata* is the work of a profound pessimist. Concluding *What Ye Do*, Tolstoi wrote a noble passage on the sacredness of motherhood. Now all that is changed. Motherhood must go too. It will take time, for the old Adam is strong in us. But go it must, and when we have all brought our bodies under, no more children will be born. The race will expire, having perfected its imitation of Christ, and the animals that remain will hold the world in undisputed possession; unless, indeed, they catch the contagion, and wind up the whole terrestrial business.

Before we treat Tolstoi's evangel in detail we must remark that he does not explain the "primeval command" of Jehovah to Adam and Eve—"Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." This is very inconsistent with the gospel of absolute chastity. Jehovah says, "Get as many children as you can." Christ says, "Get none at all." If it was the same God who gave both orders he changed his mind completely, and having changed it once he may change it again. In that case the Koran will succeed the New Testament, and the *Imitation of Christ* give place to the *Arabian Nights*.

Revenons à nos moutons. The *Kreutzer Sonata* is a terrible story, but like all novels with a purpose it is inartistic. Othello kills Desdemona without moralising on the sinfulness of marriage, and Pozdnischeff stabs his wife from sheer jealousy. All the preaching is by the way. It might be cut out without affecting the work, and that is its condemnation. When the preacher steps forward the artist retires. And as we are dealing with Tolstoi the preacher we shall go straight to his article in the *Universal Review*.

Tolstoi admits that what he now teaches is incompatible with what he taught before. When writing the *Kreutzer Sonata*, he says, "I had not the faintest presentiment that the train of thought I had started would lead me whither it did. I was terrified by my own conclusion, and was at first disposed to reject it; but it was impossible not to hearken to the voice of my reason and my conscience." This is the language of earnest sincerity.

The conclusion is this—"Even to contract marriage is, from a Christian point of view, not a progress but

a fall. Love and all the states that accompany and follow it, however we may try in prose and verse to prove the contrary, never do and never can facilitate the attainment of an aim worthy of men, but always make it more difficult."

This is sufficiently dogmatic. Chapman thought otherwise.

Without love

All beauties bred in women are in vain,
All virtues born in men lie buried;
For love *informs* them as the sun doth colors:
And as the sun, reflecting his warm beams
Against the earth, begets all fruits and flowers,
So love, fair shining in the inward man,
Brings forth in him the honorable fruits
Of valor, wit, virtue, and haughty thoughts,
Brave resolution and divine discourse.

Thus the great Elizabethian. Now for the laureate of the Victorian age.

For indeed I knew

Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of fame, and all that makes a man.

Chapman's strain is higher than Tennyson's, but they harmonise. Tolstoi's is a harsher note. He vilifies the flesh to exalt the spirit, as though the two never mingled. He would abolish the springs of life to purify its stream! He bids us see in our passions "foes to be conquered rather than friends to be encouraged." Why not try to establish a just harmony between them? Is there no medium? Must the passions be kings or slaves, in prison or on the throne? "It is thought an injury to reason," wrote Diderot, "to say a word in favor of her rivals; yet it is only the passions, and strong passions, that can lift the soul to great things; without them there is nothing sublime, whether in conduct or in productions—art becomes childish and virtue trivial."

But let us hear Tolstoi simply as a follower of Christ. We cannot do better than reproduce some of his sentences *in extenso*.

"Christ not only never instituted marriage, but, if we search for formal precept on the subject, we find that he rather disapproved it than otherwise. ('And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' Matthew xix., 29; Mark x., 29, 30; Luke xviii., 29, 30). He only impressed upon married and unmarried alike the necessity of striving after perfection, which includes chastity in marriage and out of it."

"There is not and cannot be such an institution as Christian marriage. . . . This is what was always taught and believed by true Christians of the first and following centuries. . . . In the eyes of a Christian, sexual relations in marriage not only do not constitute a lawful, right, and happy state, as our society and our churches maintain, but, on the contrary, are always a fall, a weakness, a sin."

"Such a thing as Christian marriage never was and never could be. Christ did not marry, nor did he establish marriage; neither did his disciples marry."

"A Christian, I say, cannot view sexual intercourse otherwise than as a deviation from the doctrine of Christ—as a sin. This is clearly laid down in Matt. v., 28, and the ceremony called Christian marriage does not alter its character one jot. A Christian will never, therefore, desire marriage, but will always avoid it."

"In the Gospel it is laid down so clearly as to make it impossible to explain it away, that he who is already married when he discovers and accepts the truth, must abide with her with whom he has been living, *i.e.*, must not change his wife, and must live more chastely than before (Matt. v., 32; xix., 8-12), that he who is single should remain unmarried and continue to live chastely (Matt. xix., 10, 12), and that both the one and the other, in their yearning and striving after perfect chastity, are guilty of sin if they look on a woman as an object of pleasure (Matt. v., 28, 29).

Pozdnischeff, at the close of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, clinches all this by saying—"People should understand the true significance of the words of St. Matthew as to looking upon a woman with the eye of desire; for the words apply to woman in her sisterly character—not only to another man's wife, but also, and above all, to one's own."

If this view of marriage prevailed, and perfect chastity obtained, the human race would come to an end. Tolstoi says he cannot help that. Carnal love perpetuates the race and spiritual love will extinguish it. But what if it does? It is a familiar religious dogma that the world will have an end, and science tells us that the sun is losing its heat, the result of which must in time be the extinction of the human race.

The great Russian does not shrink from the logic of Christ's teaching. He follows Christ as St. Paul did; as Peter did, who forsook his wife; as the Fathers did in crying up virginity and running down marriage; as the monks and nuns did who severed themselves from the world and the flesh, though they often fell into the hands of the Devil. Still there is another step for Count Tolstoi to take. He has not pressed one important saying of Christ, and it is this.

For there are some eunuchs, which were born so from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.—Matt. xix., 12.

The great Origen followed this advice and emasculated himself. Nor was he alone in the practice. All the disciples of his contemporary, Valens of Barathis, made themselves eunuchs. Mantegazza considers them the spiritual fathers of the Skopskis, a Russian sect dating from the eleventh century. They have been persecuted, but they number nearly six thousand, and regard themselves as the real Christians, the only true followers of Christ. They castrate themselves, and sometimes amputate the genitals entirely; the women even mutilate their breasts as a mark of their sex.

Will Count Tolstoi take the final step? It seems logically necessary even without the text on eunuchs, for the only certain way to avoid sexual intercourse is to make it impossible. In any case we are very much obliged to him for holding up the *real* Christianity, as far as he sees it, to the purblind and hypocritical mob of professed Christians. It will fortify Free-thinkers in their scepticism, and warn the healthy manhood and womanhood of Europe against this oriental asceticism which pretends to be a divine message to the robust Occident. When Tolstoi goes the one step farther, and embraces the teaching of Jesus in its entirety, he will be the most powerful enemy of Christianity in the world. By demonstrating it to be a religion for eunuchs he will array against it the deepest instincts of mankind.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN WAS CHRIST BORN?

It is very certain that the Christian era, supposed to date from the birth of Christ, 754 after the building of Rome, cannot be correct, if the story of the early chapters of Matthew has any value. The death of Herod the Great, according to Josephus (*Ant.*, xvii., 8, 1; comp. xiv., 14, 5; xvii., 9, 3), must have occurred before Easter in B.C. 4 (see Browne, *Ordo Sæclorum*, or any good chronology). Herod reigned over thirty years, so that, if the Matthew version is true, while Jesus may have been born much earlier, he could not have been born later than B.C. 4.* The learned German, W. D. Block, devoted a treatise (*Das wahre Geburtsjahr Christi*, Berlin, 1843) to showing that Jesus was born in the year 735 of Rome, or 19 B.C., so that if he is right we ought now to date 2009.

