

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

CRUMBLING CREEDS.

It was well remarked by Mr. Bradlaugh, in his last theological debate, that no one ever sees a religion die. Nevertheless religions do die. Their decease is a long process, and it has no exact period. Little by little they disappear, little by little the new gathers round the relics of the old. But the time comes when the system has perished, and for ever. There is no resurrection for dead creeds.

The truth of Mr. Bradlaugh's aphorism, however, has its limits. Literally its truth is absolute. No man, except the great general, sees the whole of a single battle; and who can see, in the span of a lifetime, the whole of a battle which rages through generations, and perhaps through centuries? Yet history, and imagination working upon its revelations, come to our aid, and enable us to see "in the mind's eye" what is invisible to the organ of sense. Thus the long death of a religion may be witnessed, every phase of its dissolution followed, and the point discerned when its epitaph might be written.

The student of history knows that the Christian religion has been breaking up ever since the Revival of Learning. Just as Christianity arose in the twilight of Pagan civilisation, and flourished in the succeeding night, so it began to wane in the young light of a new day. Centuries have since rolled by, and Christianity is still here; and, sustained by this knowledge, the Christian may wreath his lip with scorn. But Paganism survived for centuries the knell of its doom. Generation followed generation, even after the day of Constantine, yet Paganism lingered where it was not forcibly suppressed, and even after the conversion of the Northern nations it lurked under the magic and witchcraft of the Middle Ages. We might go back even earlier than the first spread of Christianity, and see that Paganism was dying before the star of Bethlehem appeared. Rival superstitions crept into the Roman world from the East, and philosophy took the place of religion in the minds of the educated classes. Yet the Pagan temples continued to lift their columns in proud beauty, the priests were still numerous and powerful, and everything went on as though the old system were as secure as the everlasting hills. Ages after Cato wondered how two Roman augurs could look each other in the face without laughing, sacrifices were performed, the victims' entrails were inspected, the oracles gave forth their dubious prophecies, and wealth was poured into the hands of swarms of priests. Indeed, it may be said that Paganism was never wealthier than just before its downfall, and that it left a splendid spoil to its lucky successor.

One need not be surprised, therefore, at the present condition of Christianity. It is enormously rich, and its power is apparently tremendous; but the sphere of its influence is, in reality, ever contracting. The Pope is still at Rome, but the State holds him in pawn in the Vatican, and though he cries for aid, no one will come to his assistance. St. Peter's

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thunders are impotent against the cannon and rifles of King Amadeo. The sword of the flesh is stronger than the sword of the spirit. In Germany there is a parade of Christianity, but only the court and the peasantry are in the fold of faith. Educated men and workmen are nearly all outside. In France the spectacle is grievous to the friends of religion. Even in Spain, although the Church is as insolent as ever, she is being gradually crippled, and scepticism is spreading like wild-fire in the universities and the great towns. In England the State Church is strong and wealthy, but it feels its life is threatened. The Catholic Church is only gaining as the Establishment loses. The Nonconformist bodies have crowds of ministers and large incomes, but they are always sounding notes of alarm. They hear the approach of the strong man who is to take their possessions. All admit that the masses of the people are "lapsed." Desperate efforts to retrieve them are attended with no success. But this is not all, nor the worst. When the *mind* of the age sets away from Christianity, the only hope for the old creeds is to grasp power once more, and crush out the heresy with blood. But the for thorough-going persecution is past. Old laws against Freethought may be retained, but they are seldom employed actively, and no new ones will be enacted. Yes, it is the *mind* of man the creeds have now to face—the Spirit of the Age, whose presence is obvious in a thousand directions. You cannot read a sermon, or scan a religious paper, without seeing that the Churches are all aware of the terrible foe who is winding about them like an invisible serpent.

Only the Salvation Army is serene. It trades upon strong inherited instincts of superstition in the depths of brutal ignorance. Every other body is disturbed. Even the Catholic Church, at least in England, is pursuing the only method of temporary salvation. That method is *adjustment*. Under the stern law of Natural Selection, which governs all—animals, men, gods, and creeds—everything must adjust itself to live. A species may not vary for milleniums, and a creed may change very little for centuries. But when the environment alters, the species, or the creed, must adjust itself or die.

Catholic writers like Professor Mivart are practising this method of adjustment with great diligence. They have an immense advantage over Protestants in possessing an infallible Church which *interprets* the infallibility of the Bible, and is able to give it any turn to suit the exigencies of the moment. Professor Mivart is ready to find Darwinism in the Bible. He is also ready to find that all the absolute Word of God in it might be written in a waistcoat pocket-book. This clever trick will not succeed with strong-minded people, who know that infallible Churches are as absurd as infallible Books. Nor will it succeed with those who are familiar with ecclesiastical history, and who know that the infallible Church has often blundered, often contradicted itself, often been torn with internicine strife, and has sometimes put in the papal chair, as God's vicegerent

on earth, monsters of lust, avarice and cruelty. But the majority of men are not strong-minded, and have little acquaintance with history. They are without that knowledge of the past which Mr. Morley says "saves us from imposture and surprise." It will not be astonishing, therefore, if many of them, who are too ignorant, weak, and timid to think for themselves, should accept the Catholic adjustment to the conditions of modern thought, letting the Church decide for them how the Bible is to be read and understood, reposing their faithful heads on the bosom of Mother Church, and heeding her dogmatic voice as the perennial oracle of God.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST AND MUTILATION.

CHRISTIAN readers have probably been horrified at reading in the papers the extract from the recently issued report of the Lunacy Commissioners, disclosing a painful case of religious mania in Bethlehem Hospital. The extract is as follows:

"A lady patient, who, before admission, had cut off her right hand and had tried to pluck out her right eye under religious delusion, finally succeeded in removing that eye. Her only hand had been placed in a canvas locked glove, and she was in bed and constantly visited, but with her teeth she so tore the glove as to free the hand, and with the fingers of that hand she gouged out the eye. The patient is still insane, though the immediate effect of the injury was to produce a feeling of calm and happiness, from her belief that she had obeyed the Biblical command."

Here is a case of deplorable madness arising from accepting the doctrines of Jesus Christ in their natural and literal meaning. Jesus said "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire" (Matt. xviii., 8-9. See also Matt. v., 29-30, and Mark ix., 43-48). We know Christians now say these injunctions are metaphorical, but in our view there is no insanity in construing them literally, but only in supposing them to be divine and carrying them out. Insanity lies in the first place with any teacher using words so liable to be taken literally. For the literal interpretation coincides with the general character of the teaching of Jesus concerning hell-fire.* If the plucking out of the eye is metaphorical, then everlasting fire and eternal life are also metaphorical, that is literally unrealities. Christians, refined by civilisation, perceive the barbarity of the injunction to mutilate their bodies, and therefore rather than call in question the wisdom of their idol, assume that he spoke in metaphorical language, without seeing that this undermines the literal truth of the most important dogmas of their church. If there is, as Christians assert, the fearful alternative of eternal misery, the actual loss of an eye or a hand is of trifling consequence, nay if their loss saves from eternal fire it is a veritable mercy. Christians suppose that by hands, feet, and eyes Jesus simply meant the lust of those members. It would follow that when he spoke of entering into life "with one eye" he meant with one lust. But Christians do not believe that we can enter heaven with any lust at all neither do they hold that it is our lusts instead of our bodies and souls that are burnt and tormented in hell-fire.

Jesus, it will be remembered, also approved of those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew xix., 12). The learned and devout Origen was no literal-minded man. On the contrary, he allegorised most of the Old Testament stories. Yet he held that the injunctions of

Jesus on this point were positive, and made himself an eunuch. Gibbon tells us "Before the fame of Origen had excited envy and persecution, this extraordinary action was rather admired than censured." Logically so, for when desire was imputed as a crime and marriage as a defect, celibacy was regarded as the nearest approach to divine perfection. The general attitude of early Christianity towards the body was to regard it simply as the vehicle of sin. To despise and subdue it became a duty.