It must not be forgotten that, according to the Jewish accounts of Jesus, he was the disciple of Jehoshua Perachia, who was president of the Sanhedrim in the time of King Jannæus, who reigned from 106 B.C. to 79 B.C., so that Jesus was probably a contemporary of Julius Cæsar.

* Matthew gives no indication of the time spent in Egypt, but according to the Gospel of the Infancy (chap. xxv.) it was three years.

According to Matthew, Jesus was born during the reign of Herod, some time before his death. Herod was succeeded by Archelaus, who reigned nine or ten years, and was then banished. Judæa was then made into a Roman province, A.D. 7, and Cyrenius was sent out as Governor, with instructions to take account of the people's effects for the purposes of taxation (Josephus, *Antiq.*, xvii., 13; xviii., 1).

This, which was over ten years after the death of Herod, was according to Luke ii. the time when Jesus was born. As Dr. Giles says in his *Christian Records*, "if Christ was born in the reign of Herod the Great, no Roman census or enrolment could have taken place in the dominions of an independent king. If, however, Christ was born in the year of the census, not only Herod the Great, but Archelaus also, his son, was dead." The contradiction is flagrant and palpable. It is, moreover, one of many discrepancies between the birth-legends of Matthew and Luke, but one so serious and casting such doubt upon the whole narrative, that every device has been resorted to in order to evade the difficulty.

Some—since it is clear from Josephus that no taxing did take place till many years after the death of Herod—suggest that what Luke refers to was an enrolment or registration by Cyrenius. To this it is sufficient to say that there is no historical reference to any such enrolment, which, indeed, would have been an indignity to Herod the Romans would not have ventured upon, and no evidence of Cyrenius being in Syria before A.D. 6. In B.C. 6, when the ablest orthodox writers place the birth of Christ, Q. Saturninus was governor of Syria, and after him Quintilius Varus.

Others contend that instead of Cyrenius, whose correct name, by the way, was Publius Sulpicius Quirinus (see Suetonius *Tib.* 49, Tacitus *Ann.* ii., 30), we should read Saturninus or Quintilius. It is sufficient to answer that no manuscripts have either of these readings. Those who are a shade more honest, as Ammon and Weisse, suppose it was a mistake or misrecollection on Luke's part. Upon this we can only say, if so, it is a very grievous one, impossible to one who had "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." Then it is pretended that Cyrenius may have been twice governor of Syria. This assumption is inconsistent with the language of Josephus, who speaks of Cyrenius as one who had been consul, and who had passed through various magistracies before becoming consul. His governorship is then spoken of in a way indicating it to be a new magistracy. Moreover, if Cyrenius ever had before been governor of Syria, the difficulty would not be removed save by supposing an unrecorded assessment under his first administration. But the taxing referred to by Josephus was a new thing. It was manifestly the first attempt of the kind, as it resulted in a serious revolt. Others play games with the Greek and endeavor to make it mean *this* taxing took place *before* Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Others, not quite so ready to make a fool of Luke and of history, suggest an emendation so as to make it read, "This was the first census, but a second took place under Cyrenius." Lardner suggests, "This was the first assessment of Cyrenius, the governor of Syria," but does not get over the difficulty that there is no proof, or likelihood, for the Romans did not send the same man twice, that Cyrenius was governor of Syria until after Archelaus was deposed, B.C. 6 or 7.

Another mode of wriggling out of the difficulty is sanctioned by the name of Calvin. This makes it read, "In those days there went forth a decree that the whole land should be enrolled; but the enrolment itself was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." Calvin further held that Josephus was mistaken in the account he has given of Cyrenius. But it is evident, even from the allusion in Acts v., 37, that the taxing was a remarkable event, leading,

indeed, to the outbreak of subsequent rebellions, and it is not conceivable that Josephus, the governor of Galilee, with access to the archives, could have made a mistake on a matter within the knowledge of his readers. Others, again, fly to the last despairing resource of the orthodox and say, with Olsbhausen, the passage in Luke is an interpolation.

Now we say the very history of the attempts of orthodox Christians to get out of the difficulty but rivets it tighter. One and all are shifts to avoid a palpable contradiction inconsistent with their theory of inspiration. The difficulty has never been removed. As Schleiermacher observes, the indispensable conditions for its removal are wanting. Our own opinion is clear. The stories both of Matthew and Luke are legendary. It is unhistorical that Herod in alarm at a supposed prophecy slew all the children in Bethlehem, "and in all the coasts thereof," from two years old and under. Such an event must have been recorded by Josephus who sets down his other crimes. The story of Luke that "there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed" is equally unhistorical. Not only is it unrecorded by any historian, but Suetonius does mention that Augustus only a few weeks before his death caused to be engraven on bronze tablets an epitome of his public acts. A copy of this inscription is still extant in the ruined temple of Augustus at Ancyra. It records the enumerations of Roman citizens which took place in his reign, and therefore, if there had been a decree that the whole world should be taxed it would certainly be found there. As this is not the case, it is as clearly proved as possible that no such decree was issued.

As to when Christ was born, we are confident that of that day or that hour, or even that year knoweth no man. Next week we shall see that the date of his death is as dubious as that of his birth.

J. M. WHEELER.

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH-BED.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

Delivered Sunday, June 1, 1890.

We are as certain as we can be about anything that we shall die. We do not *absolutely* know that we all shall die, but because no human being has ever been known to live more than a certain number of years we arrive at the conclusion that we and all persons will come to a similar end and in a similar way. There is a Jewish and Christian tradition about a person named Enoch, who "walked with God three hundred years," and then God took him. That is, that at the age of three hundred he was wafted away to heaven on a breeze or cloud, or in some other manner translated into the place where God and the angels and elect men and women live, without suffering the pangs of death. There is a similar tradition about the prophet Elijah, who was whisked from earth in a whirlwind, but comparatively few persons believe these stories, and among those who do, none expects similar apparent good luck to befall him or her. Death is before us, and it is useless to deny that to our superstitious minds it is a disagreeable fate, even to those who do not approach it with fear and abhorrence.

For my own part I confess that when I meditate upon the subject I am conscious that I cannot do so with complete mental composure. It sometimes frightens me to think of death. I have seen so many persons go out of life, that the physical aspects of dying are repulsive to me. Heroes and heroines in novels and poems die very beautifully, but the actual physical facts about death and the process of dying are anything but romantic or poetical. They are everything that we wish they were not. Every one of our senses is offended by them. The eye is shocked by a ghastly sight, the ear is appalled by gruesome sounds, the sense of smell is horribly offended, the sense of touch is cruelly outraged, and bitter indeed must be the taste of death.

No one, I think, can rationally complain or rebel against the repulsive surroundings of death. They are hateful, but that seems to me to be a fortunate circumstance. Each of us has

times of trouble, discouragement, and almost utter hopelessness. At such times, if death were really as beautiful as poets make it, we might be tempted to weakly quit our lives. No doubt each of you, each even of the young among you, have passed through hours of darkness during which, if death were a thing of beauty and sweetness instead of a repulsive horror, you would have killed yourselves. See how many suicides there are even now, when the grave is the saddest, coldest, and most lonesome place in the world. If the tomb were a place of good cheer, and the company of the dead less ghostly to our thought, in a world as full of trouble and a life with as many heartaches as this, few men or women would reach the age of maturity. Unhappy husbands and wives, children whose peace and joy are nagged away by fretful parents, lovers with their terribly painful misunderstandings, men who now pass their days in slavery in shops and mines, women who are hitched to stoves, washtubs, and sewing machines—all the miseries of the world—if the draught of death were sweet, would drink it.

If we assume that the continuance of the human race is desirable it is a fortunate circumstance that our only exit from life is surrounded with such hateful associations that only those to whom existence has become unbearable seek it.

You may readily infer from what I have said, that I do not look upon death as a joke. To my mind it is not a fact over which to make merry or to treat flippantly. It is a solemn crisis that you and I must meet. Christians and other religious persons are entirely right in warning us of its approach and exhorting us to prepare for it. Those who believe that after death they will be brought before an avenging judge who will require from them an account of the deeds done in the body, and will take them to heaven or consign them to hell, very naturally prepare for death by trying to placate and please God. Sometimes they do not begin to prepare until they fall dangerously ill or are about to be hanged; but when they do get ready for death, it is by doing some religious thing, such as confessing their sins, praying for their forgiveness, or having a priest put oil on them. And it is supposed to be a good thing even among those who have very little use for religion in business or society, to have a small quantity where they can lay their hands on it in case of sickness or death. Just as you will find a bottle of arnica or Jamaica ginger in every house and a flask of brandy in many gripsacks, to be used in case of need, so a large number of persons keep a small supply of religion on hand to use in special emergencies like death.

Some religious persons make it the business of their lives to prepare for death. Life has no meaning for them except as a time in which to get ready to die. What they call "this life" is regarded only as a preface to what they call "the next life." Such, I mean, is their theory. Very few persons indeed live entirely or nearly in the light of "the next world," but the theory is that life is not worth living and nothing is worth doing for this world alone. This, they say, is not their abiding place; heaven is their home.

Religion—a belief in God and a hope of immortality—is believed by many to be quite necessary to die by. It certainly is a great comfort to many in hours of sickness and approaching death. And there undoubtedly are very many persons who really believe that a death-bed without religion must necessarily be more awful than when the consolations of faith accompany one through the valley of the shadow. Hence whole encyclopedias of stories about the death-beds of repentant or frightened infidels, some of which are true and some of which are pious lies that many well-meaning persons implicitly believe.

I recall that when I was a child, almost as far back as I can remember, I had an uncle, one of the happiest and most charming of young men, who was what people call an Infidel. He died, away back there in my dim past, and I can just remember an awful impression made upon my childish mind when I was told that he went out of life calling upon God for mercy and shrieking in an agony of fear. I have no doubt he died as they said he did. And not very long ago a young man who used to attend our meetings in Newark fell sick. Before he died he sent for a minister and passed away in the faith. The minister spoke of his case on the following Sunday, and warned the young people that, while my kind of preaching might be this, that, or the other, it would not serve in their dying hour.

(To be continued.)

At Church.—She: "Jacob, this is disgraceful; why do you snore so much?" He: "Beg pardon dear; sorry I woke you up."

ACID DROPS.

Three years ago the London Trades' Council issued a leaflet on "sweating" in religious circles, from which it appeared that while all the Freethought printing offices paid the Union wages, many of the biggest Christian journals were printed at "sweating" offices where lower rates prevailed. Yet some of these Christian journals make very large profits. They gush about the working man, and what Christianity has done for him, but they pay him as little as possible for his work, leaving him to be properly paid by the "infidels."

Now comes Mr. Walter Besant with a trenchant attack on the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, a summary of which appeared in Monday's *Daily News*. This Society is redolent of piety. It is a large concern, and last year it made the very handsome profit of £7,660. But it mercilessly sweats the writers of its books. Sometimes it buys on false pretences. "The author"—we quote from the *Daily News*—"is led to understand that his signing away his copyright is not much more than a matter of form, and that he will receive generous consideration in the event of the success of his book. The copyright, however, once signed away, the sight of his own signature is considered a sufficient answer to all subsequent appeals for a recompense." In other words, the Society cheats its authors, and promotes Christianity with the proceeds.

Here is a special illustration, extracted by the *Daily News* from Mr. Besant's pamphlet: "There is the case of C. D., a writer not unknown in literature, who a few years ago wrote a work of an historical character, involving much research, reading, and study, and who was paid twelve pounds for it, 'with a vague promise of further money if the book was successful.' The work reached a fifth thousand, and the author wrote to remind the Society of its promise. 'He was refused curtly, being told that he had sold the copyright, and had no claim.' Finding it, later on, advertised as in its seventh thousand, he wrote again, and was again refused."

According to Mr. Besant women are the chief sufferers. They have a poor knowledge of business and are easily taken in. "So they wear their fingers to the bone for the Society." Bah! It is simply sickening. And if it be all true, this Christian Knowledge Society should be given through tickets for heaven, or whatever other place is open to receive such caitiffs. Let them deny it if they can. Mr. Besant is not a swashbuckler. He is one of the last men to trump up false charges against a religious society. Still he *may* have been deceived. In that case he will of course apologise. But the Society will very likely say nothing and let the storm blow over. Christian knowledge must be promoted at any cost—or *anybody's* cost.

Max O'Rell is sarcastic on the missionary schooner (English, you know) which is moored on the Seine, close to the Pont de la Concorde, under the very shadow of the Chamber of Deputies. Her crew is composed of Evangelists and her cargo of tracts. How many converts are made is as great a mystery as the Trinity. Max O'Rell has a firm belief that there is more wickedness in one square mile of London than in the whole of Paris.

Charles Dudley Warner, the American humorist, is quoted as saying that the difference between the "faith cure" and the "mind cure" is that the "mind cure" doesn't require any faith, and the faith cure doesn't require any mind.

Some people's Protestantism sits on them lightly. At Goleen Father Cowley was summoned at the suit of the rector, the Rev. Mr. Hopley. In indignation fifty families attended mass in the Catholic church in a body, and publicly renounced their previous faith. Cardinal Manning has been congratulating himself on the less hostile attitude now assumed towards Roman Catholics. We suspect it proceeds mainly from religious indifference.

The battle of the sects among themselves is far keener than their war with their common foe, the infidels. A correspondent of ours, who is a commercial traveller, casually let the fact escape, in the presence of two brothers in the

profession, in the commercial room, that he was an Atheist. They immediately attacked him. Presently the two Christians discovered that they were of different beliefs, and fairly jumped at each other. The Atheist, now abandoned, settled down in his chair and enjoyed the spectacle of the rival Christians furiously endeavoring to tear to shreds each other's religion.

Among items of religious intelligence from America are the following:—Bishop Bowman has been deprived of a charge of untruthfulness. The Rev. Dr. T. C. Carter, editor of the *Methodist Advocate*, is charged with immorality with Sister Mary Ann Ramsey. The Rev. F. T. McLeod has been sentenced to one year's imprisonment for bigamy at Chicago. St. Peter's Catholic Church at Lexington has been set on fire by lightning.

Moses is sent to an asylum. He turned up in Westminster Abbey, where he mounted the pulpit, pulled out a Bible, and began to preach a sermon. He said he had a mission to convert the people. He was removed, however, by a gentleman in blue and locked up. When brought before the magistrate at Westminster, he proved to be the possessor of another name, Edmund Akers. His wife deposed that he had been five times in an asylum, and Dr. Jones that he had "delusions on religious matters." Evidently the poor man is born too late. Two or three thousand years ago he might have made a name. But these are hard, sceptical times, and prophets are very badly treated.