In considering the question as to whether these passages were intended to be taken literally we cannot forget that in ancient times the practice of mutilation was very common. As a punishment in England the nailing of ears to the pillory in such a manner that by the motion of the body they would be torn off, we believe was only abolished in 1837, although it had long ceased to be employed. In Oriental countries where polygamy prevails, the making of eunuchs to supply the position of harem attendants is common. In especial the Jews by their practice of circumcision were imbued with the idea of bodily mutilation as an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. In India ascetics have from the earliest times spent much ingenuity in devising tortures intended to subdue the body to the control of the Spirit, and it is recorded of Buddha that seeing one of these men seated on knives, he said it was in vain to seek freedom from the bonds of lust that way, it must be rooted out from the heart. To our mind this saying was saner and wiser than the ones we have cited from Jesus.

The Russian sect of the Skoptski accept these teachings literally.* Men are made eunuchs and women have their breasts cauterised for the glory of God. Like the poor insane woman whose case is recorded in the report of the Lunacy Commissioners they find their warrant in holy scripture. If the plain and literal signification of God's word was not his actual meaning, surely it was possible for him to have expressed that meaning exactly and without the possibility of a mistake.

J. M. WHEELER.

CATHOLIC PRIVILEGES IN AMERICA.

We do not know—no one knows, because the statistics are concealed—the enormous amounts of money the states give to the churches. In this city alone it is about two millions annually. In all the states the amount must be fabulous. The exemptions are still more costly to the people—something like 30,000,000 worth of exempt church property. So burdensome has this financial union become in Maryland that the last legislature passed a bill submitting a proposed amendment to the clause of the state constitution which exempts church property. The amendment provides for the taxation of all property. In Baltimore alone over fifty million dollars' worth is now exempt and the evil is so great that even some of the Methodists are clamoring to do away with this union of church and state, and are asking for impartial taxation, and seem willing to pay their taxes, because the Roman Catholics own two-thirds of the exempt property.—*Truth-seeker* (N. Y.)

Minister's Wife: "I think these church dissensions are awful, my dear, and so unnecessary." Minister: "They are not pleasant, but Deacon Jones has gone too far. If my influence, as pastor, isn't great enough to bring about his expulsion, I shall resign." Wife: "I would, indeed. What is your text for to-day?" Minister: "'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.'"

A few years ago, a pious Methodist arose in an experience meeting and gave a review of his life. When he came to the declaration, "I thank God that I owe no man anything," a quiet man in a remote corner jumped up and said: "I have a little account against you, brother, that you must have forgotten." "Ah Brother C.," said the speaker, unctuously, "I have been bankrupt twice since then."

* See my pamphlet, *The Christian Doctrine of Hell*.

* See *Freethinker*, Sept. 22, 1889.

LOOKING BACKWARD. 1870-1890.

As every school-boy knows, people were not so liberal in respect to religious belief twenty years ago as they are to-day. The masses in England were steeped in ignorance for Mr. Foster's Education Act had not yet become law, although in this year that now admittedly beneficent measure was introduced, and passed; two or three years elapsed, however, before the compulsory clauses of the act operated with sufficient force as to be felt in its effects throughout the whole community.

One evening after an unusually hard day's work I felt so drowsy that I threw myself upon the couch, and having wriggled about until I got into an uneasy posture I dreamt a dream. I dreamt that, like Rip Van Winkle, I slept for twenty years; that I went to sleep as a youth of fifteen and woke up a man of thirty-five. When I woke, I was shown by a friend over certain parts of London that I had known when a youth, and was struck dumb with astonishment. In the place of a wretched dilapidated wooden bridge at Blackfriars, I saw a magnificent stone and iron structure worthy of an advanced age of civilisation. "Holborn Hill" had disappeared—to the advantage of the poor 'bus and cab horses that travelled in that direction—and in its place stood a splendid viaduct. The appearance of Fleet Street had undergone numerous changes. Temple Bar had vanished, and near the spot where the historic gates had stood was erected a fine statue of the Queen, which, however was somewhat marred by an unsightly figure of a Griffin. The Law Courts at Westminster had been pulled down, and a colossal building erected in the Strand to take its place.

In the evening I was taken on the roof of a friend's house and shown a number of model dwellings, which, I was informed had been specially erected to meet the requirements of the working classes. The following day being Sunday, my friend took me to a church in the neighbourhood and I listened to what seemed to me to be a very remarkable sermon. On our way home I ventured to ask my friend a few questions. "When I was a youth," I said, "the clergy used to talk a great deal about the Devil and 'Hell fire' and tell their congregations that damnation would be the fate of the majority of mankind if they did not accept God's revelation as given in the 'Holy Scriptures'?"

"Yes," my friend replied calmly, with a smile of satisfaction, "in respect to the teaching of the clergy a great change has taken place during the past twenty years. To day the Devil's name is never so much as mentioned in polite society let alone in the pulpit, and as for 'Hell fire,' that was sold at an alarming sacrifice to an ignorant and fanatical set of cranks, who started what they call a Salvation Army, and who to this day make 'day and night hideous' by extraordinary vocal and instrumental efforts that fill the hearts of the ignorant with delight, but make the judicious grieve."

"But the whole character of the sermon seems to be changed," I said, anxious to gain further information.

"No doubt that is so," replied my friend, "though the change seems to me to have come about very slowly."

"I should like you to explain the process by which some of these changes have come about. You see, having slept for twenty years they come upon me with the force of a revelation, and utterly amaze and confound my understanding."

"I daresay you are surprised at the changes that have come about in regard to religion, but you would be equally surprised if I were to tell you of the great political and social progress that has been made during the same period."

"Indeed," I replied. "But first be good enough to tell me something concerning the religious transitions to which you just referred. Have the clergy given up belief in the Bible as an 'inspired record'? When I was a boy most of them accepted the dictum of the Bishop of Ripon, who said 'The Bible is pure unadulterated truth—truth without the admixture of error.'"

"Ah, but the Bible has been revised since then, and thousands of alterations made, and most of the clergy will now admit that it still contains numerous errors? But strange to say they still cling to the doctrine of Inspiration although they give it a new interpretation."

"What is this new interpretation?"

"Well," replied my friend, "to be candid I must say that it requires a good deal of skill to describe it."

"Or a great deal of subtlety to grasp it," I suggested.

"Exactly. As I understand it, the clergy maintain that

the writings of the Bible are inspired in the same sense as any other great work—for instance in the same sense as the writings of Shakespeare."

"I never heard of anybody being threatened with damnation for disbelieving in Shakespeare," I urged rather warmly.

"Nor do the more educated among the clergy threaten anybody with damnation as they did twenty years ago, but if they have occasion to speak of the subject at all, they say that the unbeliever will *probably be condemned*, but what form the condemnation will take they leave to the imagination of their hearers."

"It is a source of great satisfaction to me to learn that hell fire has cooled down to such an extent among the orthodox. Twenty years ago it was the one great doctrine of all the sects, and was shouted from the housetops. What other important change has taken place?"

"Well, the more educated among the clergy now take the ground that the Bible was never intended to teach science; that Darwin was a better authority on the descent of man than Moses; that there is a good deal of the mythical and the quasi-historical scattered through the pages of the Jewish scriptures; and farther, that the morality of the Bible was of a low order—in fact, that there is an evolution of ideas on all these subjects distinctly traceable in the scriptures."

"But how do these ideas fit in with the teachings of the New Testament. If the clergy abandon the story of the Fall what *raison d'être* do they give for the Atonement? Twenty years ago the orthodox used to see that if you did away with the first Adam, the second Adam would be unnecessary."