Many years ago Herbert Spencer, the Agnostic, explained the ethics of gambling. The winner gets something without working for it, and his gain is always another man's loss. Of course there is something else to be said. Many people gamble in a small way with no particular desire to win money. They are satisfied if they don't lose, or only lose a little; and they have bought their excitement, they think, at a cheap rate. This is necessary to be borne in mind by those who write on gambling, or they will make human nature a good deal worse than it is.

Herbert Spencer's powerful article did not cause a flutter in the churches. At that time they were all safe and sound, and all their joy was kingdom-come. But things have changed rapidly. Doctrinally the Churches feel they are breaking up. They have therefore to invent fresh excuses for their existence. They are now on "the moral lay," attacking "social evils," and trying to persuade society that they stand between it and moral anarchy, in which case, of course, they are naturally worth what they cost. Among these "social evils" is gambling. It affords a happy hunting-ground for the Christian zealot, eager at once to reform the world and secure his own "screw." But when these people take up a cause they generally make it stink in the nostrils of sensible folk. They are only half-sincere, and they have no sense of proportion. They cant like Stiggenses, and thunder against vices as though they were crimes. Every gambler is "a thief," if he only plays halfpenny whist or farthing card-dominos. This is the style of Hugh Price Hughes and his gang. They don't mind a good bouncing lie, all for the glory of God—and the preacher; but their virtue is like a hedgehog when they hear of human peccadilloes which they don't happen to share.

These zealots will only aggravate the evil. Their brutally intemperate language will do for gambling what it has done for drink. They have run up the drink bill, if they have done anything, and they will increase gambling. They spoil everything they touch, with their blatant Pharisaism. If they would only stop howling, the voice of common sense and common humanity would be heard, in other and more persuasive accents than those of the professional soul-saver.

Modesty, thy name is *Christian Commonwealth*. "For variety, freshness, and independence," it (we mean the paper) claims "a first place," and "no one will dispute the claim who has carefully read the paper for a few weeks." Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Here is a specimen of its "freshness." After saying that Greece nourished "a heroic patriotism," produced the loveliest creations of art, and intellectually "erected monu-

ments that will last while the world endures," it observes that the force of Greece was only "destructive" in religion. Poor old Greece couldn't construct anything. It turned out such wretched abortions as Plato and Æschylus, instead of a *Christian Commonwealth* with its magical "freshness and variety."

Here is another specimen of "freshness." For some weeks the *C. C.* has been publishing, under the head of "Is the Bible True?" a series of extracts from great writers, compiled by that intellectual luminary, John H. Mitchell. None of the extracts touch the Bible. They all deal with the existence of God. But what does that matter? The *C. C.* boasts of its "independence," and that is a fraud if your title cannot be independent of your contents.

J. H. Mitchell is a proof that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." He quotes from Darwin's *Descent of Man*, and prints in italics, the statement that the question whether there exists a creator and ruler of the universe "has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever lived." Mitchell doesn't know that, in the second edition, Darwin modified this into "some of the highest intellects." Again, he does not know that Darwin disavowed all belief in creation, and expressed his regret at having used the term Creator. All this is set forth in Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*—a little work which every Freethinker should keep by him in order to silence the unscrupulous Christians who, after denouncing Darwin for a whole generation, are now trading upon his name and falsifying his opinions.

Mr. G. W. Child, in his book on *Church and State*, just issued by Messrs. Longman, allows that the Church has continued in every respect what Henry VIII. and Elizabeth made it, "simply a department of the State," yet it continually objects to the State exercising its control. As Mr. Taylor Innes allows, in his work on the same subject, the only influence the laity have on the Church is that exercised by their representatives in Parliament. These have the right to do with it what they will.

The lucrative priestly business of "apparitions" is not confined to Italy. According to the *Enniscorthy Guardian*, the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared at Ballyfoyle, about six miles from Athy. The lady never puts in an appearance without bringing grist to the priestly mill.

Dr. Barnardo has been taken to task for giving out in the so called "National Anthem" the lines

Confound their politics,
Frustrate their Popish tricks.

Yet this is the earliest known version. Since Catholic emancipation it was thought advisable to substitute the synonym "knave" for "Popish."

Bishop Thornton, of Ballarat, at a meeting of the Church of England Assembly, while condemning the new Divine Law of Victoria, expressed himself in favor of opening museums, art galleries, and libraries on Sunday, under cautious regulation that it should come as little into competition with his own business as possible. This liberal prelate would "even incline to one Sunday train both ways upon our railway lines, perhaps at high fares, to meet the frequent emergencies of human life," which of course only happens to those who can pay high fares.

"God so loved the world."—Scripture.—On Sunday he sent a tornado over Northern Illinois, which destroyed fifty farmhouses, and ruined all the buildings, fences, and crops. Two schoolhouses were blown to pieces, and the schoolmasters and children killed and mangled. Let us pray.

Dr. Plumtre, the Dean of Wells, is wroth with the Churchmen, like the editor of *Lux Mundi*, who are giving in to the great Biblical critics such as Wellhausen. He declares that if the theory they are accepting be true, the "Old Testament in its narrative and its laws is simply the most false and fraudulent history in the literature of the world." Well, that is just the truth. A Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel!

Exeter Hall boasteth a magazine. It is conducted in the interest of the Young Men's Christian Association. The

intellect of its readers—and editors—may be judged by its "poetry." Here is a specimen.

Ram it in, cram it in,
Young men's heads are hollow;
Slam it in, jam it in,
Still there's more to follow.

Evidently the writer knows his public. "Young men's heads are hollow"—at Exeter Hall.

The Exeter Hall magazine is as good at serious as at comic "poetry." Look at this.

Think! Think! Think!
As on the awful brink
Of the Eternity!
Think! Think! Think!
Whilst still your soul may drink
Of love's infinity.

Eternity and infinity are excellent rhymes. As for drink, brink, think—why, as Touchstone says, "I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners, and suppers, and sleeping hours excepted."

Dr. Parker unloaded his mind last "Lord's Day" on Sunday observance. From present appearance, he said, Sunday may be considered dead. At present there is hardly any Sunday at all. Even many of those who nominally keep it would be glad to get rid of it. Sunday is given up to cycling and lawn tennis; part of it is piously kept by going to the churches where there is most music, and avoiding those where there is most prayer. In the West End "at homes" are held on Sunday. Dr. Parker says it is idle to blink these facts. Still he thinks that Sunday is only momentarily eclipsed. It will come up again and reassert itself. For our part, we take a different view. The religious Sunday is doomed. The day will not be given over to work. Men are not such fools as that. But it will be devoted to recreation and mental and moral improvement. Anyhow we welcome Dr. Parker's admission. It proves the progress that has been made in secularising the Sunday.

A short time ago a gentleman who "ruled the planets" in Liverpool failed to detect a police emissary in a person who solicited his aid, and now Henry Harding, of Birkenhead, has been sentenced to two months' hard labor, in default of paying a fine of £20, for "pretending to tell fortunes with intent to deceive and impose" on various persons. He advertised himself as "Zenophon," and about 150 letters containing from 1s. to 5s. each were found in his possession. These people who "rule the planets" should be more careful. There are high dignitaries, in receipt of good emoluments, who profess to have great influence with the Ruler of the Planets, and they are held in greater respect. Henry Harding did not fly high enough.

E. Osmotherly writes a long letter in the *Gravesend Reporter*, which must be short of copy to print such nonsense. Against "the blind and mythical speculations of Darwin and Spencer" he quotes Scripture, remarks "God said that," and bids the scientists regard themselves as squashed. The poor fellow is a Baptist. We suspect his proper name is Grandmotherly.

According to a Dalziel telegram, the Humboldt Free-thought Society at Leipzig has been dissolved by the police. While awaiting further information from one of our German exchanges, we can only remark that the incident, if true, is a curious comment on the "new era" of the young Emperor. The freedom he talks about is apparently a freedom to accept his schemes. Any independent thought is not to be tolerated. And this is the country of Goethe and Heine, of Büchner and Haeckel!

Fortunately we are not so bad as this in England. But who knows what might happen if the anarchical party of "law and order" and "Church and State" had a seven years' innings in England as well as in Ireland? Especially if Cardinal Manning had what he always tries for, a finger in the pie!

Stanley told the Edinburgh folk that he was in the habit of visiting churches to see if he could meet with a good sermon. He hadn't found one yet. The preachers all grind away at doctrines and forget the present needs of the

people. But what is the use of their trying to do otherwise? The real needs of the people are being looked after by statesmen and social reformers. Let the ministers preach kingdom-come. It isn't a useful occupation, but it is all they are fit for.

The Bishop of Manchester recently consecrated a burial-ground at Bolton. We believe the performance was well paid for. What wonder, then, that the Bishop denounced cremation? He had no doctrinal objection to it, but he thought we should reverence our dead, and that was best done by continuing to inter them. In other words by continuing to pay Bishops for consecrating the ground. As for reverencing the dead, we fail to see it in the practice of putting them underground as a feast for worms. Of course if people feel for the poor worms, and wish them not to be defrauded of their repast, the sentiment is a respectable one. But we never yet saw it put in that light. It is not the worms that count, but ignorant prejudices and clerical fees.

Theologians have been so anxious to distinguish God from matter, that they have been in danger of confounding him with space. One writer at Sydney, indeed, says that "the ether of space is the godhead." According to this, the way to find God is easy. Take a box 12ft. by 12, exhaust the air, and you can say you have 144 feet of solid deity.

An Oxford firm, having a shop also in Farringdon Street, London, reduce the deity to smaller compass than this. They supply what they call the Cowley Portable Altar, an arrangement by which not only the Holy Sacrament, the body, bones and divinity of Jesus Christ can be carried about from house to house, but supplying chalice and wafer-dish from which to eat and drink him, and Christmas candles to light up the festive scene, all in a nice box no bigger than a lawyer's brief bag. Who says that religion does not progress with the times?

The Rev. Joseph Ferguson has been complaining at Sunderland of the sinister way in which the Church parsons attack Dissent. He also finds that "there are more than twelve hundred parishes in England and Wales without a School Board, which means that tens of thousands of our children are drugged on week-days with doses of superstition, as vicious as the rankest Popery." How shocking! But these very dissenting Dissenters are quite ready, in their turn, to drug the children of Freethinkers with their do-es of superstition. It is so hard to make a Christian understand fair-play. What he usually wants is freedom for himself and the right to tyrannise over others.

The Postmaster-General is a pious gentleman. So is his first underling, the philanthropic Blackwood. No wonder, therefore, that they are down on the poor postmen who met on Clerkenwell Green to ventilate their grievances and start a Postmen's Union. Some of the men, who have been twenty years or more in the service, have had their good conduct stripes taken away, which means a loss of three shillings a week. Others have been suspended. No doubt they will all understand in future the holy saying of St. Paul that we must all obey the powers that be, especially when the powers that be feel they are "ordained of God" and fall like a ton of bricks on anyone who has the presumption to canvas their doings.

A curious mistake occurred at the Highland cemetery, Southsea, at the interment of two gunners of the Royal Artillery, who had died in Portsmouth garrison. One was a Roman Catholic and the other a Presbyterian, and both Father Collins and the Rev. A. Halliday were in attendance to read the funeral services peculiar to their respective churches. By some mischance the coffins got mixed, and the Roman Catholic rites were performed over the body of the Presbyterian, while the Presbyterian prayers were offered over the remains of the Roman Catholic. Fortunately the mistake was discovered before the actual interment and the whole services gone over again, otherwise Lord knows what would have happened. The Presbyterian might have found himself in the Catholic department of heaven surrounded by a set of Irish howling Howly, howly, howly, while the Papist would have felt out of water in the Scotch department of heaven, where they cry Hooly, hooly, hooly!

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 29, Forester's Hall, West Street, Reading; at 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; at 3, "Secular Salvation"; at 7, "Is there a Future Life?"

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.

C. DOEG.—Very likely he is not particular with whom. We are. Thanks for cuttings. We hope the Liverpool Branch will strike while the iron is hot and forge out a new Building scheme.

F. GOODWIN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

C. WATTS.—The Branch must "keep pegging away," and we are delighted to hear that it intends to. There is fine scope for open-air lecturing in Manchester.

LUCRETIVS KEEN.—We are sorry to hear of your being hustled in Finsbury Park, but since you have brought your experience to our notice we think it right to say that we have received several letters from Freethinkers complaining of your injudicious advocacy. Lecturers must learn to accommodate themselves to their audiences, and this can be done without any sacrifice of principle. Courtesy and good temper are *indispensable* when lecturers are breaking new ground, as they are *useful* at all other times. If there is a prejudice against you at Finsbury Park—and there seems to be—why not speak elsewhere, and give the feeling time to subside?

W. HOLLAND.—We are obliged for the jokes.

E. H. JONES.—It would hardly be prudent to alter the time of the Manchester meeting at this late stage. The outdoor lecture might go on concurrently.

W. BOWDEN.—We do not think you can obtain the American Freethought papers except by subscribing for them yearly.

W. T. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks. Mr. Wheeler has written on the same subject this week.

J. W. WITTERING.—Such letters in the local press are useful to the cause. We are glad to see the *Grimby News* is liberal enough to insert them.

J. K. SYKES.—If a deformity, however slight, is a divine judgment, there are a lot of "judgments" walking the earth. The conduct of the fellow you allude to is disgusting. But what can you expect from a worshipper of the Bible God?

J. G. WARREN.—We thought there was something wrong. Thanks for the information.

J. ELIAS.—You will see we have dealt with the matter.

C. TURNER.—Your visit to the North Middlesex stations on Sunday was an unlucky one. No lecture at Tottenham, and no literature to speak of for sale anywhere, is an unfortunate state of things. We hope your experience was exceptional.

W. B.—Rénan does not accept the Josephus passage as it stands.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Mr. Foote has written on the subject.

S. M. PEACOCK.—We are sorry to hear the North Eastern Federation has run short of funds. Surely the Freethinkers in the district will support an organisation which is doing such excellent work.

FREETHINKER.—There is nothing about the pyramids in the Bible and we fail to see the connexion.

C. RANTZEAN.—Pleased to hear you are taking three copies weekly. Solomon built the first Temple. For the life of David see Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*, where you will find references in the footnotes. Neither Philo nor Josephus (in any authentic passage) mentions Jesus Christ.

WILL the Liverpool gentleman who paid Mr. Foote 5s. for the Central Fund kindly send us his name and address. Mr. Foote has mislaid the memorandum.