"The clergy are not so logical to-day, but they are very plausible for all that."

"They believe in moving with the times, and what they lack in logic they make up for in emotion. They preach Christ as the Savior of mankind, and are always very careful to present to their hearers the supernatural as well as the human aspect of the subject."

"Do they get large congregations to hear this new doctrine?"

"The High Church party get very good congregations, not for the sermons, but more perhaps on account of the good music and singing they get in their churches."

"Tell me how the Low Church party manage."

"Oh! their congregations have fallen off considerably; the dissenters have gained immensely by this."

"And the Infidels—See, there was a man name Bradlaugh who had a few followers, what has become of him?"

"Bradlaugh! You'll scarcely believe it; he's in Parliament making great headway."

"And his followers?"

"They've increased immensely, and not only his followers but Freethinkers generally have made great strides during the past twenty years."

"And who's at the head of them now?"

"A young man named Foote; he's their President and is the Editor of a paper called the *Freethinker*—"

Whack! whack! halloa what was that? Oh nothing; I had merely rolled off the couch on to the floor and had awakened; to find that though I had been dreaming my dream was in substance founded on fact.

ARTHUR B MOSS.

THE CHURCH AND LABOR.

The Canterbury Diocesan Conference has been discussing "The Church's Duty in regard to Labor Disputes." The first speaker was a big capitalist, Mr. G. A. Spottiswoode, who denounced Trade Unions. The discussion was wound up by the Archbishop, whose "labor" is rewarded with a salary of £15 000 a year, enough to support two hundred families even at Trade Union rate of wages. The intermediate speeches were hardly worth a mention. One clergyman said a word for the just demands of working men, and was called a Socialist. We commend this debate to the attention of those who foolishly consider the Church the "friend of the poor."

THE PROPOSED SECULAR HALL FOR LIVERPOOL.

On Sunday morning a meeting of friends of the movement was held at Camden Hall, at which several projects were discussed, and it was resolved that the Committee should continue their investigations. So far the promises of support have been most encouraging, but we are anxious to ascertain what further support will be accorded to a well-considered scheme.

—C. DOEG.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION'S EXCURSION.

SUNDAY, July 20th, was a red-letter day to many London Secularists. Although the previous unsettled state of the weather and remembrances of last year's drenching may have deterred some from venturing to Epping Forest, the second annual gathering was even larger than the first. Providence was in its best humor, and the glorious weather made the ride and ramble through the forest most enjoyable. After amusing and recreating themselves in their own fashion, the excursionists assembled at King's Oak, and after tea were addressed by Mr. Standing, Miss Vance and Mr. Foote, who presided. At about 7.30 all returned in good spirits, anxious only that the third annual excursion shall be still better than the second. In all there were about twenty brakes, besides smaller vehicles, and many travelled by rail. The party must have amounted to nearly five hundred.

ACID DROPS.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson stuck up for religion at the Peace Congress. This was very good of him. But what he gave with one hand he took away with the other. For he presently told the Congress that after eighteen hundred years of Christianity twenty-eight millions of armed men, including reserves, were kept in Europe to kill one another. What a beautiful fruit of religion! Is it not a rational inference that, after another eighteen hundred years of Christianity (but it won't last so long) there will be fifty-six millions of armed men kept to kill one another?

Here is the pretty sequel to Lord Salisbury's base truckling to the Papacy in allowing Papa Pecci to decide the marriage laws of Malta. The leading newspapers of the island, having made "un-Christianlike attacks" on the Pope and the Bishop of Malta, have been formally excommunicated, and Catholics are forbidden, until the removal of the ban, to sell, read, or purchase them. This is very decided boycotting; but Malta is not Ireland, the Pope is not an Irish farmer, and of course it will be tolerated. But why make so much fuss about boycotting in one part of the British empire when it is positively sanctioned in another?

This little incident throws some light on the pretences of the wily Manning. His cue is to make out, here in England, where Catholicism is in a minority, that it will never, never persecute, or do anything wrong or ungentlemanly. But this is all humbug. Let Manning's Church get the upper hand, and the insolence of Rome would soon show itself in unmistakable colors.

Mr. Stead is a passionate Christian, but he is only a half Christian after all. He shrinks from Tolstoi's new views on marriage, but, like the rest of Tolstoi's critics, he lacks either the courage or the honesty to consider the New Testament texts cited by the great Russian moralist. Of course it is easy to say, "Tolstoi is mistaken," but the only way to answer him is to show that he has misquoted or misinterpreted the language of Jesus. Anything short of that is cowardice or hypocrisy.

By the way, the passage which Protestants usually quote against Catholics declaring that "Marriage is honorable in all" (Heb. xiii., 4) appears to be a perversion of the meaning of the writer. Dean Alford translates it, "Let your marriage be held in honor in all things, and let your bed be undefiled." It will be seen that this version rather supports Count Tolstoi's view, while the other stands in blank opposition to it.

The ascetic character of early Christianity is much more clearly seen in the Roman Catholic versions of the New Testament. For instance, the injunction to "Repent" is in the Douay translated "Do penance," the Greek word *metanoieite*, according to the use of the scriptures and the early fathers, meaning not only repentance for past sins, but their punishment by fasting and other penitential exercises.

By the way, as Tolstoi is the father of nine or ten children, the youngest of whom is still a baby, he must deeply regret having so late discovered the impropriety of sexual intercourse. He has apparently found out the (Christian) truth in his old age, in sickness, when his passions are nearly dead, and the question (for him at least) lacks actuality. Nor have his views on property been reduced to practice. The Countess prevented his fooling his means away on the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. He wanted to give all his goods to the poor, but the Countess declared she was no longer capable of earning her own living, that poverty, combined with nine children, would cause her death, and that he himself is not qualified to earn his living by manual labor. She had a hard struggle, but she triumphed, and all Tolstoi's worldly affairs are now in her hands.

The priestly party in Rome are setting up a new monument to Pope Innocent III. This is the Pope who authorised the bloody exterminating crusade against the Albigenses. Probably, however, his chief claim to remembrance by the Ultramontane party is his assertion that the pope is king of kings, and stands in the place of God.

On the 25th ult. the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, New Rochelle, N.Y., was struck by lightning. The city's fire service made valiant efforts to save the untaxed building, but divine Providence was too strong for them.

The Christians of Jonköping, Sweden, lately held a prayer-meeting in which they besought their God to help Mayor Palmgrun in the lawsuit brought against him by Henry V. Berghell, for unlawful piety, as exhibited in his preventing the latter from giving a series of lectures in said city. Of course their God will help them.

The use of confession has for some time been on the increase among High Church females, and is boldly advocated in the Ritualistic journals. This device for entangling the weak in the meshes of priestcraft, on the confession of Bishop Wilberforce, "tends fearfully to pollute the purity of family life." Yet the clergy always pretend that morals are in danger from the spread of Secularism.

The *British Weekly* is publishing "Leaves from the Diary of an Ex-Ritualist," by one who has seen how near the movement leads to Romanism.

One of our articles recently dealt with Christianity as a "religion for eunuchs." After reading the *Christian Age* for last week we feel tempted to treat of the popular faith as a religion for cowards. The *C. A.* tells us "scepticism is better than indifference. . . . for sensual contentment and spiritual sloth are the offspring of the very idolatry of Mammon; while the sceptical activity may be only the feigned bravery of the coward who whistles through the graveyard to keep his courage up. . . . That all such may come to see Jesus as he is should be our prayer." Selah.

The *Christian Age* opens its arms to receive the cowards in the ranks of Freethought. It is welcome to them. Christianity, with its convenient doctrine of forgiveness of sins, is a fitting haven for cowards. They are surely out of their element in militant Secularism.