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—De Dageraad—Reading Observer—La Verité—Bournemouth Guardian—El Radical—Phonetic Journal—People's Press—Portsmouth Evening News—Stoke-by-Wayland Magazine—Loyal American.

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 £66 1s. 8d.

[The Tenth List is postponed till next week. Meanwhile intending subscribers are desired to lose no time in remitting.]

SUGAR PLUMS.

Last week's *Freethinker* ran out of print before Saturday, and several orders could not be executed. We regret that we did not print enough, though we allowed for an extra demand. Our circulation is steadily improving, and if all our friends will do their best to promote it still further—by taking extra copies and introducing the paper to newsagents—we shall soon be able to announce that the editor is receiving journeyman's wages for his work. The corner was turned some time ago.

Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences at Liverpool were so so. The weather was inviting out of doors, and Camden Hall, since the structural changes, is far from a thing of beauty. Fortunately the evening lecture in the large Concert Hall drew a capital audience and a very enthusiastic one. The only opponent was Mr. G. Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society.

After the evening lecture some friends met in the ante-room. One of them, a builder, offered handsome assistance if the Branch would go in for a hall of its own. He declared, apparently with truth, that many people will not go to Camden Hall. Mr. Foote pressed the Committee to take immediate action, and they promised to start a Building Company forthwith. We hope to make a more definite announcement next week. Meanwhile we beg the Liverpool Freethinkers to hold themselves in readiness to support the scheme.

The new departure at Manchester promises to be a great success. Mr. Wakefield addressed a good open-air meeting last Sunday. There was some discussion, and a good deal of literature was distributed.

Members of the Finsbury Park Branch of the N. S. S. and other Freethinkers residing in the locality, are earnestly requested to meet Mr. Rowney at his house, 155 Winston Road, Green Lanes, on Monday, June 30, at 8.30 p.m., for the purpose of re-organising the Branch.

Over a hundred new members have joined the National Secular Society since the Conference. The President finds the signing of their certificates a monotonous pleasure.

The Branches are slow in electing their corresponding members of the Council. They should perform this duty *forthwith*, as it is necessary to print fresh prospectuses, with the altered rules and the new names of officers.

At the close of Mrs. Besant's lecture at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening, that lady made a most interesting and important statement which was received with tumultuous applause. Recalling the great and sustained support given to her by Freethinkers more than a dozen years ago, when proceedings were taken against her for the removal from her of her daughter Mabel, she thought it would please her friends to know that her son, who was now of age, had returned to her of his own free will, and that her daughter, although not legally free until next August twelve months, was again with her. Miss Besant had expressed a desire to be present there that evening, but Mrs. Besant to avoid any unpleasant complications had advised her not for the present. My daughter, said Mrs. Besant, notwithstanding her training and surroundings, and without a practical knowledge of Freethought, already expresses her detestation of the religion that separated her from her mother, marring the happiness of her childhood, and causing her mother such poignant sorrow.

Mr. G. J. Warren has obtained the views of the various Liberal and Radical candidates for the Tower Hamlets divisions. The following have promised to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws:—S. Buxton, M.P. (Poplar), J. Haysman (Mile End), J. M. Macdonald (Bow and Bromley), S. Montagu, M.P. (Whitechapel), B. T. L. Thomson (Stepney), J. S. Wallace (Limehouse). St. George's-in-the-East is at present without a Liberal candidate.

We hope Mr. Warren's example will be followed. Every Liberal and Radical candidate should be pointedly questioned as to his attitude in regard to these infamous laws.

Mr. J. M. Robertson's lecture at Hammersmith was a great success. His subject, "The Dishonesty of the Church," roused the ire of one clerical opponent. Many questions were asked and suitably replied to. Mr. Foote ends this course of Free Lectures on Thursday evening, June 26, a few hours after this paper is in the hands of its London readers. Place—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Hammersmith. Time, eight o'clock. Subject, "Freethought and Christ."

The Lancashire Branches are requested to bear in mind the meeting to be held at Manchester on Sunday, July 6, at three o'clock, when a Lancashire Federation will be publicly inaugurated. Every Branch should send delegates. Individual members are also invited to attend.

The ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost, one of whose discourses we print elsewhere, is one of the most energetic Freethinking lecturers in America. Every week he prepares a new discourse, which he delivers in three places. In Newark in the morning, Brooklyn in the afternoon and New York at night. After that it appears in the *Twentieth Century*.

In the *Revue Bleue* M. Louis Havet has an article on his father, the late Ernest Havet, who he claims destroyed the legend of the Jewish writers being anterior to the Greeks. Some time since, in an article on the Modernness of the Prophets, we drew attention to M. Havet's views. This distinguished critic, who was Professor of the College of France and Member of the Institute, held that the earliest Jewish writings dated only from the Macedonian age, and were consequently infiltrated with the Greek spirit. This thesis, which we can by no means consider fully established, is defended by his son.

Dr. Voelkel, of Magdeburg, is now bringing out a German translation of Paine's *Age of Reason*. The work should have a good sale, especially among Germans in America.

James Stirling, the Government geologist of Victoria, has been lecturing at the Melbourne Hall of Science. At Sydney they have a new lecturer, Mr. Gammell, who is recommended by Mr. Collins and Sir Robert Stout, of New Zealand.

The Melbourne *Age* of May 12, declares that the manifestoes issued against the Victorian Divorce Law by Bishop Goe as the head of the Church of England in that colony, and Dr. Macdonald the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, have not been exceeded in "fatuous folly and wrongheadedness," by any bull issued from the Pope at Rome. The more it is recognised that such followers of Jesus are behind the age the better.

Mr Herbert Spencer expresses a high opinion of the late Miss Constance Naden. Writing to Dr. Lewis, who has founded a Constance Naden medal at Mason College, he says:—"I can think of no woman, save George Eliot, in whom there has been this union of high philosophical capacity with extensive acquisition." Her receptivity and originality, he says, were equally great. At the same time he utters a warning against a too sudden development of woman's mental powers. He "cannot let pass the occasion for remarking that in her case, as in other cases, the mental powers so highly developed in a woman are in some measure abnormal, and involve a physiological cost which her feminine organisation will not bear without injury more or less profound." Mr. Spencer is not able, however, it would seem, to indicate how this danger is to be guarded against. It looks as though woman's mind will have its swing, and natural selection be left to decide the issue.

A crematory has been set up at Copenhagen. Cremation is certainly extending on the continent. There are Siemen's furnaces in Dresden, Breslan, Gotha and Zurich. At Zurich a regulation is in force by which the ashes of the dead remain in separate urns at the cemetery for twenty years. Then the nearest of kin may take the urn in his dwelling. The crematories at Milan and Paris are more patronised than ever.

Mr. Lennstrand's lecture, "Is there Another Life?" translated by G. Nelson, appears in the *Boston Investigator*. Mr. Lennstrand's friends are still anxious on his account. He has again to be tried on July 6 for the lecture "Why I attack Christianity," and if again imprisoned it is feared his health is such that he will certainly succumb. We hope for the best.

Mr. Wheeler has written a sort of biographical preface to our reprint of Jeremy Bentham's *Church of England Catechism Examined*, which is nearly through the press and will be ready for sale in a week or ten days. Mr. Wheeler has turned over some Bentham manuscripts in the British Museum, and has made some important discoveries as to the depth of Bentham's scepticism. What he has unearthed will be of great interest to Freethinkers, and likewise to all students of English literature and thought.