But we wonder how many graveyard whistlers the *C. A.* could find in the Freethought school. The man who dares to think for himself against the tide of popular faith, who faces social ostracism, and often pecuniary loss, by the avowal of his beliefs, is not the man to fly to the coward's castle over which floats the flag of "Sauve qui peut."

A correspondent of the *Christian World* gives a striking account of the Christian charity displayed at the bogus tomb of Christ:—"Among the crowds who gather in the porch of the Holy Church and worship under its dome there are twenty rivals and not two brothers. A pilgrim from one country believes the pilgrim from another country to be a heretic and a scoundrel; the monk of one mount scowls on the monk of another mount as a man who is hurrying to his bed of everlasting fire. What a Catholic peasant of Connemara thinks of a Presbyterian tradesman in Derry is something fraternal compared with the bitterness with which a Romish priest speaks of a Greek ecclesiastic

or an Armenian pastor of a Copt. With each it is a shrug and a curse. Every friar in Jerusalem believes that a Protestant is damned beyond hope of mercy, entirely beyond the pale of salvation. It is in this fierce spirit that Christians judge each other at the tomb of Christ. Greek meets Nestorian, Latin encounters Copt, on a spot which each professes to revere, asserting that his fellow believer is a stranger and intruder into the holy house, whose presence in the shrine is an abomination in the sight of God. Hence their only salutation is a scowl of hate, and their worship a scuffle which but for the presence of a Turkish guard would end in bloodshed and murder."

How the old Bible chronology is played out! Here is the *Christian World*, for instance, reviewing a recent volume edited by Prof. Sayce, and referring to some Assyrian tablets by which "the authentic history of the world has been pushed back already to a date little short of the year ascribed by the orthodox Biblical chronologists to the creation."

The *Christian World* quotes David Hume's sentence that the State should "bribe the indolence" of the spiritual guides by giving them liberal salaries. Our contemporary thinks this an argument against a State Church. Hume did not. He simply wanted to keep the "spiritual guides" out of mischief. The same thought was in Gibbon's mind when he said that, to a philosophic eye, the virtues of the clergy were more dangerous than their vices.

There is "profound grief" in Methodist New Connexion circles. It appears that last year's labors in the home circuits have been "so small," and the Annual Committee has issued a circular calling on the churches to "set apart the third Sunday in July as a day of special prayer and consecration." But what on earth is the Lord to do? He cannot give all the churches a big increase. At present he is looking after the Catholic Church on the one side, and the Salvation Army on the other.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, Ward Beecher's successor, says that if a young man comes to him saying he has lost his faith, he asks the doubter what he has been reading, and finds it is Herbert Spencer in philosophy, Matthew Arnold in literature, and Byron in poetry. Having diagnosed the malady, Dr. Abbott proceeds to apply the cure. Does he answer the arguments that have overturned the young man's faith? Oh no. He is far too canny for that. He knows it cannot be done. His method is to divert the young man's mind, by setting him to read Browning and Tennyson, and the biographies of Bushnell and Robertson. All this, of course, is very fine—in its way. But there is one thing Dr. Abbott forgets, and that is, to tell us how many young men he has cured by this evasive treatment.

The Rev. John McNeill, the "Scotch Spurgeon," after being for fifteen months the pastor of Regent Square Church, seems likely to quit it for fresh woods and pastures new. For the third time he has had "a call" from Westminster Chapel, and this time he thinks there is something in it. It may be, he tells his elders and deacons, an indication of God's leading him to a larger sphere; and the matter is to be settled after Mr. McNeill's holiday. Thus do the men of God hear the voice of God in the whisper of their own ambition. When the jargon of piety is seen through, their motives are as those of ordinary people—sometimes very ordinary people.

Father Barry's address at the Catholic Truth Conference on "The Church and the Masses," is printed in full in the *Weekly Register*. Father Barry sees that the mass of Englishmen are not Christian on Sundays and still less on week days. He, however, thinks the laboring class is not anti-Christian, though "there is a small and energetic propaganda of Atheism." "Of late years," he continues, "I observe a marked tendency to Secularism, by which I understand the treatment of social questions exclusively in their temporal aspects, without reference to divine law or to another life."

Dr. Barry admits that this Secularism is growing, and will grow. In this we have the honor to agree with him. We think it will grow to the extent of displacing his Church, and though we also agree with him in saying "the

moment is critical and the issue undecided," we have every confidence that Secularism will triumph as the survival of the fittest.

The *Times*, in a leader on the Salvation Army, describes the movement as "revivalism made spectacular and furnished with a disciplinary organisation." It notices the proneness of English pietists to stirring revivalism, but does not see that this is but a survival of savage expression of religion.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet* persuades the faithful not to go and see the Passion Play, which it says "does harm." Its chief offence seems to be that the rôle of J. C., as performed by Meyer, "appears like a plea for Unitarianism." We should think that, however performed, it would be difficult to reconcile the action of a man with that of a deity.

Some ministers say
In a mild, begging way
They've no use for notes when they speak,
But don't you forget
There was never one yet
Who didn't want bank notes each week.

Judas Iscariot has long since been whitewashed as a fervent and believing apostle, who only gave his master up to the authorities in order that he might more effectively display his divine nature and convert the rulers from the unbelief with which they regarded his mission. Prebendary Harry Jones thinks that the turn of Barabbas for the white-wash brush has arrived. He contends that Barabbas was a large-spirited and popular patriot, and that it was quite natural that the Jews should clamor for his release. The fact that it is said Barabbas was a robber need not trouble Prebendary Jones, for the patriotic party of the Sicarri were all called robbers. In this aspect it seems no wonder that the Jews should have preferred the release of a patriot to that of a dreamy visionary.

The Census Bill provides that Sunday, April 5, 1891, shall be the Census day. That is the day every household must fill up the forms which have previously been left, with an account of the persons residing in the house on that day. The collectors will call for the returns on the day following. There will be no religious census.

The papers have been laughing at the German Jews for prosecuting one of their Rabbis for smoking a cigar on Saturday, unaware that, in accordance with the law of Moses, a man was put to death for picking up sticks upon that day.

Professor Freeman, in the *Speaker*, says we have no reason to believe that the prophets of Baal were not perfectly sincere. We should think not, indeed. They cut themselves with knives, which is a great deal more suffering than most of the Christian clergy are prepared to undergo for Jesus. When a man "makes incision" and draws his own blood, it seems very strange to suspect his sincerity.

Dr. Goe, Bishop of Melbourne, tells his clergy not to recognise the New Divorce Law. They must not re-marry divorced persons, and if such persons re-marry elsewhere they are to be treated as in a state of sin and repelled from the communion. We are delighted to hear it. We always welcome every sign of hostility between the Church and the secular laws of the State, especially when the laws are approved by an overwhelming majority of sensible men and women.

The London *Echo* thinks Bishop Goe is acting within his rights because the Church is not established in Victoria. We believe, however, that the churches are licensed for the celebration of marriage, and if they are in conflict with the law of the State it seems reasonable to make them submit or take away their privileges.

The *Review of Reviews* gives some curious extracts from "a very remarkable article" by the Rev. Charles Starbuck in the *Andover Review*. One of the extracts is "very remarkable" indeed, and it shows the writer to be a very remarkable liar. After pointing out that Mr. Gladstone, the Christian statesman, may be followed by Mr. Morley, the

Freethought statesman, Mr. Starbuck begins to conjecture what will happen afterwards. He expects to find in Mr. Morley's successor "some more refined Bradlaugh of the next century, who will be ready to carry out the recommendation of the present Bradlaugh, to prohibit religion, and punish parents who shall teach it to their children." Our readers do not need to be told that Mr. Bradlaugh never said anything of the kind; he has always said the very opposite. We only quote Mr. Starbuck's words to show the depth of infamy to which clergymen will descend without a shudder.