Next week *The Creation Story* will be on sale. It is the first instalment of the new, revised, and greatly amplified edition of Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*. From the constant applications for this work we expect a large sale, and we are printing accordingly.

Mr. Forder has bound in two volumes, cloth gilt, all the pamphlets of Colonel Ingersoll published at our office. The price is 3s. 6d. per volume. No doubt there are many who would like to have the set in this convenient form.

The imperial size portrait of Mr. Foote is now on sale. It is a very fine production and does the photographer great credit. The price is three shillings.

Our next number will contain an article from Mr. Foote's pen on *Lux Mundi*, dealing chiefly with the essay of the editor of the volume, the Rev. Charles Gore, on the Inspiration of the Bible.

Professor Huxley is writing an article on *Lux Mundi*. It will appear in the July number of the *Nineteenth Century*.

PROVIDENCE.

"One day a dozen years ago," said a stoop-shouldered tramp, as he rubbed his hand over the deep pits in his face, "I came along to a house in the outskirts of Pekin, Illinois. I wasn't much struck with the house, but what did hit me was a lot of coats, vests, and pants hanging on a clothes line. I was on my last pins for clothes, and as I saw them hanging there I said to myself: 'Moses, old boy, I've allus told you to trust in Providence, and you now see the result. Them duds was hung out there for you. Go and git 'em.' I crawled along a fence, got over among some bushes, and after a little trouble I got a whole suit and got away with 'em. Nine days after I blossomed out with one of the prettiest cases of small-pox you ever saw, and some farmers drove me into an old barn and let me fight it out. When I knew what had got hold of me I says to myself: 'Moses, old boy, I've allus told you to trust in Providence, and you now see the result.'"

“THE LION AND THE LAMB.”

THE Irish Freethinker gifted with a sense of humor is rarely in want of material to excite his risible faculties. Every now and then events occur in Ireland so ludicrous in their nature and so childish in their motives and objects, that he cannot help being intensely amused even while pitying his fellow countrymen whose love of God tempts them to acts of the grossest folly.

There is a pious fiction given credence to by Christians that the day will come when “the Lion and the Lamb will lie down peaceably together.” This is the Oriental round-about way for saying that all mankind will one day unite in harmony in accepting the doctrines of Christ without doubt or reserve. The intensity of this belief is not shaken by the obvious facts that there is no perceptible advance being made by Christianity amongst the heathens, and that every day there is greater divergence than ever between the numerous sects that comprise the Christian world. While each Christian sect is positive that *it* possesses the doctrines of Christ in their purity, and while the tendency is plainly towards an increase of sects, it requires no great insight to conclude that the day is indeed far distant when anything like Christian unanimity will be possible. It is all very well to talk of the Lion lying down with the Lamb; but when all the sects pretend to act the part of the Lamb, the Freethinker is justified in coming to the conclusion that there is a greater probability that the sects will devour each other after the fashion of the historic “Kilkenny Cats,” than that, metaphorically speaking, the Lion will lie down “check by jowl” with the Lamb and refrain from having that innocent for supper, as a sensible Lion ought to.

The religious folk have a queer method of bringing about the blissful day when the Lion and the meek Lamb are to lie down together. Animated by what they call “a love of God and Jesus Christ,” they act towards their neighbors in a manner that ought to make the meanest of gods ashamed of the “love” of such canting “critters.”

Here in Ireland, we often hear the expression “God is Love.” It is a favorite text for Protestant sermons, and is much affected by young men of that persuasion, and of the “goody-goody” order. Occasionally we are treated to practical illustrations as to what the expression means. And at the present time there is being given at Arklow, in county Wicklow, a series of object lessons illustrative of the way some people regard their God of Love. There is such discord about the matter that the police, in great force, have had to interfere, God being so strongly impartial that he allows the opposing factions to decide among themselves which loves him best, or which hates him most.

The troubles came about in this way. Three Protestant clergymen and a Methodist individual agreed, for the nonce, to join forces, and to carry the light of the scriptures amongst the benighted Papists, who have this merit at least, that they are in total ignorance of the contents of the anything but Sacred Bible. These four pious worthies say that they feel that they have not disseminated the scriptures as much as they should have done, “considering how ignorant some persons are, and how the people around them had not their hearts influenced by the love of God.” They assert that they do not want to convert anybody, but only “to bring the love of Jesus before them.” Accordingly, they decided to go into the streets in which the Catholic poor lived, and to preach there that the Papists were ignorant and did not know “the light.” They carried out their resolve; they preached on Sundays in the Catholic quarters in the open-air; they expounded the Scriptures; they sang hymns; and they exhorted the poor

ignorant folk to come out of their cabins and listen to the word of God. They were fond of saying also that their duty was to love all men, and that their watchwords were “Christ, Co-operation, and Charity.”

But the Catholics naturally did not want that sort of love and charity which found expression in taunts as to their ignorance. And—out of love of God, of course—they adopted means to teach the ranters a lesson.

The Catholics of Arklow are mainly fishing-folk, and are rather rough and ready in their arguments. When, therefore, the Protestant clergymen persevered in their extraordinary conduct, the Catholics turned out in force; they shouted so loudly that they drowned the voices of the preachers and singers; they beat old tin cans; they blew horns; the women said things not quite nice; mud was thrown; stones were heaved; and as a climax one of the preachers was hit with an old kettle. Other Christian acts of politeness were exchanged, and matters now stand in this way, that the several sects in the town are showing their love for God by hating each other heartily; the police are at their wits’ end how to keep the peace; the papers are giving partizan and colored accounts of the business; questions are being asked in Parliament; and altogether the “Lion and the Lamb” cause is in a very mixed and disturbed condition in Arklow town.

There is a point that I must not overlook. One of the Protestant clergymen has written to a local paper saying that in Protestant England Catholic clergymen would be allowed the luxury of open-air preaching. The local editor retorts that the majority in England is not Protestant at all, but is composed of “Pagans or Freethinkers, Deists or Atheists.” The clergyman now “talks back,” and says that if this is so the Catholics of Ireland could afford to learn a lesson in toleration from the Atheists of England—which is the truest thing that this particular “man of God” has said up to the present.

But to me the whole row seems very funny. As an Irishman I feel a little humiliated that such silly scenes could take place at a time when the school-master is so much abroad; but as a Freethinker, I cannot help looking on with a smile, and consoling myself that the “Lion and the Lamb” age is not upon us yet, and that such bickerings as this may end in illustrating the proverb, “When rogues fall out honest men get their due.” J. O'DONOVAN.

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- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

At the Methodist New Connexion's annual Conference the Rev. Dr. Cocker moved a resolution, which was carried, against the practice of reading sermons in the pulpit. Henceforth all the slow-minded preachers will have to spout extempore. God knows how some of them will manage it. Here is a clear case for divine assistance.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

How England came to take St. George as its patron saint is a question which opens up some curious points of history and mythology. The real history of the saint in the Christian calendar is told in the twenty-third chapter of Gibbon's great work. George was the son of a fuller of Cappadocia. From this obscure origin he rose by the talents of a parasite, and his patrons procured him a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. He accumulated wealth by the basest arts of fraud and corruption and with it purchased the bishopric of Alexandria. In course of time "the infamous George of Capadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter." How this came about is in part explained in an interesting article in a recent number of the *Cornhill Magazine*. The earliest original of St. George and the Dragon is the Egyptian god Horus slaying the crocodile, the symbol of darkness. In one of the bas-reliefs in the Louvre, sculptured in Egypt in the late Roman period, Horus is represented in full armor on horseback slaying a dragon. Had the head been wanting the Egyptian deity would have been unhesitatingly set down as an early representation of the Christian saint. Christianity borrowed its religion and symbols wholesale from Egypt, and among the rest Horus was incorporated in St. George, who is to this date patron saint of the Coptic Church of Egypt. It is difficult says Mr. Loftie to persuade a Copt Christian that his guardian saint, with the same white horse, green dragon and other accessories, holds a similar post in England. Of course the Egyptian Saint was imported at the time of the Crusades. Fighting as they were against the dragon of Mohammedanism, it is small wonder the soldiers of the cross chose the warrior saint for their especial veneration.—LU CIANUS.

A WATER-CURE.

"London Wept."—New Version.

A globe upon a pillar stood;
It was not stone it was not wood:
It was alive and made of bone,
And, strange to say, it could intone.

Although this globe could plainly speak
It seems sometimes, it had a leak,
And could turn on, by force of brain,
A flood of sympathetic rain.

It could upon occasions spout
To put its foes to utter rout,
Yet many said the stuff was dry;
But that, of course, was All my eye.

Well 'twas the eye that did the play
And work in quite a curious way—
Whether bright with hopes or dark with fears,
It shed a bounteous lot of tears.

It wept for things upon the cross,
It wept for gain, it wept for loss:
It wept for want, it wept for sin—
Yet kept a sharp look out for tin.

I'll name this funny watering place,
Which is adorned with so much grace.
Well, if through London streets you tread
You'll find it at—"The Bishop's Head."

DOLPH.

THE TALMUD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

It is utterly impossible to read a page of the Talmud and of the New Testament without coming upon "striking parallels." To assume that the Talmud has borrowed from the New Testament would be like assuming that Sanskrit sprang from Latin, or that French was developed from the Norman words found in England—*Emanuel Deutsch*, "*Literary Remains*," p. 54.

A little miss of the city was in a meditative mood the other morning and said: "Mamma, I want to die and be an angel." The mother remonstrated, saying: "Daughter, you must not talk that way. I want you to live a long time—to be a woman and an old lady." The little miss replied: "Well, I tell you what it is right now, mamma; I'm not going to die and be an old grey-headed angel."

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRIST AND KRISHNA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Will you allow me, while thanking Mr. Wheeler for his friendly and discriminating review of my *Christ and Krishna*, to correct one or two misapprehensions which I find in it? Mr. Wheeler writes that "For Mr. Robertson to go to Devaki [? type broken] and Krishna for the origin of the worship of the Virgin Mother and child, is travelling far for what certainly existed in Egypt two thousand years before the Christian era. His theory that Isis and Horus may have been derived from India must be dismissed as utterly without evidence." This is to me a surprising misconception of my position, and I suppose I must have failed to put it clearly. I do not at all mean to argue that the Virgin and Child worship originated in the cult of Devaki and Krishna. I use expressions which exclude that view. I merely contend that not only is such a worship older than Christianity in India, but that it may have arisen there quite independently of Egyptian influence. Tiele had laid it down that the figure of Horus on the lotos was "certainly" borrowed from Indian pictures, and suggested that in turn India might have borrowed from Egypt the child-suckling Isis. I merely suggest on the other hand (p. 39) that there is no evidence for the latter hypothesis; and that if Egypt borrowed in the one case from India she might have done so in the other. But I myself have no "theory" of such borrowing; and I twice remark that if India did "borrow" the child-bearing Goddess from a non-Indian cult, "the idea might obviously have been derived from the Isis-figures of Egypt before Christianity came into existence" (p. 38; see also p. 40). My own notion is that a child-bearing Goddess was worshipped in India and elsewhere throughout Asia at a very remote period indeed. On that view the cult would be (as I think Krishnaism is) pre-Aryan, and there might be a racial connection between it and the Egyptian system. But I deprecate any positive assumption as to the idea "originating" in this region or in that.

I may add that I do not for a moment claim to have "proved" that the tax-paying motive is pre-Christian. I speak of that view (p. 137) as a "fair surmise."

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

A PIOUS FABLE.

Canon Pennington has a queer notion of evidence—queer, that is for a sane man, though normal enough for a Christian. Writing on "Light and Liberty" in the *Quiver*, he said—"We always recur with great delight to the testimony of a Deist, who, after having publicly labored to disprove Christianity, and to bring Scripture into contempt as a forgery, was found instructing his child from the pages of the New Testament. When taxed with his flagrant inconsistency, his only reply was that it was necessary to teach the child morality, and that there was nowhere to be found such morality as in the Bible. We thank the Deist for this confession." Now for the sequel. One of our readers asked Canon Pennington for the name of this Deist. The Canon replies on a postcard that he is unable to give it. He borrowed the story from "the late Canon Melville," who told it in a sermon before the University of Cambridge, and "it has never been disputed." That is how the Christians reason. A pious yarn is started; names, places, and dates are withheld so that it cannot be disproved; and finally they say it must be true for "it has never been disputed."

PROFANE JOKES.

Many a man who is a good shot in this world hopes to miss fire in the next.

Teacher: "Who was the first watchmaker known to have existed?" Boy: "God; he set a watch over the gates of Eden before Adam was a year old."

"Why did you put that sixpence with a hole in it in the contribution plate?" "Because I couldn't put in the hole without the sixpence, and I had to put in something."

"Make the paling very high and strong, John," said a minister in the North to his beadle and man-of-all-work, who was erecting a boundary paling in the garden, "for my Christianity can't stand the test of my neighbor's poultry grubbing up my plants." "I believe ye, sir," said the beadle, "because I hae aye noticed that there was an end to a' peace, guid will, and religion whaun there wasna a fence."

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. Lucretius Keen, "I and my Father are One." Members' quarterly meeting after the lecture.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 3 sharp, quarterly meeting, election of officers; 6, tea (tickets 9d. each), s iree at 7.30. Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camb-rw-ll—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Christ Hallucination."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Why we Reject Theistic Views of Creation."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, 'Shelley, Poet, Atheist, and Republican.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey. "And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Bethnal Green — Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. S. Standring, "Christ on the Labor Question."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Crucifixion of Christ."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford. "The Gospel Christ Unhistorical."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Foolishness of Prayer to God."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. Harry Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Old Testament Morality." July 2, at 8, Mr. J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "God and his Book."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Two Revelations."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus."

Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, a Freethought lecture.

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. T. Smith, "God so Loved the World."

Tottenham — Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Romans xiii., 1, 2."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Mr. Gladstone's Impregnable Rock."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam "The Life and Times of Voltaire."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Mysteries and Perplexities of Faith."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, 7, Mr. S. G. Middleton, "Science and Happiness."

Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, quarterly meeting, members earnestly requested to attend.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. J. Needles, "Secularism Reviewed."

Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, committee meeting and Tontine Society; 7, Mr. H. Smith, "Will God Hear his Cry?"

Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Socialism and the Middle Class"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 6.30, "Hypnotism: the Fact and the Explanation."

Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, monthly financial meeting of members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mrs. A. R. Atkey, a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Mr. John B. Copp-ck, 11, "The Origin of the Present Phase of the Universe"; 3, "The Age of the World"; 7, "The Fate of the Present Phase of the Universe."

South Shields—Seamen and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation Street, 7, election of officers.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — June 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 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.

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