When a Freethinker receives periodical invitations by post to subscribe to local gospel-shops, he naturally wonders at the indiscriminate methods of Christian cadging. One of our readers send us a begging circular from the managers of St. Paul's Church, Upper Norwood, from which it appears that there is a pressing need of "ventilation." That is a very common necessity. Christianity altogether needs a great deal of ventilation, and we are doing our share of the work without asking Christians for a halfpenny. But "ventilation" is not the only thing wanted at St. Paul's, Upper Norwood. The Church is "seriously affected by dry rot." Of course it is. Every Christian church is more or less affected in that way; and on the whole it is about the driest rot on record.

We don't intend to give the managers of St. Paul's, Upper Norwood, any cash to cure their dry rot; but we shall be happy to supply the congregation with a weekly copy of the *Freethinker* gratis. This is the cheapest method of curing dry rot.

Mr. G. A. Sala relates that in 1875, in Belgium, at a village fair, he bought a little bundle of straw, which he was informed was part of the identical truss on which Pope Pius IX. lay in the dungeon to which he had been consigned by the wicked usurper who called himself the King of Italy. Like many other relics it was a complete fraud. The straw, of course, came from the neighborhood, and Pius IX. was never in prison. But just as much might be said of the thousands of relics that are still peddled in Europe by underlings of the Catholic Church.

T. W. Porter, grocer and sub-postmaster of Southey, was sentenced at the Norfolk assizes to ten years' penal servitude for embezzling Post-office deposits and falsifying the accounts. He was a leading member of the local Wesleyan Methodist body.

George Duckett, colporteur and conductor of religious meetings at the North Town Mission Rooms, Maidenhead, is remanded for trial on a charge of attempting to commit an unnatural offence on a youth named Ravel. When arrested by the police, Duckett was in bed with a boy named Morris.

The Rev. Andrew Gardiner, of the Glebe Presbyterian Church, Sydney, who filled the office of Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly, having committed adultery with one of the members of his congregation, has been forced to leave for America. He has left his wife and family to the care of the Lord.

A Mr. Hope, of Edinburgh, has recently left a large sum of money for the purpose of preventing Scotland from being deluged by Popery. The Rev. Jacob Trimmer, of Dunfermline, and the Rev. Robert Thomson, of Glasgow, are determined to earn the money. Last Sunday they started their crusade in the Queen's Park, Holyrood, Edinburgh, and the proceedings resulted in a free fight between Protestants and Catholics. Sticks were used freely, and a large staff of police had to charge the crowd with drawn bayonets.

The Rev. A. Collier, 102 High Road, Chiswick, works on the principle that fools and their money are soon parted. He advertises an "Easy Biblical Competition," with prizes from five pounds to ten shillings, for those counting most correctly the letter "S" in Hebrews. As the entrance fee is one shilling, it is easy—in fact, a good deal easier than the competition—to see that a few thousand competitors will yield a big profit to the enterprising Collier. For this reason, perhaps, he promises to divide the proceeds between

a West-end church and a Temperance Missionary Fund. Some people would like him to produce the receipt and the audit of his accounts.

Sabbatarianism flourishes in Lancaster. The authorities have stopped a Sunday concert of sacred music that was to have been given by the Midget Minstrels in the Athenæum. Mr. Montague Roby, who was the head and front of the offending, issued an explanation of why the concert could not come off, and ended by saying, "I am, however, led to understand that the public-houses will be open as usual."

Joe Cook says there are now a million inhabitants in New York, and only 75,000 Protestant Christians. We suspect he has exaggerated the number of Protestants, and are quite sure he has exaggerated the number of Christians.

In a recent missionary sermon Dr. Cyrus Hamlin said we can no longer say the harvest is great and the laborers few. "The harvest is great and the laborers are many. But the gifts are few." And, we add, the converts.

Some one has calculated that in Protestant hymn-books Jesus Christ is praised thirteen times as often as God the Father and forty-seven times as often as God the Holy Ghost. The Father may be supposed to take pride in the praises of his Son, but if the Holy Ghost is at all a sensitive person he may take umbrage at his position of decided inferiority.

Madame Blavatsky, and with her the headquarters of the Theosophical Army in Europe, of which she is now sole President, vice Colonel Olcott, unanimously deposed, has removed to 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood, N.W., where a sort of Theosophical chapel has been erected.

We see that Booth has issued a new official notice to the Salvation Army officers ordering bands not to go past churches and chapels during their services. If this cannot be avoided the Sergeant-Major must blow a whistle before coming to the church or chapel, when playing and singing must stop. When will Booth learn that people in their houses, and horses in the roads, require consideration as well as churches and chapels?

The missionary Huc relates that a Chinese once asked him why he baptised women. "That their souls may be saved." "But have women souls?" was the next question, and although the missionary gave a decided affirmative, the question is said to have been disputed at the Council of Macon. Little is found in the Bible in favor of the proposition and the passage in Revelation, declaring that "there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour," is cited as being in blank opposition.

Say Christian and you say Bigot. Dr. Parker approves the attitude of those who left the Peace Congress because it would not open its sittings with Christian prayer. He has withdrawn his name from all connection with the Peace Society. We must admit, however, that Dr. Parker is a consistent bigot. As a Christian he will have no political or social dealings with "infidels." In his opinion the Christians should have separate societies for every object. He agrees with Paul, who said "hold no fellowship with unbelievers." Of course he is several centuries behind Shylock, who drew the line at a higher point of difference. Quoth the Jew to Bassanio, "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Even Shylock might have sat in a Peace Congress with a Christian—if the Christian would let him.

OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death of Mrs. Forder, wife of Mr. Robert Forder, Secretary of the National Secular Society. The deceased lady had long been ailing, but she seemed better before her death, which occurred with startling suddenness while she was travelling by train from Hastings to London. Her remains were interred at Finchley Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Foote performing the last sad rites at the graveside. Mr. Forder's bereavement will elicit the sympathy of a wide circle of friends. Mrs. Forder herself was well known at the Hall of Science, where she was an ardent worker for Freethought in the days of her health and strength.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 27, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 7.30, "Faith and God: another Reply to *Lux Mundi*."
 August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Portsmouth; 31, Birmingham.
 September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 28, Hull.
 October 5, 12, 19, 26, Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

T. RILEY (Halifax) suggests that Mr. Foote's article on "Is the Bible Inspired?" should be reprinted as a penny pamphlet. What do others say? If reprinted, the article would be somewhat amplified.

G. WILDMAN.—Glad to hear your good report of Mr. Rowney's defence of the cause in Regent's Park.

C. W. KENNAWAY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. COMAN.—The "pious lie" referred to in the *Norfolk News* has already been dealt with in our columns. Mr. Foote's unanswerable exposure is obtainable in pamphlet form, price one penny. We agree with you that some Freethought work should be done at Norwich. Is there no one in the city who will undertake to establish an active Branch of the N. S. S.?

J. BURRELL.—We have given a general report of the Federation Excursion. Thanks to the Westminster Branch for distributing such a quantity of literature on the road.

JAMES MCKAY.—Unfortunately the best books are very expensive. You should obtain if you can, Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*, and *Supernatural Religion*. Other such works, as well as books on human evolution, could follow. We will advise when you apply again.

T. FRENCH.—The tract you send us by W. R. Bradlaugh is worthy of the man. It betrays both ignorance and dishonesty. He does not know that "the noble Altamont" is a fictitious character in a romance of Dr. Young's. He quotes a passage from Cheetham about Thomas Paine, but does not tell the reader that Paine prosecuted Cheetham for libel, and got a verdict and damages. He quotes from a malignant French priest about Voltaire, and does not tell his readers that the Abbé Barruel knew absolutely nothing at first hand as to the circumstances of Voltaire's death, or that his lies are simply monstrous in the face of the well-known and abundant testimony of eye-witnesses. See our *Infidel Death-Beds*.

C. H. KELP.—Thanks for your interesting letter. You have had your look into the face of death, and you now know by experience that honest convictions stand by one in the hour of need.

T. CRISFIELD begs to inform P. H. Echlin, and all it may concern, that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Brighton at Thatcher's in Oxford Street. It is also sold in a shop at Blatchington Road, Hove.—T. Crisfield is hereby thanked for his efforts to promote our circulation. Brighton is a hard ground for Freethought seed. It is too full of idle wealth and its parasites.

E. S. DAX.—We understand the certificate has been sent.

A. H. GUEST.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A WOMAN OF BATTERSEA.—One has to be patient, and not to expect too much at once. There was nothing positively objectionable in the entertainment you refer to. The members are all working people, and as they cannot pay for talent at present, they provide the amusement themselves.

R. P. STAPLES.—The Bible Handbooks by Angus and Mitchell give the orthodox statements. The principal early New Testament MSS., with the exception of the since-discovered Sinaitic MS, are mentioned in Taylor's *Diagnosis*. Tischendorf's Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament may in part supply you with what you want.

S. SODDY.—Thanks for the cuttings.

W. MORTIMER.—Thanks for the 5s. for the *Freethinker* Circulation Fund. The Swedish Prisoner Fund is closed. How shall we apply the other 5s.?

W. HOLLAND.—Sorry we are unable to furnish the address. Thanks for the cuttings.

A. B. MOSS.—Sorry to hear you are still unwell. Your absence was explained to the excursionists on Sunday.

W. WARRY.—Zulus are not negroes, and South Africa is not Central Africa. How far Booth's officers may be speaking the truth in claiming seven Zulu converts here, four there etc., we do not know, but we do know that Christian England has broken and massacred the Zulu nation with every conceivable circumstance of infamy. We are absolutely sick of the humbug of your creed.

J. R. W.—Your sending in a copy of our exposure to Price Hughes before his address in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester may explain his ill temper during the meeting. Of course he gave you no reply. Could you expect him to? That is not his game.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Newcastle Chronicle—Independent Pulpit—Coming Man—Edinburgh Evening News—Adelaide Advertiser—War Cry—North Middlesex Chronicle—East Anglian Times.

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 £75 6s. 7d.

Eleventh List.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Dr. W. Mortimer	0	10	0	G. Naewiger	0	1	0
N. B. Billamy	0	2	6	A Friend (per Mr.			
H. J. Robinson	0	2	6	Foote)	0	10	0
S. Thompson	0	2	6	Nottingham Friend	0	5	0

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (July 27). His subject will be "Faith and God: another reply to *Lux Mundi*." He will deal with the first three Essays of that important volume.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital reception at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. Unfortunately, the English summer had stolen his voice. He had to exert himself painfully to get through his lecture. Mrs. Watts preceded him with two scenes from the "School for Scandal," rendered, of course, in a bright, sparkling manner. The chair was occupied by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who travelled up from Brighton for the purpose.

Mr. Watts looks little older than he did ten years ago, and is as jolly as ever. American life seems to agree with him. He lectures regularly on Sundays at Toronto, with occasional visits during the week to distant places. The hall he has discoursed in for four years is now too small. A larger one is getting ready, and Mr. Watts will open it on the first Sunday in September. There are a few wealthy supporters of the movement in Toronto.

Free admission is the general rule in America. When Mr. Watts goes on tour now and then, the local Freethinkers pay all the expenses, often on a handsome scale. Audiences are very large, and the cause is making rapid progress.

Mr. Watts's paper, *Secular Thought*, has an increasing circulation which it certainly deserves. Owing to the great distances in America, the bulk of the copies are mailed. Only in Toronto itself are the new agents supplied. The price of *Secular Thought* is twopence-halfpenny.

During Mr. Watts's brief stay in England he does not propose to lecture again except at Birmingham, which he will visit at the special request of an old friend, Mr. Daniel Baker. Mr. Watts is very well pleased with his Sunday night's reception, and he will tell the Canadian Freethinkers that their English brethren gave him on their behalf, as well as for auld lang syne, a thoroughly cordial greeting.

W. Grantham, corresponding secretary of the Australasian Secular Association, Sydney, New South Wales, writes to us:—"The Sydney friends, although deploring Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation, congratulate you on your appointment. All here think no better appointment could have been made, and hope you may long live to fill the position."

The *Adelaide Advertiser* for June 6 has a long letter from Judge Boucaut in reply to the Bishop of Peterborough. Judge Boucaut was the magistrate who prevented a barrister from attacking a witness as unworthy of credit because he did not believe every word of the Bible to be inspired saying "the Bishop of Peterborough does not." The Bishop, who has expressed his opinion that states cannot be guided by the Sermon on the Mount instead of turning the other cheek has, says Judge Boucaut, "tried to smite on both cheeks one who never smote him at all." Judge Boucaut repels the charge of libel as "wholly untrue, originating only in episcopal arrogance."

A monument to Richard Jefferies, the Freethinker, is to be erected in Salisbury Cathedral.

From San Fernando, Trinidad, we have received a little pamphlet on "The Clericals and the Education Question" by Emilie Maresse Paul. It shows that the clergy there as elsewhere are resisting secular education as godless, and use every influence to retain dominion over the infant. They know that this once lost will never be regained. We are glad to see that in the West Indies there are those who combat in favor of a purely secular education.

Clara Neymann, the German American Freethought lecturer, is now at Berlin, being on a visit to Europe.

The Battersea Branch holds its monthly Concert this Sunday evening (July 27). Friends willing to assist please communicate at once with Mr. Dickinson, 28 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea; or the Secretary will be glad to see them at the Secular Hall early on Sunday evening.

Mr. C. H. Kelf, of the Newcastle Branch, has passed safely through a perilous adventure, the details of which are reported in the *Daily Chronicle*. On Sunday afternoon he engaged a small sculler boat at Tynemouth, and rowed out with a friend named Thompson. By and by a gale of wind arose and they were driven twenty miles ^{adun} e shore, where they were picked up at daybreak by a passing schooner. During the night they strove to keep the boat's head to the waves, for a good broadside would have swamped her. Eventually they became exhausted and had to resign themselves to their fate, but by that time the wind had abated. Mr. Kelf informs us that he felt no qualms. He wished to live, but he was prepared to die. Even amidst the danger there arose the detestable idea that he might be misrepresented; so he took a card out of his case, and wrote with a copying ink pencil, "Good bye to all friends. I die an Atheist."

The July number of the *Independent Pulpit* gives articles by T. V. Munson, S. J. Matthew, Wm. Edmunds, "Pericles," J. L. Shaw (the editor), and others. The publication is as interesting and useful as ever.

Mr. A. J. Field, the new secretary of the Finsbury Park Branch, contributes a well-written letter to the *North Middlesex Chronicle*, protesting against the brutal and cowardly conduct of "respectable" Christian roughs, who ill-treat Secular lecturers in the Park on Sunday afternoons. When they dare not overturn the platform and kick the

lecturer, they pelt him with stones or disgusting interruptions. Mr. Field is to be thanked for his letter. It is too much to hope it will shame the well-dressed rowdies.

Four weeks ago we announced that special weather was ordered for the London Secular Eederation excursion. *It came*. The weather changed, after about six weeks' muddle, on the Saturday afternoon. Some people, who think they are very wise, will say it was a mere coincidence, a lucky guess. We know better. It was a distinct prophecy. Every man who is open to be convinced will see that the editor of the *Freethinker* is also among the prophets, and that the London Secular Federation is under the care of a beneficent providence.

Edmonton sent three brakes to Epping Forest. It was a splendid show for so young a Branch. Camberwell, the largest Branch, was not proportionately represented. The largest contingent came from Milton Hall, under the superintendence of ever-active Miss Vance.

It appears that the suppression of the Humboldt Freethought Society at Leipsic, was occasioned by a discourse by Frau Henrich-Wilhelmi, a lady of culture whom we had the pleasure of meeting at the Paris Congress last year. Frau Wilhelmi has been used to the free atmosphere of the United States, and will not be likely to desist from her efforts at mental emancipation by these high-handed acts of intolerance.

The Mortality of the Soul by David Hume has just been issued from our office. It is a reprint from the original edition, published at Edinburgh thirteen years after Hume's death. This essay is not included in the ordinary editions of Hume. Professor Huxley, a very good judge, calls it "a remarkable essay" and "a model of clear and vigorous statement." Its argument is that the Soul, even if it be immaterial, is mortal like the body whose vicissitudes it shares. An introduction is contributed by Mr. Foote.

AN HONEST MAN'S DILEMMA.

BY CLARA DIXON DAVIDSON.

THE Rev. Josiah Scrimm was engaged in a theological discussion with his Agnostic neighbor, Squire Hobbs. They were very good friends and were exceedingly comfortable, lounging on easy chairs in the reverend's luxurious, but somewhat disorderly den, each in his turn puffing lazily at his cigar while he listened to the replies of his opponent.

"I am willing to admit," Scrimm was saying, "that there isn't much difference between us on this question of hell. Few of us really believe in any such horror now, you know. Why, you would be surprised at the admissions we make to each other sometimes, we preachers,—but all in strict confidence, of course; all behind closed doors."

"It seems, then, that the difference between us is more in degree of morality than in doctrine." Here Rev. Scrimm lifted his head quickly and forgot his cigar, but the suavity of his friend's face and manner and the smoothness of his tones softened the effect of his words. "Neither of us believe in hell. I tell what I think to the few who care to know; you proclaim things you do not really believe to the many whether they care to know or not. You give to a lie the prestige of your supposed learning, the weight of your personality,—and such a monstrous lie it is! You are a good neighbor and a faithful friend; but how can you lend yourself to such indefensible—"

"No, not that; I can defend my course easily. There are plenty of people who need to be frightened about 'the wrath to come' as often as once a year to prevent them from terrorising gentler citizens."

"Ah, but those gentler citizens! If you ever in your life really believed the doctrine you now preach you must understand that the most ingenious cruelties that could be invented by the lower classes, supposing them to be as malignant as you represent them, could not compare with the mental agonies suffered by the morally sensitive through their acceptance of the hell-theory."

At this moment a servant appeared, saying:

"A man has come a-wanting to see you, sir."

"Who is he?"

"That I cannot tell; but such a cast-down look he has, sir, as if he'd been a-thieving and come for comfort, maybe a-wanting you and God to pardon him; he's urgent to come in."

The Rev. Scrimm's face showed some annoyance, but he said:

"I will see him; show him in here."

"Perhaps I had better go," said 'Squire Hobbs, as the visitor entered.

"Not on my account," said he of the downcast look. "My name is Benjamin Latham. I have nothing to conceal and, as I am not a bashful man, one listener more or less will not affect my nerves. I desire nothing else, just now, so much as wise counsel. You may be able to aid if you will have the patience to hear me. When —"

At this point Benjamin Latham paused to cough, tobacco smoke acting as an irritant to the surface of his respiratory organs. 'Squire Hobbs and Rev. Scrimms puffed away at their cigars in expectant silence. If he who stood before them—he had declined to be seated—had been of the other sex they would have cast away their Havanas and opened a window to rid the room of its foul odor, but they were less courteous to a man, forgetful that the tracheæ and bronchi of men and women have a deplorable tendency to grow alike.

"At the age of twenty-one years," said Benjamin Latham, when he was able to proceed, "I had twelve thousand dollars. My friends insisted that I should place it at interest and live on the income, which would have been quite sufficient to supply my simple wants. But I had conscientious scruples against receiving money for the use of money; I said that money could not perform labor and had no real power of increasing itself, and that when I had used as much as I then had I ought not rightfully to have any of it left; that one cannot 'eat his cake and have it,' and neither could I, rightfully, use my money and have it. They said I had a fantastic twist in my moral nature; that it was legal to take interest and therefore right, though they could not explain why it was right to take ten per cent. in one state and a deadly sin to take eight in another, in which the legal rate happened to be fixed at six.

"As I was obdurate on that point my advisers insisted that I should go into business. This I decided to do, but after two years spent in quest of some operations in which I could pay fair wages to my assistants, put honest goods on the market, and yet successfully compete with others engaged in the same line of business, I abandoned the thought as hopeless.

"Then I bought a farm. I said, 'Surely the closer I get to Nature's heart the more honestly I can live.' I paid my hands what they really earned, as nearly as we could determine the amounts. I cared for my stock humanely, I gave honest weights and measures when I sold grains or fruits, and I lost money every year. I found that the cost of production was greater than the price of the product, taking one year with another. But I knew not what else to do, so I kept on farming until a few months ago, when I gave up everything to satisfy mortgages.

"As I worked about fourteen hours a day on the farm, and was often exposed to inclement weather, my health is too far impaired for the hardships of a day-laborer. I have tried earnestly to find suitable employment at which I could earn an honest and comfortable livelihood, but, so far, have failed. I have a wealthy relative who offers me large sums of money with which to speculate in lands or grain. I have an opportunity to travel for a firm in the interest of which I should be expected to lie volubly; but no honorable means of self-support has presented itself to me. In this strait, my mind has turned to suicide as the only avenue of escape from living dishonestly. But I listened to a sermon from your lips in which you distinctly said that suicide is the unpardonable sin, and that all unforgiven sinners will burn forever in hell; so, sir, I came to ask whether, in your opinion, my soul's salvation would be safer as a land speculator, in which business I might ask pardon every night for the sins committed during the day, or as a suicide."

Rev. Scrimm examined the face of Benjamin Latham attentively. Was it all a piece of irony, or was the man really in such mental stress as he appeared? There could be no doubt about his earnestness, the Rev. Scrimm decided. His hands interlaced and clenched each other until the nails marked the flesh, and his sombre eyes had held a look of horror as he mentioned the place of torment for lost souls.

"Tell me," said Benjamin Latham, and there was a note of pleading in his voice; "why do you say that suicide is the unpardonable sin? I cannot find it in my Bible."

"'Thou shalt not kill' you can find that?"

"Yes."

"If a man kill himself it is the last act of his life; there is no time afterwards to ask for pardon."

"I see, I see. But God is a brutal tyrant. I never dared say so before, but I will say it now. He made everything as it is; I suppose it all suits him or he would have it different. He made our environments such that we must either live in fear of hell or die in danger of it. He made the impossibility to live honestly, and yet if we do not so live we are threatened with his wrath. He is cruel and unjust, and impossible to please."

"So here's some of the fruits of your hypocrisy, preaching a doctrine which you confess you do not believe," said Squire Hobbs, turning to Rev. Scrimm with energetic wrath.

"Not believe—a preacher not believe in hell," mused Benjamin Latham, as he pulled his hat over his forehead and turned to go.

"Wait, let us —" began 'Squire Hobbs.

"I do not care to confer with men who do not believe there is a hell. I know there is. It begins in this life. I live in it. How could suicide add to its horrors?" The visitor left the house.

"What a strange jumble of sense and nonsense it was," 'Squire Hobbs said.

"All nonsense, every bit of it," emphatically asserted Rev. Scrimm. "I think the fellow is insane."

"Oh yes, of course; we all are more or less. But I think this person might well say with the dog that is to be muzzled by legal mandates: 'Most men are far more mad than we.'"

The next morning the mangled remains of Benjamin Latham were taken from a railway track—crushed.

A HAPPY BAPTIST FAMILY.

A strange scene was witnessed yesterday in the Strict Baptist Chapel of Chelmondiston, six miles from Ipswich. For some time past the minister (Rev. J. Cordle) has been at variance with some of the leading members of his congregation. The dispute began with the singing at a Sunday-school meeting of some of Moody and Sankey's hymns, which were in the pastor's opinion heretical. The result was that 10 or 12 of the old members were practically shut out from church fellowship. Two of these members, who were formerly deacons, gave notice of a church meeting for yesterday morning, and were present with a considerable following of friends. Directly the service was concluded the pastor read a statement that he had taken legal advice, and that all persons guilty of riotous behavior, would be dealt with according to law. The senior deacon asked whether the service was concluded. The pastor, who evidently considered he was legally safe so long as the service was in progress, replied that it was not. By way of bridging over the interval, between twelve and two (the latter being the hour for afternoon service), he called down the school children, and got them to sing a number of hymns on the promise that they should hereafter be rewarded with a treat of tea and cake. In about three-quarters of an hour the children were dismissed, and the minister started a prayer meeting. Whilst this was proceeding the deacons and their friends sent out for bags of biscuits and buns to make up for the dinner they were sacrificing. When the prayer meeting was over, the minister said they would spend a few quiet moments and then he would give them an address. This announcement aroused intense indignation among the hungry dissentients, more especially as the minister spent his few quiet moments in munching biscuits. One of the deacons called out "Shame" with great emphasis, and an old lady quoted the text, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord," adding, "And I believe he will."

The minister took for his text the words, "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine," and preached at the old members for three quarters of an hour. He was frequently interrupted, and on each occasion he took an ostentatious note of the words used. At two o'clock the dissentients went home to dine, leaving a funeral service to proceed quietly; but they returned in force when it was over, and a scene of disorder followed. A resolution was passed calling upon Mr. Cordle to resign, because of the low condition of the church, and the brethren after making many appeals to each other's Christian generosity, fell out all round, some calling their brethren slinks, liars and rogues. In the midst of the hubbub the minister went after the village policeman, who refused to interfere, and the squabble continued for nearly an hour, the disputants adjourning from the chapel to the vestry, and thence to the burial ground. The villagers and school children gathered round, and were much amused at the proceedings. In the end Mr. Cordle locked up the building, and threatened to take legal proceedings against the offenders.

—Star.

Evil, Adam, and Satan, we venture to state,
Got up the Original Sin-dicate.

THE DEATH OF THE DEVIL.

(FREELY ENGLISHED FROM DE BERANGER.)

FOR the miracle that I'll retrace
Quickly as a sketcher paints,
Glory be to the Saint I grace,
Patron of all our little Saints.
By a trick which really would seem most
Infernal if ever Saints misled,
He has made the Devil give up the ghost:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Satan found him going to dine:
Drink or own yourself second-best:
Done!—but he poured in the Devil's wine
A powerful poison potently blest.
Satan drinks, comes the colic quick;
He swears, he writhes, he dashes his head;
At last he bursts like a heretic:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

He is dead! the monks all cry,
None will purchase another *agnus*:
He is dead! the canons sigh,
Who will pay now for an *oremus*!
The conclave shook in mortal fear,
Power and strong-box, adieu! they said,
We have lost our Father dear:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Love won't serve us as Fear of old,
Whose gifts have overfilled our hands;
Intolerance is almost cold,
Who will kindle again its hands!
If Man escapes us, slips our rope,
Truth will begin to lift her head,
God will be greater than the Pope:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Ignatius runs to them while they cry;
Give me, give me his place and power;
No one was frightened of him, but I—
I will make even the monarchs cower:
Robberies, massacres, plagues, or wars
Everywhere, O I'll flourish, he said;
God may have what I fling out of doors:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

Al! *brave homme!* cried all the court,
We bless thee in thy malice and hate;
And at once his order, Rome's support,
Saw its robe flutter Heaven's gate.
From the angels tears of pity fell;
Poor Man will have cause to rue, they said,
Saint Ignatius inherits Hell:
The Devil is dead, the Devil is dead.

(The late) JAMES THOMSON (B.V.)

Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter: "Aunt Dinah, why don't you tell that yer heathen reprobate, your husband, to put his money in the collection plate, and lay up his treasures in heaven." Aunt Dinah: "What for. What do use ob laying up treasures dere, where he neber see um agin? Tell me dat, eh nigger."

Jones (sentimental): "I heard Madam—sing last night." Smith (prosaic): "Did you like it? Was it good?" Jones (rapturously): "Charming! Divine! It carried me to the gates of heaven." Smith: "Pity you didn't take advantage of the opportunity, old man! You may depend that you'll never have such another chance."

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.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, select concert. Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green—At Mr. Simson's, 2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road, on Wednesday, at 9, a members' meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Prophecy."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30. Mr. G. W. Foote, "Faith and God: another Reply to *Lux Mundi*."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Rev. S. D. Headlam, "Christian Socialism."

Wood Green—At "The Star," 7, J. M. Robertson, Summer Conference of the North Middlesex Secular Federation."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed." Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God: Where and What."

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secularism Superior to Christianity."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, a lecture.

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Fall and Redemption."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "The Gods of Russia."

Hammersmith Bridge, 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Revelation and Modern Science."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. G. Standring, "Why has Christianity Failed?" Wednesday, at 8, Mr. J. Rowney, "An Hour with God's Favorites."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic, Part II."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christianity and Progress."

Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Man's Place in Nature."

New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "What is a Christian?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Simes, "Justification of Secularism."

Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, a lecture.

Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Some Ancient Views of God."

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. J. Fagan, "Miracles."

COUNTRY.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. Ward's, Hightown, 4.30, tea and musical evening.

Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. G. Franks, "Signs of the Times."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society"; 7, Mr. C. Doeg, "The Unity of Nature."

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans, "The Origin of the Earth."

Newcastle—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Mr. A. B. Moss, 11, "Voltaire and Paine"; 3, "The Bible and Evolution"; 7, "Saviors of Mankind." Monthly financial meeting of members in Society's Rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, at 8, after Mr. Moss's evening lecture.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street; annual excursion to Charnwood Forest; brakes leave the hall at 8, a.m.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 7, Mr. Lush, "Herbert Spencer on Education"

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A Compulsory Eight Hours' Labor Bill: Useless and Impracticable."

Sheffield Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Excursion of members and friends to Strines Inn, etc.; meet at Monolith, Fargate, at 1.30; go via Hollow Meadows and return via Bradfield.

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Socialism and the Middle Class"; 3, "Hypnotism: the Facts and the Explanation"; 7, "Christianity and Women."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Vicar's Croft, 3, Mr. R. Atkinson, "Is Christianity Reasonable?" On Woodhouse Moor, at 7, Mr. H. Smith, "Is there a Hell? and if so, What Class of People are most likely to get there?"

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Ernest Evans, "Darwin v. Moses."

Newcastle—On Town Moor, 7, grand concert. Monday, at 7, in Bigg Market, Mr. Chas. H. Kelf, "Secularism: the Religion of Every-day Life."

Rochdale Town Hall Square, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "Some Modern Unbelievers in Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E. — North-Eastern Secular Federation tour:—Sat., July 26, Ox Hill; Sun., 27 (three lectures in hall), Newcastle; Mon., 28 (open air), Newcastle; Tues., 29, South Shields; Wed., 30 (open air), Sunderland; Thur., 31, Bedlington; Fri., Aug. 1, Blyth; Sat., 2, Chester-le-Street; Sun., 3, Durham.

August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning) Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 3, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 3 (morning), Camberwell; 10 (morning), Midland Arches; 17 (morning), Bethnal Green; 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell; 21 (morning out-door, and evening in the hall), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—August 17 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 7, Chatham; 21 (evening), Woolwich. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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